

ROLAND TD-4KP PORTABLE

£649 The V-drums company presents an electronic kit that is so portable, you can sling it over your shoulder and head out for a gig or rehearsal...

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The last year has witnessed a huge leap forward in music technology, not least with Roland's stunning SuperNATURAL sound engine with Behavioural Modelling. While this achieved a near-acoustic playing experience on an electronic kit - no e-wares produced by Roland (or in fact any other manufacturer), were designed specifically for portability. On the acoustic front, however, with portable models such as Yamaha's Hipgig, Pearl's Rhythm Traveler, Taye's Go drums, Alchemy's Traps A400, we were spoilt for choice.

Build

For review I have the brand new Roland TD-4KP - a five-piece set-up, complete with four drum pads (similar to those on the HD-3),

pedal, sticks etc) can be slipped into the optional gig bag.

To partner this unique rack system Roland chose the V-Drum TD-4 module, as it is light and compact but capable with a wide range of quality sounds. It comes with 25 pre-programmed kits which may be user-tweaked (or entirely changed), with adjustable parameters such as tuning, dampening, ambience and voice. While the TD-4 doesn't have the latest SuperNATURAL processing, it does feature COSM sound modelling for a pragmatic performance.

Hands On

As the kit would normally be packaged within two boxes, a first-time set-up involves attaching the pads, module, cabling etc, to the rack. However, the pre-erected kit was kindly

short while, I have to admit, the positioning feels surprisingly natural.

The TD-4 interface is fairly basic, but, as a result, is also incredibly intuitive - so it doesn't take me long to become fully acquainted. The 25 kits comprise a mixture of excellent live and recording sets, electronic *EastEnders*-type sounds and a choice of percussion. There are no onboard songs to play along with but the module does provide a mix-in jack to input your favourite audio source and jam along.

It does however feature a coaching facility which is not only great for a beginner, but also useful for a player of any level to help with a pre-gig/rehearsal warm-up. Another notable feature is the quick-record function which (at the press of a button and the whack of a pad), starts recording a performance - great for analysing your playing. Once the machine is turned off, this data is erased, leaving you with the pre-recorded demo when next powering-up.

Blitzing around the whole set showed no noticeable latency and I actually thought the triggering response was really good, though (as I found with the HD-1/HD-3), warming to the feel of the pads takes some getting used to. With chokeable cymbals (including the hi-hat!) and dual-zone cymbals, creates additional elements of realism - the option to purchase a mesh snare pad would add extra functionality without necessarily adding much weight to the set-up. **R**

VERDICT: This kit offers full portability (and is therefore incredibly easy to transport), with little compromise - it is also easily stowable, which will appeal to those not wishing to fill up their valuable space with drums - the rack design could well set a new trend.

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

THE KIT'S UNIQUE RACK DESIGN ALLOWS IT TO FOLD DOWN TO HALF ITS PLAYABLE SIZE, SMALL ENOUGH TO STASH IN A CUPBOARD

three for the cymbals, hi-hat controller and a small pad ('borrowed' from a KD-7), for the kick - all fairly standard stuff, so far. So, what makes this set-up so different? Well, its unique rack design allows it to fold down to around half its playable size - small enough to stash in a cupboard/corner of the bedroom or, for a gig or rehearsals it could sit next to you on a bus or in between passengers on the back seat in a small car!

The rack comprises three round vertical tubes linked to the centre by two square-shaped tubes. The two opposing ends telescope into the lower rack portion, along with the cymbal arms, which also fold inwards/downwards, so the cymbals then become vertical, with the other pads and module following suit. Once it is 'folded', everything (including the hi-hat, bass drum

hand-delivered by Roland's Drum & Percussion Product Manager, Jules Taberner-Stewart. Having offered to help lift the kit out of his car, I had been given the job of carrying the kit within its soft case, while Jules carried two packaging boxes. Realising that he had actually given me the complete kit to carry (while he was carrying two empty boxes!), I was amazed how light the whole set-up was.

With each component attached - the whole kit emerges out of its case, extending the telescoping rack tubes and unfolding each piece a bit like a Transformer. When fully 'unfolded', the rack forms a rather apt 'V' shape where it stands stable and surprisingly sturdy. I must admit that I was thinking 'how weird, the snare is perched in the middle on a pole and the kick is way over to the right on another!' - having played the kit for only a



Also try...



1 GEAR4MUSIC WHD DD516- PRO

We say: "Simply wills you to play and urges you to have fun."



2 ROLAND HD-3 V-DRUMS LITE

We say: "The module interprets stick strikes with surprising accuracy."





CHOKEABLE CYMBALS

Chokeable cymbals (including hi-hat) and dual-zone cymbals create additional realism

TD-4 MODULE

TD-4 interface is fairly basic but is also incredibly intuitive

PORTABILITY

Once folded, the whole kit can be slipped into the supplied gig bag

KICK PAD

Kick-pad has been 'borrowed' from a KD-7

RACK N' ROLL

When fully unfolded the rack forms a V-shape that is stable and surprisingly sturdy

Essential spec

Roland

PRICE

TD-4KP, £705 (with CB-TDP soft case); £649 (without case)

TD-4 PAD CONFIGURATION

1 x kick; 4 x single-zoned rubberised drum pads (snare, 3 x toms); 3 x CY-5 dual-zoned cymbal pads (1 hi-hat, 2 x crash/rides)

INSTRUMENTS

125

EDITABLE DRUM PARAMETERS

Voice, muffling, tuning, pan, volume

SOUND GENERATOR

COSM

DRUM KITS

25 preset kits (all editable)

EFFECTS

Ambience (9 types) - Room, Rock club, Hall (small), Hall (large), Arena, Dance floor, Studio, Recording, Isolator

DISPLAY

Graphic backlit LCD

QUICK RECORD

Recording method: real-time; capacity: 9,000 notes (approx.); resolution: 96 ticks per quarter-note

COACH MODE

Time check, tempo check, quiet count, warm ups, auto up/down

CONTROLS

Rotary pots for volume, increment/decrement; push buttons for power, drum kit, stop, start, quick record, OK, SEL (up/down), metronome, up/down

CONNECTIONS

DB-25 connector for trigger inputs, out R and L/ mono 1/4" Jacks, MIX IN (stereo miniature phone type), phones 1/4" jack, MIDI Out (5-pin DIN), 9 Volt DC In

CONTACT

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