

CLAVIA NORD DRUM 2 AND PAD

From £199 Nord's updated drum synth and accompanying Nord Pad are put under the microscope

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Back in 2012, Swedish keyboard giant Clavia produced their first electronic drum since selling off the ddrum brand. The Nord Drum is a 4-channel drum synthesizer module which generates its 'virtual analogue' sounds via electronic synthesis rather than the more common sample-based methods.

Build

The Nord Drum 2 looks very similar to the original model, retaining the familiar red and black livery, plethora of push-button controls and the infinite rotating parameter dial. It is slightly larger and the rear panel is now loaded with sockets. The 'virtual analogue drum synthesizer' subtitle has been changed to 'modelling percussion synthesizer' – a strong hint of its second generation potential. Nord has kept to the basic fundamental building blocks of sound with Click, Tone and Noise, however there are

with network connection, but is used exclusively for the new, dedicated Nord Pad which we also have here for review.

Like the Nord Drum 2, the Pad has a red steel casing but the black comes courtesy of the six rubber pads which are glued into position over each of the six transducers. To the rear of this compact laptop-sized box, we find the Ethernet socket – however the only device it will connect to (at present), is the Nord Drum 2. The six pads take full advantage of the six individual synth channels on the module and there's no need for a power supply – simply plug 'n' play.

Hands On

Though the Nord Drum 2 can accept trigger inputs from a variety of pad sources via its six 1/4" jacks, for the review I am using the Nord Pad and connecting it to the module with the supplied CAT 5 cable. The four inputs

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many new waveforms and filters (including high pass), and a range of comprehensive mix facilities. A free downloadable sequencer app for the iPad turns the Nord Drum 2 into an extremely powerful package.

There are many enhancements on the new drum synth including three methods of synthesis, stereo output (lacking on the Nord Drum), and several new tone parameters. One significant tone parameter is 'Spectra' which allows independent tuning or stretching of certain components within a waveform. The manual suggests one example being the tuning of the 'head' which alters the pitch without it affecting the fundamental sound, like that of a real drum.

We are now treated to six inputs on six separate real-time synth channels and Nord has also included the much-needed 'Phones' and an intriguing Ethernet socket. This standard Ethernet socket is nothing to do

on the original Nord Drum didn't quite feel enough, now with six channels we can configure the pad with a full kit of kick, hi-hat, snare and toms or some tuned percussion such as a marimba or xylophone. Six channels give you less than an octave to play with but it's more powerful.

Pulling up the sounds from any of the eight sound banks (four user, four factory set), instantly loads tuned percussion and fantasy noises/sounds into the Nord Drum 2. Here we can begin to play around and have some fun, with the pad configured to play six timpani of different pitches. The kit sounds and tuned percussion are highly convincing – you are actually fooled into thinking somewhere in the background there is a sample of the real thing!

The repeat function which can be set to bpm, provides a beat or rhythmic pattern while playing around with other sounds.



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We say: "...a must-have product which could make me run out of adjectives describing it."

NORD PAD

Six rubber pads are glued into position over each of the six transducers

Some low-end noises or drum sounds chuntering away while I blitz around the pad is both musically satisfying and great fun.

You are not just limited to the original sound triggered for the 'repeat'; the sound may be altered and played around with in real-time.

Adding certain filter effects and a variety of tones (all in real time), can be used during a performance with a sequence of repeats, or when playing the pad with one hand and altering the parameter with the free hand or using a sequencer. Think of early Porcupine Tree tracks, the noises, buzzes and drum sounds of Kraftwerk, Human League or even some Floyd and you won't be too far out! **R**



NORD DRUM 2

Enhancements to the Nord Pad 2 include three methods of synthesis, stereo output and several new tone parameters

Essential spec

nord

PRICE

Nord Drum 2 Modelling Percussion Synthesizer, £399; Nord Pad, £199

TRIGGER INPUTS

Six - either via the 1/4" jack sockets or Ethernet socket (Nord Pad)

CONTROLS

15 function buttons, step encoder dial, rotary volume

PROGRAMS

400 - 8 banks of 50 programs

SOUND BANKS

4 preset - 4 user

EFFECTS

Crush, Overdrive, EQ (individual channels), Repeat

SYNTHESIS

Resonance Modelling, Subtractive Synthesis, FM Synthesis

CONNECTIONS

Mini Jack for Phones, 1/4" jacks for: Left out; right out; 6 trigger inputs (Ch1 to Ch6); Midi In; Midi Out (5-pin DIN); ethernet-style socket for Nord Pad; Socket for 12 Volt DC power supply

DISPLAY

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

DIMENSIONS

222mm x 130mm x 35mm

CONTACT

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NORD PAD

With six channels, we can configure the pad with a full kit of kick, hi-hat, snare, toms and tuned percussion

VERDICT: The upgraded features of the new drum synth means it is now a serious musical instrument. Listed simply as an 'accessory', the compact Nord Pad is a worthy piece of equipment. Though connection is limited to the Nord Drum 2 alone, via MIDI it can be used to trigger other devices. Add a sequencer to the set-up (such as the Nord Beat 2), this becomes a powerful sound and rhythmic creation tool.

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