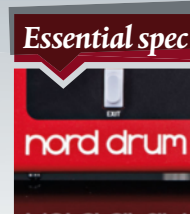


NORD VIRTUAL ANALOGUE DRUM SYNTH

£369 Back to the future with the brand new 'virtual' analogue drum synthesizer from Nord...

WORDS: DAVE HOLMES



PRICE

Nord Virtual Analogue Drum Synth, £369

TRIGGER INPUTS

Four, velocity sensitive

CONTROLS

13 function buttons, step encoder dial, rotary volume

PRE-SET SOUNDS

80

USER SOUNDS

19

SOUND STYLES

Acoustic, machine, world, weird tweaks and FX

PITCH OF TONE COMPONENT

15Hz to 1600Hz for the fundamental harmonic

CONNECTIONS

1/4" Audio out (Line level, Mono), MIDI In, MIDI Out (5-pin DIN), 1/4" jack Trigger Inputs (Ch1, Ch2, Ch3, Ch4), Socket for 12-Volt DC power supply

DISPLAY

Three-character LED (alpha numeric), single LED's for channel peak/selection and activity

DIMENSIONS

200mm x 45mm x 42mm

WEIGHT

350g

CONTACT

Nord
01462 480000
www.soundtech.co.uk

SOUND MODELLING

Nord uses digital electronic synthesis to virtually recreate sounds



While many electronic instrument manufacturers use sample-based sounds, Swedish company Nord create theirs with digital electronic synthesis. This form of sound modelling (found on several of Nord's keyboards), simulates the electronic circuitry of old analogue devices, virtually recreating the sound.

Build

The red and black finish of the rugged steel casing is typically Nord, while the function buttons are similar to those used throughout Nord's keyboard range. Each of the four input sockets has a dedicated synthesiser channel. These jacks will accept a range of pads or drum triggers for which there are user-adjustable parameters (such as threshold and sensitivity), to give optimum pad/synth performance. Each of the sounds consist of three fundamental elements: Click, the initial noise heard (creating attack, for example);

Tone, the main body of sound using any one of 17 selectable waveforms and spanning seven octaves; Noise, 27 varieties from a rumble to a breathy whoosh. Before any of the signals head to the mono output, the sound generated is given splashes of colour and texture through real-time filtering and adjustment to decay, fades, gating, etc.

Hands On

For the review, I am using a mixture of mesh and rubber pads and have MIDI'd the Nord to the Alesis SamplePad. The defaults for trigger inputs are: ch1 kick, ch2 snare, ch3 tom1, ch4 tom2. Nord has kept to the General MIDI standard-note numbers for particular drum categories, eg: a bass drum is MIDI note 36, snare is 38, etc. By using the step-by-step guides in the excellent manual and the intuitive layout of the controls, the basics of the synth are surprisingly easy to grasp.

Whether using the pads or MIDI, the response is immediate, dynamic and

surprisingly organic. Sounds range from alien-type noises to snares laden with white noise - ideal for a spot of Kraftwerk perhaps. Others are much more 'acoustic' and drum-like; some 'kick'-type sounds have masses of bottom end - with one particular sound reminiscent of Edell's 'Rumour Has It'. Preset program 5 shows off some great tom sounds where, after adding a real-time smattering of 'noise', the toms change to a sound reminiscent of the London Tube. **R**

VERDICT: Enjoyable and satisfyingly creative to play and will prove useful for numerous drum-like applications. It is small enough to be able to integrate into any acoustic/electronic kit or could be useful for percussionists.

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