

Korg M50

| from £899

It's portable. It's affordable. But **Daniel Griffiths** wonders if Korg's new stripped-down, bargain workstation is still the right side of powerful



WHAT IS IT?

Korg's new workstation, based on their M3 and packing many of the same features, but at a great affordable price

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Well thought-out DAW connectivity
- 2 Top notch sounds
- 3 Touchscreen is a real bonus at this price



When the M3 dropped last year, we heaped praise on it, highlighting the fact that not a single corner had been cut in delivering an all-dancing synth, sampler, sequencer workstation. It really had the lot – including an insane number of great sounds.

Now the M3 has been expanded yet further (see page 102 for proof) leaving space for a new miracle at the base of Korg's tree. Step up the M50 – packing everything any musician could need at an incredible low price.

For ease of imagination think of the M50 as a trimmed back M3, cutting away the superfluous features to leave 256MB of PCMs, 608 patches and 384 combinations covering all the bases.

Special mention must go to an accent on great synth sounds (alongside the slightly more mundane impersonations) and a full recreation of the classic Korg SG-1 sampling grand piano. And, for when you get creative, there's a superbly ample 640 program

slots and 512 combo slots to store your patches and stacks.

The synth engine on board is Korg's EDS (Extended Definition Synthesis) borrowed from the M3 and it's impossible to tell if you're listening to an M3 or an M50 when you rack up both side by side. The sound is powerful

and definitely synthetic, although a GM soundset is on board (but fortunately feels like an afterthought rather than the main event). I found that for synth strings, leads and basses the M50 excelled – all are rich with plenty of movement, with the rest of the soundset serving up a wide gamut of, above all, useable textures. It's a real welcome change after tapping through endless banks of atmospheres and zap-pow 'show-offs' on other synths.

Light machine

Build-wise, the M50 is amazingly light. Take possession and you'd be forgiven for thinking that they'd forgotten to put one in the box. The potential for portability is therefore enormous, be it hauled from gig to gig, or simply tucked under the bed when not in use.

While bigger brother the M3 has metal parts visible and even a glimmer of wood at its ends, the '50 isn't so blessed. That said, the plastic used throughout has a nice matt patina

Computer Love

The M50 has been built with computers in mind. Connect via USB and the

M50 is a MIDI interface and controller keyboard. Next, use the M50 editor

software to edit and store your patches on your computer. Better still, spark up the M50 plug-in in your DAW and treat the M50 as a 16-part soft synth. It's so easy to select and audition sounds that you probably won't reach for anything else. Select a sound on your DAW and it makes the changes on the M50, or hit the screen and buttons on the M50 and it changes the plug-in.



