

GEAR REVIEW

ALESIS COMMAND KIT

£599.99 *Alesis allows you freedom to take control over your e-drumming and budget with this wallet-friendly electronic kit*

WORDS: DAVE HOLMES

The Alesis catalogue of electronics encompasses synth modules, studio monitors, audio interfaces, signal processors, mixers, e-drums, drum machines and sample pads. Whether a home studio enthusiast, working musician or a budding basher, the ever-growing and rapidly expanding Alesis moniker has become synonymous with affordability.

Build

Given its first public airing at the NAMM show earlier this year, the review kit here is a full-featured five-piece electronic kit. It is one of the few sub-£600 kits which has the ability to load user samples and songs. With this apparent advantage, it would appear to be a great example of Alesis' cost-effective ethos.

At just a cursory glance, pad configuration

toms and cymbals are made from stick resilient rubber. There are three 10" pads for the cymbals (Ride, Crash and Hi-hat), two 9" versions for Tom1 and Tom2 and a slightly larger 11" pad for Tom3.

The tom and cymbal pads do look similar to those on Alesis' starter set-ups, but (with the exception of the hi-hat), they are each dual-zone. This will permit acoustic-like playing techniques of chokes, rim shots etc. Included with the kit is the ever essential wiring snake, manuals, hi-hat controller pedal, power supply, drum key, 7A sticks and, of course, the Command drum module itself.

Hands On

The pictorial guide takes you gently by the collar, guiding you through the simple rack assembly and basic pad set up. A

THE SNARE MESH HEAD FEELS GREAT UNDER THE STICK TIPS AND THE MODULE RESPONDS IMPRESSIVELY

appears similar to many budget type kits and especially the Nitro (reviewed in *Rhythm* a few months ago), also, the module looks to be almost identical to those used on two of the other mid-priced Alesis Crimson and Forge kits. Perhaps this is a mix and match approach from Alesis taking some of best elements from the other e-kits it has to offer.

Appearances can be deceptive, but the module has the design and feel of a piece of highly desirable hi-fi equipment which belies its price tag. As well as the ability to play user samples and play user created songs (via memory stick or being directly plugged into a PC), features include the ability to play user .wav files to play along with as well as the wealth of on-board songs.

Out of the five playable drum pads, this set-up features mesh heads on both the snare and pad of the kick tower. To be quite honest, a mesh head on the kick is perhaps a little overkill as I have found the feel of a mesh pad has little benefit. However, the pads for the

combination of 'L' type bracket mounts for the pads, especially designed rack mount for the module and the D-type connector makes set-up a breeze. Boom-style cymbal poles slot into the front uprights and the ride and crash cymbal pads are attached. The single-arm pole of the hi-hat features a neat tilt to help optimise playing preferences. Which reminds me... the kit can be set up either as a left or right-handed player, simply by swapping over the position of the hi-hat, snare and 'large' tom pads. Then there is a quick adjustment of a parameter on the module and, voila, we have a lefty e-kit.

Overall the rack (with its chunky plastic bracketing and standard diameter poles), looks and feels surprisingly sturdy and the whole kit looks impressive. With a quick play around the kit, making a few adjustments on the way, we find the controls are intuitively and conveniently placed. Any little tweaks or changes required during kit/pad editing, such as pan, pad voice or pitch, for example, are



1 ALESIS DM10 PRO

We say: "Hits the mark where it counts, making it worthy of serious consideration."



2 ROLAND TD-4KX

We say: "Combined interaction of sensitive pads and tone that makes this a winner."

rapid, thanks to the plain and simple layout and our good old friend the value/dial wheel.

Accessing the menu to load songs (either .WAV or MP3), from your own memory stick or user samples to play on any pad (in .WAV format) is easy. Simply by pressing 'Song' on the Command module, you'll have instant access to preset songs or those from your own memory stick. Here the module comes into its own and it still staggers me to think of



CYMBALS

All cymbal pads (apart from the hats) are dual zone

RACK

Putting the kit's rack together is an absolute doddle

Essential spec

ALESIS

PRICES

£599.99

SOUNDS

628

KITS

70 (50 preset + 20 User)

EFFECTS

Reverb 0-16

VOICE EDITING

Volume, Pan, Velocity Curve, Decay, Pitch, Reverb

CONNECTIONS

Back panel: USB Midi Port, Midi Out (5-pin), Midi In (5-pin), Inputs for Tom4, Crash 2 (6.35mm Jacks), Main Out L and R (6.35mm Jacks), Phones Output (3.5mm Jack), Aux Input (3.5mm Jack); side panel (right hand): USB socket (memory stick for saving kit data and user voice samples), AC adaptor socket

PADS

10" mesh snare (with sensitivity control), 1 x Kick tower with 8" mesh head, 2 x 9" tom pads, 1 x 11" tom pad

CYMBAL PADS

3 x 10" cymbals - two dual zone

SUPPLIED CABLE

Snake terminated with 1/4" stereo jacks (labelled with individual designation) and a single D-type connector

HARDWARE

1 1/2" diameter chrome steel tubing (4 x vertical poles/3 x horizontal), 2 x boom cymbal arms, 1 x cymbal pad bracket (hi-hat) and associated clamps; hi-hat control pedal, kick pad assembly

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the capabilities of this module - eg: if you own an acoustic kit, you could play the sound of your own kit on this electronic set - nice!

The snare mesh head feels great under the stick tips and the Command module responds impressively to each strike of varying intensity, taking each stroke in its stride. Not quite there in terms of realism, with some occasional robotic machine gun-type snare sounds but, bearing in mind that sub-£600

price tag, it's impressive nevertheless.

The rotary sensitivity pot at the side of the snare pad appears to have little noticeable effect for my playing style, others may find this works better for them. Beater response on the kick pad is a little too charged on the meshed head for my liking and I think it could spoil me for the next time I play on my acoustic set! However, if you fancy some fast blast beats, this kick is right up your street. **R**

VERDICT: The Command is yet another well-priced kit from Alesis which offers an impressive feature list.

BUILD QUALITY



PLAYABILITY



VALUE FOR MONEY



RHYTHM RATING

