Nord C2D £2,599

The C2D adds real drawbars to the already excellent and now improved C2 engine. **Dan 'JD73' Goldman** gets hands-on with Nord's new B3 beater

INCLUDES AUDIO

WHAT IS IT?

Upgraded version of the C2 organ with real drawbars, improved key click and percussion

CONTACT

Who: Sound Technology Tel: +44 (0)1462 480000 Web: www.nordkeyboards.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Lightweight, with B3-style ergonomics
- 2 Improved key click, percussion and new 122 rotary speaker model
- 3 Real drawbars



Imost three years after the launch of the C2, Nord present us with the C2D.
Yes, the case maybe similar

(albeit a darker red with a black/yellow panel) but the biggest difference is that the C2D is adorned with a full set of real drawbars, laid out in the main as a Hammond B3, so diehard organists will immediately feel at home.

This is something that has been sorely missed on Nords of the past, at least by the Hammond purists, and so for them the C2D is now a hugely viable B3 alternative, not just in terms of sound but perhaps even more importantly, authentic playability.

Grabbing drawbars is an integral part of the tonewheel organ playing experience and as great as Nord's button/LED drawbar system is, you just can't beat the real thing. The four sets of drawbars (two for each manual and one set of pedal drawbars) also feel like those on a real B3 too, which adds to the overall experience. Close your eyes, grab some drawbars and you'd be hard-pushed to tell the C2D from a real B3, save for the air from the Leslie

blowing your hair (if you have hair of course, unlike me).

Key changes

So what else has changed? Well, the keybed feels pretty much the same as the C2, a little stiffer than a real

Hammond but nonetheless very playable and easy to control - note that the springs do slacken off a little once played in. The space either side of the control panel on the C2 is now gone, so there's no room to perch your laptop anymore, but that's no biggie. The preset controls (three per manual) are now conveniently positioned down the left-hand side of the keyboard for easy access, though it would have been great if the rotary controls had been squeezed in by the lower manual too, as if you don't shell out for the optional half-moon rotary switch (£126 inc VAT) you have to reach up to the main panel to change the rotary speed which is quite a stretch. The half-moon switch is therefore a must, so factor that into your budget - it really should be

Real Drawbars and Presets

At the top edge of each drawbar is a red LED that signifies which are active within each of the three available presets per manual. To edit a preset, simply hold the corresponding preset button whilst moving one of the drawbars that has a



lit LED. The LED will switch on or off when the drawbar passes its stored position value, so you always know what the actual stored preset value is and how far from that you are when tweaking. Each manual also has a drawbar A and B button that makes them active in their current position and brings into focus either of the two sets for each manual. To make things even clearer, each drawbar button, so you always know which is active.





standard on a premium instrument such as this.

Other changes include the very welcome addition of a proper LCD screen, rather than the simple red dot matrix display. You can now give your presets proper names and change system settings much more easily than referring to the cryptic lookup table found on the C2 and this really helps the general workflow. The upper manual some significant additions including a super-realistic new key click model and improved percussion model, both of which really stand up admirably next to my real B3. A new Leslie 122 model (close-miked and distance-miked) is also a very useful addition to the 145 model already onboard and this really broadens the scope of the C2D's sonic capabilities. Let's not forget the killer pipe organ samples either which, when

still be nice to have a resonant filter, different waveforms and the ability to use the whole of the five octaves as a bass synth, but there you go, you can't have everything.

If you wish to get deeper with the B3 model there are three vintages of tonewheel emulation available too, ranging from clean to downright dirty, plus you can tweak the balance of the bass/treble rotors and acceleration.

SPECS

B3 tonewheel organ simulation

Farfisa and Vox transistor organ simulations

Baroque pipe organ with

Rotary speaker and amp simulations

Delay, EQ, Drive and Reverb effects

Dual manual 61 key waterfall keys

Two sets of physical drawbars per manual

Left-hand drawbar preset panel

Dimensions:

966 x 163 x 445mm

Weight: 16kg

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and control panel has also been slightly tilted to aid playing and tweaking and this makes a nice difference when playing and using the drawbars. Also, for those that still prefer the old-style Nord button drawbars/LEDs, then the C2 is still being produced alongside the C2D priced at £2,199 inc VAT.

Sonic boon

The sound engine remains largely the same as the C2, and the delay and three-band EQ remain, but there are

coupled with the five onboard reverb emulations, coupler modes and tremulants, transport you into vast cathedrals or small churches, plus the Vox and Farfisa emulations which are still right up there in terms of playability and authenticity (see my original C2 review for a more in-depth look at these areas).

I still love the synth bass mode that turns the lower octaves of the bottom manual into a synth bass with variable pluck and release, but it would

Real deal

For most people, it will be the B3 emulation that gets the most use and it's here where the C2D really hits a home run. It just

oozes authenticity on every level and even staunch B3ists will surely be impressed by the feel and sound.

Not only that, it integrates well with most MIDI systems. Sure, £2,599 isn't cheap but when you consider how authentic the C2D sounds, plus its portability and now how much more playable it is with real drawbars, it's pretty hard to imagine how it could actually be improved as a B3 emulator, save for perhaps some wider-sounding reverbs and a rotary model with more wind/belt noise, plus user sound upload would be nice too (like the Hammond SK2). However, when you consider you can also plug in a real Leslie speaker and add the Nord Pedal Keys 27 pedalboard too, this is as complete a B3 emulator as you could wish for. FM

FutureMusic BUILD VALUE EASE OF USE VERSATILITY A significant improvement over the

C2, the C2D now appeals to tonewheel purists too.

ALTERNATIVES



Hammond SK2

The closest competitor to the C2D with authentic B3 and pipe organ sounds, plus Piano, Rhodes, Strings and more. Only one set of drawbars though.

www.hammondorganco.



Nord C2

£2 199

Still in production and sounds almost as good as the C2D. Digital drawbars instead of mechanical but still has the same killer sound engine, minus a few

www.nordkeyboards.com



GSI VB3

50 euros

One of the best sounding and most tweakable software R3 emulations there is. Also does Vox and Farfisa emulations and is a steal at the price.

www.genuinesoundware.