

Korg Wavedrum Mini | £299

Korg follow up the success of last year's refreshed WaveDrum with a smaller, more portable version. *Greg Scarth* catches a Wave

ON THE DVD

WHAT IS IT?
Portable alternative to the Wavedrum WD-X

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HIGHLIGHTS
1 Touch-sensitive drum pad and clip sensor
2 Built-in speaker and battery power option
3 100 sound and 100 rhythm presets, 10 effects

Korg's Wavedrum was always an unlikely product. Back in 1994, the original unit had plenty going for it but was a commercial failure thanks to its prohibitively high price. To Korg's credit, the new Wavedrum WD-X, released last year, brought things up to date and lowered the price to an affordable level.

We loved it, so we weren't surprised to see Korg follow up its success with the introduction of the new Wavedrum Mini, a slightly different take on a similar formula.

Mini me

The Wavedrum Mini is smaller, lighter and cheaper than the WD-X, clearly pitching it at a different user – perhaps a singer-songwriter looking for

accompaniment in a live setting rather than a percussion specialist or studio musician. The inclusion of a built-in speaker and battery power option is pleasing to see, making the Mini significantly more portable and immediate than its big brother.

The front panel of the plastic case is dominated by a single large rubber pad, with the remainder housing the speaker, two-digit LCD screen, eight rubber push-buttons and a volume pot. In addition to the (six AA) battery option, power can be drawn from a supplied DC adapter. The underside of the unit also reveals recessed sockets for the clip sensor, headphone output and unbalanced mono quarter-inch line out.

The whole Wavedrum concept relies heavily on the hands-on appeal of the drum surface, so attention inevitably focuses first on the pad itself. It's immediately obvious that the Mini's pad is very different to the WD-X's skin. Firm to the touch and non-adjustable, the playing surface is closer to a cheap electronic practice pad than the WD-X's outstanding tactile skin.

Perhaps more intriguing is the inclusion of a clip sensor, which can be mounted onto practically any surface in order to provide a second trigger input. Hit the surface and the clip will sense the vibration, triggering the built-in sounds accordingly.

Performance

The Mini allows two 'sounds' to be loaded simultaneously – one to the pad and one to the clip. The terminology is slightly misleading since each sound can actually include a variety of drum sounds or melodic samples, with the output sound depending on the velocity and timbre of the hit which triggers it. The Mini's sounds all come from preset PCM samples rather than the WD-X's various synthesis models, meaning that the larger unit's editing features are no longer applicable. In fact, most of the Mini's sounds can't be edited at all.

Some melodic sounds can be controlled by assigning scales to control note pitches, but most of the drum sounds are essentially fixed presets. Ten built-in effects – combinations of reverb, multi-tap



