

ALESIS PERCPAD



£79.99 Alesis's new electronic pad proves good things come in small packages

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PADS

Pads are designed for sticks but are sensitive enough to be played with the hands

Essential spec

ALESIS

PRICE

Alesis PercPad, £79.99

SOUNDS

25

PADS

Four, velocity-sensitive

SENSITIVITY

10 levels

INDIVIDUAL PAD VOLUME

10 levels

EDITABLE MODES

Tune, Reverb, Pan, MIDI (note number), Sens, Assign, Level

EFFECTS

Reverb 10

PANNING

9 levels (4 left, centre, 4 right)

CONNECTIONS

¼" Headphones jack, ¼" Left (Mono), ¼" Midi Out, ¼" jack for 'Kick' (or other pad), socket for 9-Volt power supply

DISPLAYS

LCD and LED

MIDI

MIDI Out

CONTACT

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The Alesis PercPad is a four-zone electronic pad which comes complete with a modest selection of the 'most in-demand' drum and percussion sounds including block, clave, cowbell, timbale, clap, wind chimes etc. At its widest point, the PercPad measures just 38cm, so it's small enough to be able to integrate into a percussion rig or a kit set-up with ease. It may be attached via a mounting bracket (available for approx £20), placed in a snare stand or simply laid flat on a percussion table, for example. At just under £80, the PercPad vigorously upholds the Alesis ethos of providing affordable electronics for musicians.

Build

The casing housing, containing the electronics, pads etc, is constructed from an impact-resistant ABS and is finished in a subtle matt black. The pad striking areas are made up from four individual chunks of dense black rubber, inset within the ABS casing itself. While these velocity-sensitive pads are designed to be whalloped with sticks, they are also sensitive enough to

be played with the hands, or a combination of both - great news for percussionists and kit players alike.

Depending on which mode is selected (Tune, Pan, Reverb, etc), an LED illuminates to show the selected mode and which one of the four pads (or trigger) is currently being struck or selected for editing. To the centre of the top panel is a largish LCD which shows the number of the selected sound, displays a range of alpha-numerical parameters, including tuning, level of reverb, pan, volume, MIDI note number etc. The underside has a set of rubber feet at each corner, a neat cable grip for the power adaptor and a recess for the optional mounting bracket.

Hands On

Once powered up, the PercPad becomes immediately playable, defaulting to 'PAD1' and 'TUNE' - I think it would have been more practical to default to instrument assignment 'ASSIGN', as this would be the first thing to be altered during a performance. Still, just two clicks down of the mode 'SELECT' button, whack any pad you wish to alter and choose the sound

from the printed listing and begin playing. Easy peasy.

With each strike of the stick the pads manage to faithfully reproduce the sounds and the reverb adds elements of realism where necessary. The rebound is instant and certainly good enough for live performance or perhaps even a bit of practice if you feel inclined too. Most of the sounds produced are clear, crisp and, though I am not sure of the available polyphony, there seems no noticeable chopping-off of any sound, even when playing the longest sample of the wind chimes and a double-stroke frenzy. **R**

VERDICT Alesis may have discovered a market niche for themselves with the new PercPad - it is competitively priced, conveniently compact and as easy to use as rattling a maraca.

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★

PLAYABILITY

★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★★

RHYTHM RATING

★★★★★