

THE PROS & CONS



Integrated pads are long overdue

Small, compact gigable size and tough chassis. Also includes a hardware mounting bracket

Global reverb and delay effects with control for individual channels



Only one dedicated trigger input compared to six on the standard version

3.5mm headphone jack isn't the most flexible option – a 1/4-inch jack would have been preferable



The 3P offers the perfect tonic to the norm. That's not to say you couldn't whip up an 808 kick on it

It can often be said that if you lust after something for a long time, when you finally get the chance to meet the object of your affection you'll be sorely let down. This was my worry when the Nord Drum 3P came into the office for review. I hadn't had much time with its previous incarnations, but the brief time I did have, I instantly loved their sound. So when the third iteration of Clavia's beatbox made its debut at Musikmesse 2016, I knew I had to get my hands on one for a closer

look. The big surprise at the launch was the introduction of the 3P. No guesses as to what the P stands for, as they'd only gone and welded the pads to the module! The Nord Drum feels like it is no longer a sound module first with pads available as an optional extra; it now looks to be a fully-fledged instrument in its own right.

My initial thoughts straight out of the box were that of surprise – the unit is much smaller than the box would have you believe. The 3P's solid metal chassis comes in at just

under 30cm in both width and depth and, despite the premium construction materials deployed, it only weighs a smidgen over 4lbs. The unit is wafer thin and those of you familiar with the previous Nord Drums will recognise the pad section of the 3P looks suspiciously similar to the Nord Pad. At this point, if we were to compare it to the likes of Roland's SPD-SX and the Alesis Samplepad Pro, you could probably fit two 3Ps inside each of its competitors.

For the uninitiated, the integrated multipad, much like the standalone unit, is super responsive and, by adjusting the pads sensitivity, there will be something to suit players of all types. The density and feel of the

pads is reminiscent to that of your average rubber-mounted-on-wood practice pad. Nord state that it's possible to play using just your hands and, even with the sensitivity set to maximum and Pad Mode set to hd (hand), you'll need to hit the pads quite hard. Greater sensitivity here would've been preferable. That said, should you need to engage in silent operation of your 3P, then you could also make use of the pad function in the Nord Beat app (more on that in *Nord Beat 2 App* on the next page).

Get yourself connected

What is most notably missing from the 3P's connectivity is the full complement of trigger inputs. Only a

THE ALTERNATIVES



Roland Octapad SPD-30 Version 2

£629

Perhaps the most direct competitor to the 3P. The Octapad has two more pads and four trigger inputs, firmly aligning itself as a live tool, but it is more expensive.

www.roland.com



Roland Aira TR-8

£399

Okay, so you need an iPad to sequence the 3P, but you won't be getting a pair of sticks anywhere near a TR-8. It's much cheaper, but then everyone has got one.

www.roland.com



Nord Drum 3 (standard module)

£479

Should you want to upgrade from a previous version and already own a Nord Pad, then this is the fiscally sensible option. Although you'll still be carting two units around.

www.nordkeyboards.com

Kick trigger input is included. Perhaps this is due to retaining the relevance of the standard module version, which does feature trigger ports for all six channels (however, it is worth noting that a Nord Drum 3 module is not yet available on the Nord website, although available to pre-order in stores it seems). Despite being called the Kick input, you're not limited to just a pedal trigger firing off kicks as other sounds can also be triggered from any type of pad or clock device. A nice touch from Nord is that once a trigger is connected to the Kick input, it also benefits from dynamics adjustments made using the Pad Sensitivity and Velocity controls.

3P's signal flow is largely unchanged from the previous version, which is a good thing – 'if it ain't broke...' and all that. Three main areas make up the synthesis engine: Noise, Tone and Click. The signal flow also features distortion, EQ, ring mod, and two new effects in reverb and delay.

Within the Tone section you have controls for selecting and adjustment of the wave, which features a whole bunch of subtractive synthesis wave types, FM, cymbal and resonance waves. The Noise section is essentially a white noise generator, followed by filter and resonance controls. Lastly, the Click section is where you'll find your transients; a variety of filtered noise waveforms and short pulses, when combined with Tone and Noise sections, really gives you a huge array of sonic possibilities. The real plus side is the



INTEGRATED MULTIPAD Super solid and satisfying feel with every strike. Each individual pad's sweet-spot is large enough to cope with any enthusiastic stick-wielding muso.

REVERB AND DELAY New to version three of the Nord Drum is the addition of global reverb and delay effects. The amount of each effect can also be dialled into individual channels.

DRUM SELECT Another new addition to this latest iteration is the Drum Select library, which gives you access to a whole list of preset drums.

workflow here is painless. You may only find yourself referring to the manual just to confirm certain abbreviations on the LED display, but other than that, adjusting and creating new sounds is quick and easy. So easy, in fact, holding down the INIT Sound and Shift buttons will restore the sound back to a default state, so you can start afresh.

The 'in sound'

Perhaps the 3P's biggest strength lies in the sound – it oozes so much

character. Not to say that other drum machines don't of course. We're all too familiar with the 808/909 revival courtesy of the Aira TR-8 and the newly announced Boutique TR-09. And perhaps the 3P offers the perfect tonic to the norm. That's not to say you couldn't whip up an 808 kick on the Nord, should the need arise. It also beats the competition in its flexibility; its rugged compact chassis makes it more than suitable for integration with any live set-up and it's also perfectly at home in the studio with its relatively deep percussive sound design, onboard effects and easy workflow. Crafting your own sounds from scratch beats samples and presets any day. **FM**

Nord Beat 2 App

Nord's iPad-only sequencer is free and opens up the 3P to be more than just a performance tool. Nord Beat 2 features a six-channel, 16-step sequencer and while it's designed for the Nord Drum it also can be used to control any external MIDI source, or other apps using the virtual MIDI connection. Three different and scalable velocities are available per step and are intuitive: swipe up for a lower velocity and swipe down for a greater velocity. Each of the three velocity options can be tweaked via the slider controls. The 'song mode' allows you to chain up to eight sequences and each one can be repeated up to a maximum of eight times.

FM VERDICT

9.1

The integrated pads combined with sequencing in the Nord Beat app make this the ideal do-it-all drum tool.