

ROLAND TD-30KV

£5,779 Roland's new flagship V-Drum kit comes with all the power of the SuperNATURAL

WORDS: DAVE HOLMES

The TD-30KV is the latest addition to the formidable V-Drum family, and has taken centre-stage from the former flagship TD-20KX. The module of the TD-20KX was based on the excellent TD-20, which was subsequently updated (around three years ago), and marketed as the TD-20X - this now featured a new colour scheme and included a factory-fitted TDW-20 expansion board. This was a welcome enhancement which gave an extended lease of life to the TD-20, offering many more sounds, improved V-editing facilities, additional ambient effects etc. However, the module lacked USB connectivity and was (even with the upgrade), beginning to be left behind in the technology stakes.

Enter the new TD-30. This is a 'next generation' drum module, the first of its kind (with other Roland kits following closely behind) to feature Roland's amazing digital signal processing technology or 'SuperNATURAL Behaviour Modelling'. This sound engine (which replaces Roland's

individual outputting though PA), mix-in input for iPod or any other music source, USB socket to connect to a computer (for MIDI, for example), USB memory socket designed to accept a standard memory stick which may be used for back-up purposes or to store playalong MP3s or .WAV files.

First aired with the TD-20KX, the robust and rock solid KD-140 kick pad weighs around the same (or heavier), as a conventional bass drum. The pad features a black-chrome wrap, chunky Sonor-esque spurs and light-catching black plastic front 'head'. Also having made its first appearance with the TD-20KX, the superb MDS-25 rack again features with the TD-30KV. This has industry standard-diameter chromed tubing, boasts over-engineered clamps and features a cable management system which successfully and discreetly hides all but the ends of each of the 16 cables.

Each of the other pads feature upgraded rim triggers, taking full advantage of the TD-30's dynamic potential. Like the kick, they are finished in a black-chrome wrap and

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COSM), was originally developed for the V-Piano and is now filtering down through the Roland ranges of pianos, keyboards and now V-Drums.

The SuperNATURAL drum sounds are created from high-quality multi-samples of real drum instruments and are said to be completely transparent to the player. Each SuperNATURAL sound is translated by the Behaviour Modelling engine which acts as the go-between interpreter, remodelling or 'virtually' reconstructing the sound from the SuperNATURAL sound engine. Each drum sound created responds dynamically, seamlessly switching the individual samples, depending on how hard the pads are struck and at which position, allowing a completely natural playing experience.

Build

The rear panel of the hefty metallic grey TD-30 is jam-packed with an array of sockets including trigger inputs (occupying the whole row of the lower jack sockets), a set of routable direct-outs (useful for recording or

feature mesh heads and Pearl-type free-floater styled lugs embedded into the base of each drum pad. The newly designed cymbal pads are finished in a silvery-grey on the surface which feels strangely sticky - like when a child hands over a gummy cup from eating sweets. The newly designed VH-13 hi-hat has a new motion detector sensor (which is held in the lower cymbal) and sits on the centre rod of any standard hi-hat.

Hands On

After a rapid set-up, the first kit to appear on the large graphic display is the 'Studio' - a dry sounding set with little effects (which can be controlled in real-time on the fader), to cloud the drum sound. After a few light strikes around each of the mesh pads, the kit does sound good and quite similar to the TD-20. Then, concentrating on the snare, I try a mixture of subtle delicate strokes, flams and the usual playing techniques which eventually culminate into a full-on buzz roll, at which point (in a mixture of surprise at what I was hearing and the pleasure from the realistic



CYMBAL PADS

Pads have sticky, silvery-grey finish

KICK PAD

Meaty and robust KD-140 pad weighs as much as a conventional bass drum

Essential spec

Roland

PRICE

TD-30KV, £5,779

PADS

1 x Kick, KD-140BC; PD-128S-BC, snare; 2 x PD-108-BC, 'small' toms; 2 x PD-128-BC, 'large' toms; 2 x CY-14C-MG, crashes; 1 x CY-15R-MG ride; 1 x VH-13-MG V-Hi-Hat

DRUM RACK

MDS-25 - chrome plated, cable management system, resin ball type mounts for toms and cymbals

DRUM SOUNDS

1,100

SOUND GENERATOR

SuperNATURAL with Behaviour Modeling

BACKING INSTRUMENTS

262

DRUM KITS

From the 'factory' - 80 Pre-set, 20 User

DRUM KIT CHAINS

16 chains (32 steps per chain)

EFFECTS

Pad Compressor, Pad Equalizer, Ambience; Reverb, Mic Simulator, 25 Room Types, 21 types Multi-effects, Master compressor, Master Equaliser, Chorus and Reverb for backing parts

DISPLAYS

LCD Graphic display 80 x 256 dots, 3 character/7 segment LED, LED Trigger level indicator

CONNECTIONS

1/4" Jacks for Master Out R and L/Mono, Direct Out 1 - 8, Mix In (Stereo), Foot Switch (TRS type jack), Trigger Inputs; (1-15) Kick, Snare, Tom1, Tom2, Tom3, Tom4, Hi-Hat, HH Ctrl, Crash1, Crash2, Ride, Edge, Aux1, Aux2, Aux3, Aux4; MIDI In, MIDI Out (5-pin DIN), USB Type A (Computer), USB Type B Memory, AC In, Digital Out (S/P DIF) 44.1 kHz/24-bit

CONTACT

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HI-HAT

Newly designed VH-13 hi-hat has a motion detecting sensor

RACK

MDS-25 rack features a cable management system which hides the 16 cables

They say...

Jules Tabberer-Stewart is Product Manager for Drums & Percussion at Roland UK.



How long has Roland been developing the TD-30?

"The TD-30 has been three years in the making. The new V-Drums range is built around Roland's SuperNATURAL technology, which was also introduced around three years ago. Drumming is all about feel: how the drums respond and feed back to the player. Roland's Behaviour Modelling technology dramatically improves the way the V-Drums behave and respond, which affects the way they sound and this ultimately influences the player's reaction. SuperNATURAL has added a new dimension to the V-Drums experience."

How has Roland improved the triggering response from the pads?

"The sensors in the newly-designed V-Pads and V-Cymbals are now more accurate. Roland has always produced great sounding drums with extensive multi-layering but the new pads, when combined with the SuperNatural Behaviour Modelling, provide a faster response and a very smooth dynamic curve. This makes cymbal washes, dynamics and even ghost notes incredibly detailed and accurate."



MODULE

TD-30 has 'SuperNATURAL Behaviour Modelling' digital signal processing technology



performance) the snare sound and dynamics were so impressive this caused me to laugh out loud. The sound is tight and realistic - it really is that good. With light taps close to the rim it is possible to detect a slightly higher pitch with a subtle overtone that would normally appear at the edge of a snare then, with a slow double-stroke roll moving towards the drum centre and away back to the rim again, the drum sound changes effortlessly and seamlessly.

The dynamic range of the toms is equally impressive - for example, by hitting 'tom 3' (equivalent of a 14" acoustic on the 'Studio' kit)

accidentally brushed-up against the hi-hat, causing the two pads to touch momentarily, this actually made me look down in disbelief as they sounded just like a real pair of hi-hats. Playing them with slight foot pressure of the hi-hat pedal and striking lightly, with the slightest pad contact, here the sounds change without any detectable jumps. When the cymbals are fully closed and applying increased foot pressure, the tone alters as this is increased - behaving just like their acoustic counterpart. While it is possible to choke each of the cymbals, it's the cymbal swells which are extraordinary and it doesn't matter if you

Also try...



1 YAMAHA DTX950K

We say: "Yamaha have improved the top end of their DTX range further."



2 DRUM-TEC DIABLO ROCK KIT

We say: "An excellent e-kit alternative."

For this exercise I copied some MP3s from the playalong CD supplied. One of the tracks is an 'after-dinner' type jazz track which warrants the TD-30's 'Brushes' kit - where every subtlety and nuance from each brush stroke is clearly heard through the headphones.

V-Drum technology allows a variety of kit components to be completely altered or simply tweaked, with a choice of shell types, drum and cymbal sizes, dampening, tension etc. Creating a user kit from scratch is surprisingly easy through a menu system which is intuitive and drummer friendly - I started by copying over one of the basic kits but wanted to create a big-sounding set of drums that were deep and with a large bass drum. For this I chose a 24"x18" maple bass drum (a friend had just recently taken delivery of his new 24" model, for which he had to wait months), I wanted one with the TD-30 - this took seconds! **R**

WITH A HIGH-END ACOUSTIC KIT YOU ONLY GET ONE - WITH THIS SET-UP YOU GET HUNDREDS OF KITS AND THE CYMBALS THROWN-IN TOO!

softly, the tone remains the same but when striking harder raises slightly in pitch, brightness and then lowers again, just as if the head was, for a millisecond, a little more taut at that increased stick velocity. The 'larger' tom has less of this upwards tensioning effect but has a slight increase of tone and then you can actually detect two heads resonating as the sound slowly fades. Rim-shots are also possible on each of the tom pads and like any of them, can be set to trigger all sorts of additional sounds and effects.

When I was about to sit down at the kit, I

use ordinary sticks instead of mallets to obtain the sound. No matter what position you strike each cymbal, the sound adjusts accordingly to that position. This is more pronounced and noticeable on the ride (with its extra sensor zone), which has a variation of sound from the edge, bow and bell.

The TD-30's onboard 'Song Player' will play back either the TD-30's pre-set patterns, pre-set songs or any song stored on a USB memory stick. The 'Song Player' has four basic user controls of USB/PTN, STOP (which also halts any sound from the TD-30), and Tempo.

VERDICT: The dynamic response from this set is truly breathtaking and the sounds convincing and inspiring. Splashing-out over five grand for such a set-up is a massive outlay but it is comparable to the cost of a high-end acoustic kit, for which you only get one. With this set-up you get hundreds of kits and the cymbals thrown-in too!

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