

# cm mini reviews

A rapid-fire round-up of studio essentials (and not so essentials)

## Beyerdynamic DT 700 Pro X

£219

Web polar.uk.com, beyerdynamic.com

Gear Closed-back headphones

Beyerdynamic's DT 1770 closed back headphones are some of the best we've ever tested and have become something of a reference point on our test bench. However, at around £400, they might be a stretch for many producers. Then there are the cheaper £100-ish DT 770 Pros which, to our ears, don't deliver the accuracy of their more expensive older siblings. However, now we have the new £219 DT 700 Pro X on test here. They're not only bridging the gap between both existing models price-wise, but also promising to up the ante in terms of sound quality. So will these more reasonably priced phones bridge the sound gap as well as filling the price void?

Anyone familiar with Beyerdynamic headphones will be comfortably at home here – the velour-style ear pads are present and correct and slip around your head in an almost cosy fashion. The large drivers and relatively low

weight mean they fit snugly and won't weigh a long mixing session down, although they can get a tad warm. The headband is quite tight but you get a good level of sound isolation – as their closed back design should. It also makes closed-back phones better for mixing with. (There is a similarly-designed new open back set, the DT 900 Pro X, which we'll look at next month.)

Specs-wise, the frequencies are covered too – from 5Hz all the way to a massive 40kHz – and a 48ohm impedance means that they will deliver decent volumes from as wide a range of devices.

The all-important sound quality should, of course, be an accurate one for their intended tasks of mixing and mastering, and it doesn't disappoint with a non coloured and controlled response across the wide range.

The stereo width is pretty amazing too; you usually get this kind of extra space from a more open back design so it's great to hear it in a more measured mixing environment.

Overall we'd put the 700 Pro Xs right up there with the 1770s soundwise, which, along with



Beyerdynamic's design and expertise, you'd probably expect.

But at just a shade over £200 you're getting the comfort, sound and 1770 quality for just over half the price, so they have to come highly recommended. We talked about 'bridges' earlier, and the DT 700 Pro Xs could be your 'bridge' to better monitoring. Ho ho.

9/10

## Nanoleaf Lines

£179.99

Web nanoleaf.me

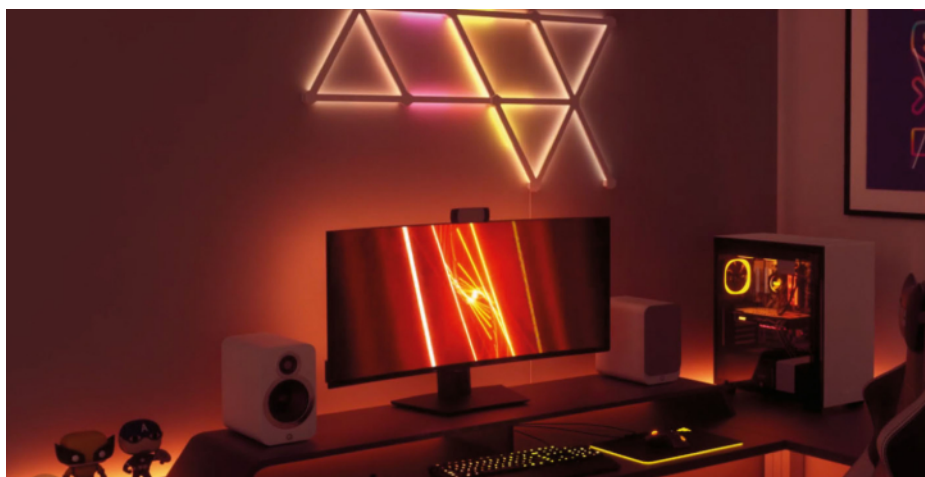
Gear 'Smarter' Decor

We've published many features over the years about how productive your studio should feel, and an often undervalued aspect of your music creation 'space' is simply how welcoming it is. The thinking is: it's no good if your studio looks like a place where you write emails, otherwise that's what you'll end up doing in it.

With that in mind, we're big fans of cool studio gadgets, great-looking gizmos and flashing lights and Nanoleaf's 'Smart Decor' seems to encompass all three. You create different shaped lights from individual units and you end up with a wall-mounted light panel which can be controlled with an app or change colour in time with your music.

With millions of colours possible, you can create amazing indoor light shows. Your finished panel can even – via the app – mimic the colours on your computer monitor, an enhancing experience for a game player or film watcher, apparently. (Not so much, we bet, an Ableton Live user – "nice grey wall you have there!")

The Lines are easy to construct into a custom shape (several are suggested, which are worth



copying or you'll just end up with triangles, like we did) and it's easy to assemble in 30 minutes. (And slightly less easy to disassemble when you undoubtedly change your mind over your target shape.) Once up and running, the lights give out a surprising amount of fun and luminescence. We found the music reaction time to be a little delayed, probably because of Bluetooth, but better in response to your voice (which can control the lights via Siri and more).

Of course it's arguable whether Lines will aid creativity – in fact you could say they offer more of a distraction – but set on something soothing,

they'll add a chilled vibe to your studio space or just some nice decoration.

We also found that having a damn great wall of colour dancing along with our freshly-created music makes it sound more 'pro' – like we're on tour, perhaps. So EDM producers might think they're in a club and stoners might think they've simply gone to heaven.

Lines might be pricey, and your sensible self will say the cash is better spent on an audio interface, but your fun side might just ask, 'where have these been all my life?'

7/10