ALESIS
PERFORMANCE PAD PRO

£230 *Alesis's latest piece of gadgetry is a pad that's also a drum machine*

WORDS: **DAVE HOLMES**

PLAYING SURFACE

The black, stick resilient rubber surface is segmented into eight individual striking areas

SOUNDS

The Performance Pad Pro boasts over 500 multi-sampled drum, bass and percussive sounds

It's been nearly four years since Alesis unveiled the original Performance Pad – a cost-effective drum pad based around the Alesis HR-16 drum machine. Now, with the addition of a 'Pro' tag, it's the turn of the Alesis SR-18 drum machine to be squeezed into a chic black rectangular box and given some stick-playable pads. The new Performance Pad Pro boasts over 500 multi-sampled drum, bass and percussive sounds and shares many of the functions and features of the HR-16, including its excellent sequencing engine.

Build

Filling most of the upper surface of the pad is a slice of black, stick-resilient rubber, segmented into eight individual striking areas. Striking it with a stick 'triggers' any of the onboard voices (or additional sounds via MIDI out). Located above the expanse of rubber are the obligatory control buttons, each conveniently placed to access the various features with comparative ease. The LCD display, being one of the major enhancements over its predecessor, is now backlit and contrast-adjustable too.

Hands On

Playing around with the various onboard sounds and features is fun while being quite productive. A 'song' is basically a string of patterns put together in some sort of order, forming the song. While in 'PTN PLAY' mode, one hit on any of the pads starts a sequence. Hit it again and this tells the machine to go to the next sequence in a song.

There are many facilities which are of immediate interest to a drummer, including being able to mute individual sound layers within a pattern or song. Muting everything else and just keeping the bass line and percussion is great for jamming/practice and, just in case you forget which part is muted, the LCD flashes each muted part. Another useful feature is the 'Tap Tempo' which displays the actual tempo the user is tapping on the button – could solve a few arguments with other band members!

Alesis have addressed some of the issues of the Performance Pad Pro's predecessor. The actual drum machine is a powerful piece of kit in itself and, as the price includes the pad for just a little more than the cost of the original SR-18, this is a big bonus. **R**

VERDICT For those who have waited for a drum pad (with drum machine included), fully loaded with quality sampled sounds at an affordable two-for-one price, look no further.

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