

Korg SV-1 | £1,724

The SV-1 Piano aims to faithfully recreate electro-mechanical pianos, clavs, organs and more. *Dan 'JD73' Goldman* puts it through its paces...

ON THE DVD

WHAT IS IT?

Korg's new easy to use electro-mechanical keyboard emulator with onboard Rhodes, Wurlitzer, Clavinet, Hammond, and string/synth sounds coupled with vintage FX and valve amp modelling

CONTACT

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Some of the best Rhodes, Wurlli and Acoustic/Electronic Piano sounds available
- 2 Very playable action and a doddle to use
- 3 Great FX and amp modelling with stretch tuning and velocity curves

PRICING

Korg SV-1-73
£1,724
Korg SV-1-88
£1,839

Fact: everyone needs great workhorse vintage keyboard sounds/effects but most can't afford the real thing. Couple

that with the headaches (and backaches!) that many associate with ownership of these old boards and it's no wonder that demand for keyboards providing quality electro-mechanical keyboard sounds are at the top of many keyboardists purchase lists.

The SV-1 is Korg's first foray into this territory. Though samples of Rhodes, Wurlitzers EP200's, Hammond B3's and Hohner Clavinet's can be found in Korg's workstation keyboards, the SV-1 packages these sounds (newly sampled and optimised for the SV-1) in a completely new way.

Available in two sizes (73 and 88-note) both models utilise Korg's RH3 graded-hammer action keybed (found in the M50 and M3-88). It feels positive, expressive and nicely balanced, (though a little too spongy on the bounce-back for my liking) but it's very controllable for pianos and Rhodes/Wurlli's, plus the onboard velocity curves broaden the scope.

When it comes to playing clavs and organs, the RH3 action isn't quite fast/

responsive enough, though experimenting with the velocity response improves the playability. It would therefore be nice if Korg offered a semi-weighted waterfall keyboard option (like the Nord Electro 3/Stage Compact) as I dare say many players would rather play pianos, Rhodes and Wurlli's via a semi-weighted keyboard

than clavs, Hammonds and strings via a weighted board.

Also, bear in mind that the SV-1-73 is pretty heavy to transport (and weighs even more in a flight case) while the 88 is a definite two-man job though. I also commend Korg for making a fantastic looking keyboard that will certainly turn heads, though it's a real shame you can't stack other keyboards on top of it.

Sound shaping

The front panel is very simple to use and selecting from the 36 onboard sounds is a doddle using the rotary selectors, whilst using the effects, EQ and amp model selection (and pretty much everything else) is child's play with no menu diving at all, though the software editor can go deeper into tailoring the amp modelling, effects,

Onboard Effects

The SV-1 is no slouch in the effects department. There's a very musical three-band EQ for subtle or drastic tonal shaping plus some very authentic stompbox or 'pre' effects including a compressor,

booster, univibe, vibrato, tremolo and a lovely emulation of a Vox wah that can be controlled via an external pedal. Then there's the real valve stage utilising the very visible 12AX7 valve, which

brings a very natural overdrive to the amp models. Modulation effects include some nice choruses and phasers that help create some very nostalgic instrument/effect combos, plus there's a decent rotary speaker effect that can be applied to any of the instruments. The onboard Reverbs and delays are great too and really have the vintage vibe where required, or can remain fairly transparent. Finally, there's a limiter to keep levels in check.



Valve Tones
12AX7 valve adds warmth and crunch to the onboard amplifier models

Preset Saving
Eight buttons for quick recall of your favourite sounds

**MIDI I/O**

MIDI In and Out plus MIDI over USB

Outputs

The SV-1 features unbalanced jack inputs and outputs plus XLR outs

tuning scales and more. There are 6 banks (Electric Piano 1 and 2, Clav, Piano, Organ and Other) with six variations available within each category, plus you can store your favourite eight sounds to the large favourite buttons for quick recall.

Now onto the sounds and specifically the Rhodes (Electric Piano 1). I have to say that the SV-1 has probably the most authentic emulation of a real Rhodes that you could find in

option to choose preset or user stretch-tuning curves.

Electric feel

The Wurlitzer EP samples are also very authentic, (though it's worth experimenting with the different velocity curves/EQ to get the best from them) while the Clav's aren't quite as authentic as I'd liked (sounding a little thin/nasally and there's no muted clav option either) but they are musical and

also a great Yamaha CP80 electro/acoustic piano onboard and some nice piano/string combos, though these sounds are preset and can't be edited (and there are no splits or layers available either). Bearing this in mind, Korg need to offer a large and varied library of user-downloadable samples to expand the SV-1's palette ASAP.

The weakest part of the SV-1 is its organ/synth sounds. The reed organs are nice but the Hammond emulations

just don't sound authentic and the only way to change the vibrato/chorus is via the editing software, which isn't ideal. Also bearing in mind

there are no drawbars or filters, I think Korg need to make some better Hammond/synth samples available for the SV-1 pronto as they just aren't good enough at this price point.

To conclude, as a Rhodes/Piano emulator the SV-1 hits the spot in terms of authenticity and playability and the Clavs are good too but the Hammonds are disappointing, plus the onboard synth/string sounds seem like a rushed afterthought. Bearing in mind the SV-1's high price point Korg massively need to improve on these areas ASAP. These gripes aside, I would not hesitate to recommend the SV-1 immediately if you're after very authentic and playable Rhodes, Wurlitzer and Piano sounds. **FM**

The SV-1 has some of the best Rhodes and Acoustic Pianos currently available

a current keyboard. I wouldn't hesitate to use it for both comping and solo work and it's very playable indeed. The RX (real experience) technology onboard really captures the nuances of a real Rhodes (including mechanical and electric noise) and this adds greatly to its authenticity.

All the Rhodes samples are very dynamic (from soft/bell-like to hard/barking) and in general the transitions between soft/hard samples are smooth enough. I also love that there's the

in the context of a band performance cut through nicely.

I'm pleased to say that the acoustic and electric pianos onboard are excellent and very inspiring to play. In particular The RX technology has captured the important nuances of a real piano including pedal noise, key on/off noise, damper noise and (like the Rhodes) this adds greatly to a very satisfying playing experience. The SV-1 has some of the best acoustic piano samples I've heard or played. There's

SV Action

Korgs RH3 graded hammer action keyboard gives an authentic piano feel

**FutureMusic VERDICT**

BUILD

VALUE

EASE OF USE

VERSATILITY

RESULTS

The SV-1 delivers some of the best electric/acoustic piano sounds with great effects and amp sims too.

SPECS

Keyboard: Velocity sensitive Korg RH3

Touch selection: 8 curves – Tuning Transpose, Fine tuning, Tuning curves

Polyphony: 80 notes (max)

Sounds: 36 sounds

Effects: 5 insert effects + 1 total effect

Equaliser: Bass, Mid, Treble

Amp Models: Amp1/2/3/4/5/Organ Amp + Cabinet Models

Valve Reactor Technology: 12AX7 (ECC83) valve

Connections: Audio outputs L, R (2 × XLR, Balanced), L/Mono, R (2 × 1/4" Jack, Unbalanced), Inputs L/Mono, R, USB

Dimensions

SV-1 73:

1143 x 347 x 157mm

SV-1 88:

1356 x 347 x 157mm

Weight

SV-1 73:

17.5kg

SV-1 88:

20.55kg

ALTERNATIVES

Nord Stage EX-88

£2,194

Flagship Nord with splits/layers, EPs, pianos, organs, vintage effects and a synth.

nordkeyboards.com



Roland RD700 Gx

£1,699

Flagship stage piano with weighted keys, multi-sampled grand, electric pianos, organ emulation and more.

roland.co.uk



Kurzweil SP3X

£1,253

Weighted stage piano with aftertouch, 'triple-strike' grand piano, Rhodes and Wurli emulations, plus effects and realtime control.

kurzweil.com