

Roger Linn Design AdrenaLinn III | £220

Amp sims abound, there's a multitude of guitar multi-FX and no dearth of drum sequencers. But all in one stomp-box? **Karl Foster** licks Linn's latest



ON THE DVD

WHAT IS IT?

MIDI-controllable amp sims and stereo multi-effects with beat-synced modulation and filtering, and programmable drum machine, aimed at the adventurous axe-meister

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Extensive range of highly usable amp simulations
- 2 Both trad and weird, editable multi-FX, many with tempo-sync
- 3 Great-sounding, programmable beat-box

Back in 2004, *FM* bestowed a Platinum Award on Roger Linn's AdrenaLinn II. Lauded for its excellent sound, instant-gratification potential and value for money, the predecessor to the AdrenaLinn III presented a number of niggles, some of which have not been addressed in this latest incarnation, but let's save carping for later. First, it's history time. Mr Linn is most famously associated with the LinnDrum. Launched in 1982, this drum machine can be heard on numerous pop records of the decade. It's hardly surprising, then, that Roger has included drum-machine capability in his guitar-effect/amp-sim AdrenaLinn. But before we get too excited about the percussion

section, it's more of a beat-box than a percussion sequencer. While there are 200 slots, the rhythms are two-bar patterns that are tricky to manipulate from the front panel, so no fancy fills and exotic variations are on tap. That said, the drum sequences sound juicy and sure beat using a metronome when practising licks. Styles range from straight-ahead rock to swinging and syncopated patterns, encouraging you to try different genres as you play along.

Amped up

Of course, the important thing is the guitar processing. Amp-wise, simulations range from prehistoric Fenders, Vox and Marshall models, though crunchier vintage Marshalls and

Boogies, right up to the JCM2000 monster, Van Halen's signature Peavey 5150 MkII, Boogie Dual Rectifier, Hiwatt and even the boutique Soldano, with offerings from ENGL, Matchless and more. Bassists, too, can jack into Ampeg SVT, Fender Bassman and Gallien-Krueger rigs. While you've no option to mix and match virtual cabs, or even mess with mic placement, the sims are sweet enough as they are. Just plug straight into an audio interface or mixing desk and enjoy truly realistic-sounding backline. Even the high-gain models perform controllably, probably thanks to an unobtrusive noise gate that's new to the Linn III.

The effects section is where it's at, however. Guitarists will sniff at multi-FX that don't include such staples as delay, reverb, chorus, flange and such, but there are no sniffles here – more of a big, man-size, Kleenex-bound parp. Y'see, while the distortion sounds are good and analogue in tone, helped in large part by a responsive compressor for Tufnel-esque, day-long sustain, the modulation effects are something else. How many studio hours have been wasted trying to get a tremolo effect to match the tempo of a song? The Linn III's trem locks to the beat-box's tempo, so it can warble or ping-pong in stereo, in perfect sync. The same goes for chorus, flanger, pan and filter-sweep rates. There's even the means to have the chorus follow the envelope of the



