

2box DrumIt Five | £1,799

2box add a splash of colour to the world of electronic drums. **Robbie Stamp** does some virtual tub-thumping

WHAT IS IT?

'Open sound' electronic drum kit system

CONTACT

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Offers an excellent playing experience
- 2 Limitless kits with open sound structure
- 3 Simple editing and control interfaces

With a little help from the relatively well-written instruction book, this remarkably lightweight metal mounting frame is quickly and easily assembled. The clamps are all fitted with rubber pads, and so grip onto the frame without the need for much torque, though a little extra tightening

can be needed as the kit settles. The basic frame may be straightforward, but it still allows for enough adjustment to fit most set-up needs.

The footings for the frame (as well as the kick and hi-hat pedals) are all made from an orange rubber material that is intended to keep the kit stationary when played. This wasn't

completely successful on my studio carpet, as I found the kit often drifted away from me while I played. The kick and hi-hat pedal spikes weren't enough to prevent this motion, but a proper drum rug may sort this out. The frame, even when loaded, is light enough to be easily moved by one person.

As you like it

The two cymbal and three tom pads mount via clamps which use a standard ball joint to allow for placement at any angle; there's plenty of scope for customisation. The mounts are all sturdy, and rarely slipped from their positions no matter how hard a beating the kit was given, and there's also an impressive lack of wobble. The kick drum mounts onto the frame via a somewhat complicated clamp, but this does allow for a good degree of rotation to accommodate a range of set-ups.

The snare pad is mounted on a normal snare stand, and the kick drum pedal is also a familiar design. The hi-hat, however, has a bespoke clamping system that removes the need for stand legs – leaving more space for towels, beer cans and drumming magazines. Cabling the pads to the brain unit is aided by a pack of cable ties and couldn't be simpler.

After an initial pad-positioning tweak, the first thing that struck me was how easy the kit is to play. The mesh heads make the pads very responsive – fast, accurate strokes are easier than on normal drum heads. The standard tuning lugs mean that the tensions can





be adjusted to taste, although this has no bearing on the sound. The pads are really quiet in the room, making this ideal in the bedroom as well as for live or studio use.

The only initial calibration needed is the hi-hat open/closed positions. I found

the kit behaves very realistically and is a pleasure to play.

Technical realism

To translate the playing realism into the sonic realm, each pad can trigger up to 128 samples (one for every velocity

combination, and the headphone output can be hijacked for two more line outs if necessary. The stereo jack line input allows for monitoring backing tracks. The LCD screen is well laid-out and editing is refreshingly easy – each pad's parameters can be scrolled through swiftly, too. Control is provided for pitch, envelope, trigger response, MIDI note/channel assignment and audio routing. As well as the on-board metronome, the user can load backing tracks (stereo 16bit, 44.1kHz) to the memory.

Open Sound

The supplied sounds offer a wide variety, from classic Electro to roomy acoustics, and many of the factory-set kits are instantly appealing, thanks to the quality of the samples. These are totally user-editable, and any sound can be loaded up within the memory – hence 'Open Sound'. There are also plenty more sounds available via the 2box website.

The DrumIt Five is a well-designed system that presents a dash of colour in

the otherwise monochrome, utilitarian world of electronic drum kits. The Open Sound structure means there are no real restrictions, – beyond the 4GB

The kit's pads are really quiet in the room, making this ideal for bedroom as well as studio use

this a tad tricky to get just right in order to achieve a lifelike hi-hat pedal response, but the setting is easily found in the OS and quick to adjust. The cymbals have bell, bow and edge sensors, and can be hand-clamped to choke the ringing. The kick drum pad does have a tendency to wobble back and forth when struck, as it is clamped at the base, but this rarely causes double-hits or off-time strikes. All in all,

level) – though around 20 samples for a snare or tom is often ample. The brain unit uses a 4GB flash memory to store samples and this can be edited via USB (see DrumIt Editor). The 100 drum kit slots are ample for even the most indecisive drummer.

There are ten trigger input sockets, so there's room for two more pads on top of the basic set-up. The six audio outputs can be assigned in any

of memory – with regards to sound palette and quality. The overall playing experience is the best I've come across, and with the prospect of different sized pads in the future, there's room for expansion. Though I've only tried the mesh heads, the user can change these for regular drum heads – as well as a new rubber head that has yet to be announced. As a package, the DrumIt Five comes in at the upper end of the market, but the physical quality, set-up flexibility and Open Sound basis make it an investment that will last. **FM**

DrumIt Editor

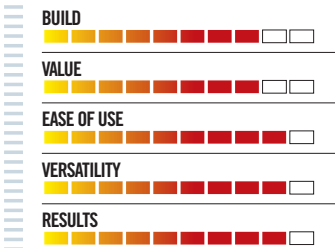
In keeping with the simplicity of the main 'brain' unit, the USB user interface requires no manual – though there are guide materials available. Once connected to the Mac/PC, the kit's memory appears as a standard USB storage device, allowing sounds to be dragged and dropped. The interface allows the user to create or edit kits, setting individual pad



volumes, pan positions and output volumes. Samples can be mapped to individual pads via a simple drag-and-drop, using the relative peak dB levels of samples to allocate velocity ranges. These sample assignments

can be saved as individual sounds (.dsnd files). These can then be dragged onto pads in the Kit Editor and kits saved as .dkit files. Though samples are mapped to individual velocity ranges there is a parameter that allows a semi-randomised relationship between trigger amplitude and velocity that helps prevent repetitious triggering.

FutureMusic VERDICT



A realistic playing experience with a limitless sound palette thanks to the Open Sound source structure.

SPECS

- Trigger Inputs:** 10x ¼" TRS jack (dual function triggers)
- Audio Inputs:** 1x ¼" TRS jack (stereo line input)
- Audio Outputs:** 1x ¼" TRS jack (stereo headphones, 32-600), 6x ¼" TS jack assignable line outputs
- MIDI:** 1x input, 1x output, standard 5-pin DIN sockets
- USB:** 1.1 full-speed (12 Mbits/s) connection for editor software package (Mac/PC)
- Conversion:** DA at 24bit, 44.1kHz
- Control Unit Memory:** 4GB flash memory
- Memory Slots:** 100 user configurable drum kits
- Sample File Formats:** WAV, AIFF and REX
- Drum Trigger Channels:** 15
- Package:** Mounting frame, 1x snare pad, 1x kick pad, 3x tom pads, 1x hi-hat pad, 2x cymbal pads, 1x kick pedal, 1x hi-hat stand, 1x 'brain' unit, 1x PSU, trigger pad to 'brain' cable set.

ALTERNATIVES



Roland TD-9KX
£1807

These pads have positional triggering sensor technology, but the base sound samples are factory set. roland.co.uk



Yamaha DTX550
£1550

A five-piece kit with silicone rubber heads, with zoning on the pads. Also lacks Open Sound benefits, but has over 400 base sounds. uk.yamaha.com



Alesis DM10 Pro Kit
£999

Realistic mylar-coated heads and metal cymbals with multi-zone triggering, though not truly Open Sound. alesis.com