

GEAR REVIEW

ROLAND TD-11KVSE



£1,429 *With a few additions and enhancements, the latest V-Drum kit from Roland offers greater value*

WORDS: DAVE HOLMES

Since the TD-11KV was launched at the beginning of 2012, this electronic kit has become a number-one best seller for Roland. The Compact Series set (compact rack and module), came hot on the heels of the highly desirable but nevertheless wallet-wrenching TD-30KV. The TD-11K has rubberised drum pads only, whereas the TD-11KV has all the benefits of mesh heads – when the sets were reviewed in *Rhythm*, we concluded it was worth the extra outlay for the mesh set-up.

Build

Up for review is the brand new TD-11KVSE – ‘SE’ for Special Edition. This is an expanded, enhanced five-piece set-up which now includes an additional crash cymbal, a 10" pad for Tom3 (the previous Tom3 was 8"), a larger rack and the superb VH-11 virtual hi-hat. Roland has set the retail

vertical sensor. The multi-zoned cymbal pad has two jack sockets – one for the cable linking it to the module and the other connecting it to the vertical sensor. This senses or detects vertical movement of the centre pull-rod on any standard hi-hat stand. It is positioned where a lower/bottom hi-hat cymbal would reside. If you don't own one already, it is worth noting that there would be the additional purchase of the hi-hat stand – however, most acoustic drummers will simply use one from their acoustic kit.

Of course, the TD-11 kit comes with the excellent Compact Series TD-11 module. One of the main features here being Roland's stunning SuperNATURAL sampling technology and Behavioural Modelling. This advanced ‘next-generation’ sound engine accurately interprets each and every stick strike, giving a seamless acoustic-like feel, (especially with those mesh heads), to the

and virtually foolproof!

A range of on-board coaching exercises is included on the module which will help hone those drumming skills. Instilling a sense of time is the quiet count, which is a useful and fun way of learning. Further coaching facilities are available via the excellent and highly recommended DT-1 V-Drums Tutor software which is available as a separate purchase for around £49.

Hands On

Though the MCS rack is a touch larger than the previous TD11-KV incarnation, it is still contained in a single box and remains a relatively compact set-up. With the exception of the cymbal arms which need to be put into position, the rack comes fully assembled. The side arms are simply unfolded, becoming a sturdy platform to attach the range of pads onto and within minutes, the cymbal arms, module and pads are in place.

Next up it's the various components of the VH-11 which slide over the hi-hat stand (borrowed from my acoustic kit) – the vertical sensor simply slides over the centre pull-pole and the VH-11 pad is clamped into position by its integral cymbal clamp. This assembly takes a little adjustment (like any standard hi-hat will) for the user to become comfortable and for the unit to operate accurately. Thanks to the clear labelling (and the single D-type connector), connecting up requires just a little cable feeding along the rack tubes and inputting the 10 or so Jack plugs into the individual pads.

I am a huge fan of mesh pads where the response of the module matches perfectly each stroke on each head. Buzz rolls, ghost notes and rapid single-stroke rolls

THE ADVANCED SOUND ENGINE ACCURATELY INTERPRETS EACH AND EVERY STICK STRIKE, GIVING A SEAMLESS ACOUSTIC-LIKE FEEL

price only around £80 more than the original TD-11KV – potentially offering greater value for money.

With the kit comes the KD-9 kick pad – a robust and solid-looking piece of kit with a vertically aligned pad suitable for any conventional pedal. It is kitted out with adjustable spikes and Velcro to ensure this won't creep around on stage and go walkabout. The beater strikes against a surface with a wear-resistant woven cloth, behind which is some spongy padding designed to give a realistic acoustic-like feel to the pedal beater. As the pedal clamp and pad face is wide enough to allow two beaters, double peddlers certainly won't be disappointed.

An excellent and worthy inclusion is the VH-11 virtual hi-hat which sits atop any standard hi-hat stand. It comprises two basic components – cymbal pad and a

whole set-up. As we quickly realised in the previous TD-11 review, there is a good selection of professionally studio-recorded real instrument samples – the overall sound quality is set to impress.

Each control of the TD-11 is intuitively placed and conveniently sized; the larger the control, knob or button, the more likely you are going to be using it either during performance or when editing. Our old friend, the value wheel, will prove extremely useful for rapid scrolls through kits, quick access through the many voices and when speedy pad edits are required. Though the bulk of the access to the many module functions is often a single button-press away. That's unless you feel like getting into some hefty edits where the aforementioned value wheel comes in handy. For ease of use, the buttons are aligned below options in the LCD screen for any icon displayed functions – intuitive





CYMBALS

Cymbal pads offer acoustic-like facilities such as washes, rolls and chokes

KICK PAD

Kit comes equipped with Roland's robust KD-9 kick pad, with the beater providing a realistic feel

PADS

Mesh pads offer acoustic-like response and rim triggering too

Essential spec

Roland

PRICE

£1,429

PAD

CONFIGURATION

1 x KD-9 kick; 2 x 8" tom1 and tom2 pads, 2 x 10" snare and tom3 pads; 2 x crash pads; 1 x CY-13R ride; 1 x VH-1 hi-hat

INSTRUMENTS

190

EDITABLE DRUM PARAMETERS

Muffling, Snare Buzz, Strainer, Tone Colour, Pan, Volume, Tuning

SOUND

GENERATOR

SuperNATURAL with Behaviour Modelling

DRUM KITS

50 - 25 preset kits, 25 user kits

EFFECTS

Ambience - 10 types: Booth, Studio, Basement, Jazz Club, Rock Club, Ballroom, Concert Hall, Expo Hall, Gate, Spiral and a 4-band graphic equalizer

FILE FORMAT FOR SONGS

.WAV or MP3 (44.1 KHz sample rate)

DISPLAY

Backlit LCD 64 x 128 graphic display

QUICK RECORD

Recording method: Real-time; Capacity: 30,000 notes (approx.); Resolution: 480 ticks per quarter note

CONTROLS

Volume, push button for power, kits (10 buttons), variation, metronome, up, down

CONTACT

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GEAR REVIEW

They say...

Jules Tabberer-Stewart *Roland's European Drum Product Manager*



Why has Roland produced an SE version of the TD-11KV?

"TD-11KV is our best-selling V-Drums kit. We get great feedback about the product. But, over the past few years I've had many questions about 'upgrading' the kit, ie: adding the VH-11 hi-hats, adding an extra crash etc. It seems that a lot of drummers that buy a TD-11KV, over time, want to expand upon it (we all do that with our acoustic kits too, right?). The TD-11KV is still our best seller because of the value it offers for the price, so there seems no reason to change it completely. We've listened to the feedback and questions from our customers and responded by offering a kit that allows those drummers who are happy with the TD-11 level of features and sound to use the V-hi-hats and have a second crash for better playability and offering a saving too. It just made sense to offer a bigger stand with facility to take a second crash without the need to buy another additional cymbal arm."

Why splash out on a more 'upmarket kit' if the TD-11 is so good?

"I think drummers who want ultimate expressiveness and highest level of sound quality should still go for the TD-25 series, or TD-30 series (both TD-25 and TD-30 now share the same sound engine - it's just the TD-30 has more sounds inside, more kits and greater pro-level features like faders, direct outputs etc). The TD-11 is great to play, but the TD-25 is definitely a cut above. But the TD-11 drummer can now buy a 'bigger' kit as one package and make a saving, without needing to add all the parts they want separately."



TD-11 MODULE

This is the brains of the outfit - intuitively laid out and easy to operate

are all available and taken in the stride of each component. It's possible to create cymbal washes too - even without felt mallets! Here the sound increases in intensity as the stick velocity builds, eventually peaking as you would expect from a 'real' cymbal. As well as cymbal chokes on both crashes and the ride the most impressive facet is the control over the hi-hat. Pedal splashes, lifting a foot slightly off the hi-hat pedal to create that half-open

IT'S POSSIBLE TO CREATE CYMBAL WASHES - THE SOUND INCREASES IN INTENSITY AS STICK VELOCITY BUILDS, PEAKING AS WITH 'REAL' CYMBALS

hi-hat that's great for lifting a song - all the techniques are possible. If there was to be an element of criticism here it would be for its rubbery feel, but this does keep noise levels to a minimum.

There's a comparatively small selection of on-board songs, but users are able to play back their own in either MP3 or .WAV format. Using any standard memory stick you can save songs, user kit data and even a whole system back-up. The songs may be organised into folders - naming folders

perhaps into individual genres. Access is easy and storing up to 100 songs per folder has the potential for masses of jam-along tracks. Other features include Quick Record which begins recording your amazing drum performance with a single press of the button or the strike of a pad.

With a selection of MP3s copied from my laptop onto a USB stick, it's simply the matter of inserting it into the rear end of the module. Within a second or two a message

pops up on the LCD display: "Now processing..." The songs are immediately accessible and I was able to quickly navigate from the root directory to any folders set up on the stick. Each song is selectable from the value wheel by rotating it to the song of choice and hitting the Stop/Start button.

As I quickly discover, there is a mixed bag of volume levels on the MP3s or .WAV song files, and balancing the kit/song volume is a bit of a pain. Not through any fault of the module however, as it is possible to alter the

Also try...



1 YAMAHA DTX562

We say: "This kit offers so much as a practice tool and maybe even for gigging as well."



2 ALESIS DM10 X

We say: "There is plenty that impresses with this electronic kit including great sound and features."

volume of the backing track independently from that of the drums. I found that it was best practice to 'normalize' each track (using some audio editing software), before saving them onto the memory stick.

With the drum sound flexibility Roland's V-Drums offer, you don't have to stick with the same voices or preset pad values. Altering any kit set-up and saving them as your own user kits is easy, and experimenting with various sound aspects such as the initial drum voice or sound, detuning, drum size, muffling, adjusting pan, snare buzz etc, is something that never fails to impress. Even if you don't want to spend time fiddling about with the various V-Drum edits, there is still a whole jamboree bag offered with this compact, powerful module and those wrist-friendly mesh pads. **R**

VERDICT: This is a really great set-up and all the SE extras of a second crash pad, the VH-11 hi-hat and larger rack help make this set more playable and enjoyable and represents great value.

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
PLAYABILITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING ★★★★★