

Yamaha

CP1 | £4,501

Dan 'JD73' Goldman gets playing with the newest Yamaha CP Stage Pianos flagship – the CP1



ON THE DVD

WHAT IS IT?

Yamaha's new flagship stage piano, using spectral component modelling (modelling plus sampling) to produce its piano sounds and amp modelling

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 No detectable velocity switching and easy to use
- 2 Authentic and electric piano sounds
- 3 Good effects, plus powerful preamp models and master EQ

Yamaha have, it's fair to say, always been at the forefront of stage piano technology. The first pianos to wear the

CP badge were the now-classic CP70/80 electric grands, adopted by many big-name artists over the years.

As with the recently-launched Roland V Piano, the Yamaha CP1 uses modelling technology (combined with sampling) to capture the nuances of a real piano. However, while VA synths get close to the magic of real analogue, modelling technology is still in its infancy compared to purely sample-based pianos.

At nearly five feet in length, well over a foot deep and weighing in at a notch under 60lbs, this is not something suitable for gigging with unless you have plenty of helpers and an estate car or hatchback with its rear seats down. On tour with roadies or in studio residence? No problem, of course – though when you also consider that it

needs a flight case, the prospect of moving it becomes even scarier.

Looks-wise, the CP1 is utilitarian yet classy. It has a textured metal case with black/brown wooden end panels, a brushed aluminium panel housing the switches and a faux-leatherette top

suitable for standing a laptop or small second keyboard on. There's a good-sized vacuum fluorescent display with six push-rotaries for direct access to the most important parameters. Sound selection is via the Preset/User/External buttons in combination with 16 Patch-Selection switches. All switches have LEDs that flash depending on if they are in Edit mode, or to signify if a particular selector switch is on or off.

The keys, the secret

The 88-note keyboard is an all-new design. It's very playable, nicely weighted and not too heavy, though perhaps a little more sluggish responding to faster runs than I would have liked. But, in general, it's very good indeed.

The signal path is logically laid out in blocks on the front panel. First up is the Piano button block, where any of the 17 piano/electric piano modes can

Sound Shaping

With regard to customising the CP1's sounds, there's plenty of control for all piano types, ranging from hammer hardness, hammer strike position to note decay.

Using these functions really helps you to connect to the CP1 – much as if you were tweaking the pianos themselves – making it feel much more like a real instrument than some

entirely sample-based pianos. The preamp and Power Amp models are also some of the best I've heard and greatly enhance the raw sounds plus they can be interchanged with different pianos, while the five-band EQ is very powerful, too. The modulation effects add a bit of extra mojo to the sounds, giving welcome movement and life, but the reverbs, though

decent enough, aren't particularly amazing.

Though there's very little to criticise in terms of tweakability or playability, it would still have been great to have more adjustment for the Rhodes sounds and the ability to choose different strings for the acoustics. It's a real shame there's no pedal on/off resonance, especially given that it's a flagship instrument.



