

Need help with your timing and co-ordination? Korg's new Beatlab could be just the toy you need!



ESSENTIALS



PRICES

Korg Beatlab Digital Metronome £69

CONTACT

Korg UK
9 Newmarket Court
Kingston
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK10 0AU
Telephone
01908 857150
Website
www.korg.co.uk

Korg

Beatlab Digital Metronome

£69 | Can Korg's Beatlab improve timing and co-ordination? **Adam Jones** puts it into practice.

Good timing is essential for any drummer, particularly in today's click-friendly environment, and practising with a metronome is the only way to get it – putting the hours in is what brings results. The Beatlab is a new digital metronome with a plethora of features to help hone your timing.

Just beat it

The Beatlab is a compact module that measures 5½" in width, 4" in height and 1" in depth. It is powered by four AAA batteries, and can also be plugged into the mains with a 9V adaptor. A backlight illuminates the LCD display to the top left of the control panel for stage or pit work. For headphone use, the fitted ¼" high output socket sends out a strong signal, ensuring that the metronome is not drowned out by the kit. A built-in speaker keeps things audible in non-headphone scenarios. The sounds are sometimes a bit tinny, but then you wouldn't expect the sonic quality of a 'fully-fledged' instrument from a metronome.

The controls are clearly set out and easy to follow. A keypad is used for programming and specifying tempos. Alternatively, the 'tap' button to the right of the keypad allows the tempo to be dictated manually. A set of slider controls left of the keypad can be used to fade in accents, quarter, eighth, triplet and 16th notes for each beat. Used in conjunction

with a shift key, the sliders will also reproduce quintuplet, sextuplet, septuplet, octuplet and nontuplet notes (divisions of five, six, seven, eight or nine notes). The remaining controls on the left of the unit are assigned to programming and editing functions.

Time and motion

The Beatlab has three modes – program, chain and training. The program mode features 24 different patterns. The bulk of these preset programs are in even time, but there are examples of three, five and seven times, and all the rhythms can be edited into different feels. The tempo is adjustable too and the aforementioned note subdivisions can be blended in with the sliders. Once edited, saving the patterns is straightforward.

In chain mode, the Beatlab will play different combinations of the programs one after the other. A total of eight can be put together, with up to 16 bars of each individual rhythm. The entire chain can be set to a single tempo, or different tempos can be programmed for each component pattern, making it possible to practise a piece made up of several tempos and time signatures without having to reset the metronome midway.

The training function concerns itself with rudiments – all 39 of them to be precise. A pair of LEDs (red for left and green for right) provide a welcome visual guide for stickings, while alternative sounds also help to differentiate the two sides. For those of us whose knowledge of rudiments has always been hazy, this feature alone is utterly absorbing. **R**

RHYTHM VERDICT

The Beatlab is a very able metronome and has many features normally found on more expensive units. It contains enough patterns to keep you occupied pretty much indefinitely and scores highly for ease of use. Metronomes are playing aids rather than fully-fledged instruments so you wouldn't expect it to have the same sonic qualities as a drum machine. To this end, the sounds the Beatlab makes are on the tinny side – they could get a little wearing after prolonged use, although this is more likely to be an issue for any non-drummers within earshot rather than the user...



Neat, very useable metronome that is good value for money.



A few alternative/extra sounds would be welcome.

RATING

