

NEW GEAR

EXCLUSIVE

ESSENTIAL SPEC



PRICES:

Single pedal with case, £329

Double pedal with case, £699

DRIVE

Direct, solid aluminium link with zero tolerance slave drive

BEATER

Felt or wood with elasticore shock absorbing lining

FEATURES

Eight basic set-up options

Two-position heavy or light direct link and beater stroke adjustment

Duo-Deck convertible long or short footboard
High speed NiNJA axle bearings

Zero-latency slave pedal linkage
Full aluminium bass plates with Velcro
Click-lock spring tension

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PEARL ELIMINATOR DEMON DRIVE P-3002D BASS DRUM PEDAL

From £329 Will Pearl's devilishly handsome Demon transform your pedalling? Geoff Nicholls has the answer...

The Demon Drive is a major departure from Pearl's previous chain- or strap-drive Eliminator. Chains have ruled the roost since the 1980s, but the big news is the Demon has a direct, rigid-link drive. Yamaha and Gibraltar make cheaper, simpler direct drives around the £100 mark, but the pricey Demon is closer to the well-established Axis pedal from Axis Percussion.

Build

The hi-tech orange and brushed aluminium image recalls the Axis or the extraordinary Trick Pro 1-V, both of which have machined parts. The Demon is predominantly cast aluminium, but still looks strong and high quality. The footboard is aluminium but has a steel spine.

Where the Demon really scores is on versatility. It has three major new adjustment features. These allow you to move both the direct link and the beater stroke mechanisms closer to, or further from, the batter head - resulting in lighter or heavier feels - and also to change the footboard from traditional short (ie, with hinged heel plate) to long. Working through all the permutations, that adds up to eight basic set-up options, something that no previous pedal has managed. And that's on top of the fine tuning, which is standard with most pedals (ie, spring tension plus length and angle of the beater stroke).

Added to this there's the silent, precise action due to the NiNJA bearings Pearl has shelled out on for the beater assembly. NiNJA

bearings are top quality, supremely smooth Japanese skateboard bearings. They're micro-polished via a laser process, the same as used for satellite telescopes. There are also self-aligning spherical bearings in the direct linkage, alleviating the stress caused by drummers who foot the board at an angle or rock side-to-side. Clever, huh? Another nice touch is the way the spring tension is locked in place by a clip so it can't vibrate loose.

The main and slave pedals are connected by a gleaming, gyroscopic Z-link drive shaft - 'Z' standing for zero tolerance, ie, no wobble or lag. Because the action is unforgivingly direct, the felt or wood beaters have shock-absorbing orange 'elasticore' innards. Elasticore is the same material used in golf clubs to cushion the blow.

Structurally, the Demon's a single post, modular design, available as a single or double pedal, or a slave unit. If you buy a double, the left-side pedal can be adapted as a single pedal. So should you ever go the whole hog and get a second bass drum, you won't have to buy single pedals all over again. The modular design is completely flexible, so you can actually change a right-footed twin pedal to a left-footed twin, needing no extra parts.

Lastly, there's a compartmentalised carrying case in black fabric. Extras include NiNJA oil, Allen keys and special universal key. Because of the extensive use of aluminium the pedal and case are surprisingly lightweight.

Hands on

This isn't the sort of pedal you just grab and play. There's the little matter of eight basic

THE FOOTBOARD MIGHT

be aluminium, but a steel spine makes for a solid, reliable build



settings to investigate. Luckily, swapping between light or heavy positions on the direct link drive and the beater shaft holder is simple, requiring a normal drum key and taking a matter of seconds. It's amazing, though, just how big a difference these options make to the feel.

The only option that takes time is changing the 'Duo-Deck' footboard from short to long, since this involves eight screws. But then, you'll probably only do this once or twice ever. The long board gives a slightly more sensitive and speedy feel.

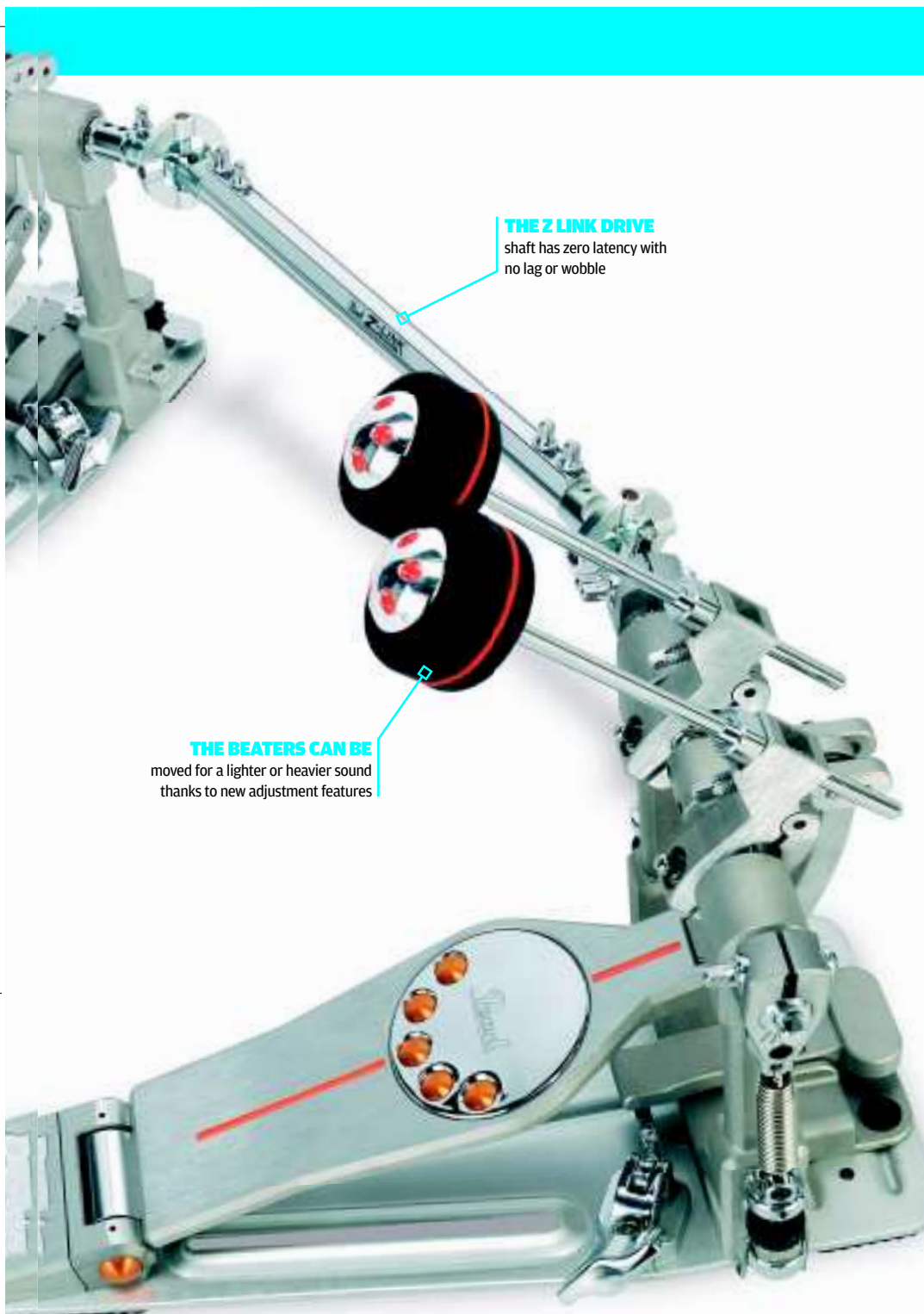
The footboard has a set of five orange aluminium 'traction' dots - looking like an old fashioned telephone dial - and these too can be moved into different positions to give your foot grip where you need it most. What's more, the spots can be changed for rubber ones for extra friction.

So to the big question: what's it like to play? Well direct action is exactly the right description. It's almost like there's no board and your foot's making direct contact with the batter head. And the slave pedal really does feel exactly like the main pedal. There's no lag or whip, everything moves with an eerie silence and friction-free smoothness. I remember a similar sensation the one time I tried an Axis. It's so 'transparent' you could say it lacks 'feel' in the way older strap/chain pedals had (good or bad) personality. But this is a precision tool for an ultra-precise age. It takes getting used to and I spent hours trying to find my ideal set-up. As of writing I'm still only 70 percent acclimatised, but that's more my fault than the Demon's.

Verdict

The emphasis on ever more subtle double-kick technique defines our age. As each new





THE Z LINK DRIVE
shaft has zero latency with
no lag or wobble

THE BEATERS CAN BE
moved for a lighter or heavier sound
thanks to new adjustment features

**This is not the sort of pedal you just grab
and play. There's the little matter of eight
basic settings to investigate**

generation emerges, with increasingly accurate skills, gear must keep pace. The Demon pedal is Pearl's comprehensive response to that challenge, with more personal tweaks than Madonna's wardrobe. There's a level of adaptability and precision that sets a new benchmark. The Demon's a looker and is mighty impressive, but building in all those options results in a scary price tag. Be absolutely sure that direct drive really is the salvation you're looking for before shelling out. **R**

Rating ★★★★★

TRY IT WITH...



PEARL
Masterworks kit - couple
the most adaptable of
pedals with Pearl's fully
customisable drums



EVOLUTION OF
the Blast Beat, by Derek
Roddy (book/CD). Derek's
book cries out for some
Demon pedalling

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