

ROLI Seaboard Rise 49 | £949

The Rise just got two extra octaves! *Dan 'JD73' Goldman* looks at ROLI's latest Seaboard model

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WHAT IS IT?

4-octave slimline MIDI controller featuring silicone multi-dimensional 'keywave' keyboard

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 The extra two octaves increase playability and practicality
- 2 Offers an innovative new approach to keyboard playing/sound triggering
- 3 Solidly built and more slimline compared to other 4-octave controllers

Last year I was very impressed by the Rise 25, ROLI's more affordable version of their flagship Seaboard Grand, and

I again commend any company that are brave enough to attempt the reinvention of the standard keyboard. The only real downside was its 2-octave keyboard but this is addressed with the Rise 49. I'm really digging the current crop of 49-note keyboards (Prophet-6/JD-XA etc) as they strike a nice balance between portability and playability and the Rise 49 scores highly here due to its low profile, portable, yet tough design (though it remains to be seen how the keywave sensors and surface will stand up the line).

Like the Rise 25, the left side houses connections for a sustain pedal, an external power adaptor and two USB connectors (DIN MIDI via a breakout cable would have been great too). The Rise 49 can be powered via USB, an external power adaptor or by the built-in rechargeable battery (charges over USB). One of my criticisms of the Rise 25 was it relied on being tethered to a computer but, now that ROLI have their own Bluetooth app 'Noise', you can go fully wireless with the Rise range and any iOS device (no support for Android currently). I love that you can now roll

up to a gig with any Rise model and an iPhone/iPad and have a fully self-contained wireless rig. ROLI also now include a bespoke soft carrying case with the Rise 49 (Rise 25 came with just a polystyrene box), although you'll still need a full flight case for touring.

Setting up the Rise 49 is a breeze – register at ROLI's website, create your user profile on the MY ROLI section, confirm your email and download the content for PC or Mac (or grab the free Noise app from the Apple App Store).

You'll then receive the software manual, the MPE (Multidimensional Polyphonic Expression) capable Equator sound engine software and ROLI's Dashboard App for setting up the Rise 49 from your computer's desktop.

Rise and shine

On the left of the Rise's front panel are a combined mode/power switch and white backlit performance controls. The switches/sliders are made from soft black silicone rubber (like the 'keywaves') and are smooth/grippy. The power switch changes colour to denote the operating mode (Expression, MIDI or Bluetooth) and there's an assignable XY touchpad for controlling multiple sound-shaping parameters in Equator or Noise (or it can control MIDI CCs for other connected DAW software/hardware MIDI instruments). Above this are three touch faders with backlit level strips which take on MIDI CC duties in MIDI mode and control three of the Rise's 'dimensions' in Expression mode – Glide, Slide and Press(ure). Above these is a switch for



