

GEAR REVIEW

CLAVIA NORD DRUM 3P



£579 *Clavia brings it all together with the latest Nord Drum percussion synth*

WORDS: **TOM BRADLEY**

Famous for industry-standard stage pianos and synthesisers, Swedish company Clavia has now introduced the third generation of its dedicated percussion synth. With a few noteworthy changes since the last model, let's see what the Nord Drum 3P has to offer.

Build

The previous Nord Drum and Nord Drum 2 modules were small, standalone units that required external pads or control surfaces to operate them. A separately available six-trigger pad could be connected by ethernet cable to the module, allowing live performance of the synth without the need for MIDI. As the Nord 3P name may suggest, the previously separate pads have now been combined with the digital brain to create one very compact drum machine. In fact, the new all-in-one unit measures just 28cm tall, 30cm wide and a minuscule 2cm thick. Each black rubber pad is 9.5cm². Despite sharing the chic satin red and black finish of other Nord products, the 3P appears much like a standard sampling pad – similar, for example, to the Roland SPD-SX or Yamaha DTX-Multi12. At first, this makes it easy to forget that the Nord Drum is in fact an entirely different beast.

The modelling percussion synthesiser relies on the customisation of sounds via the usual parameters such as attack, decay, frequency, resonance and pitch, etc. The new model now also comes complete with in-built reverb and delay effects which are individually customisable for each pad. Despite the lack of 'real' drum samples, not only do the drum and percussion sounds seem surprisingly realistic but it is now possible to quickly call up preset sounds from a host of categories such as bass, snare, toms, hi-hats, cymbals and percussion, in addition to some melodic tones and effects. These can serve as basic kit-building ingredients or worthy starting

Also try...



1 NORD DRUM 2

We say: "The upgraded features of the new drum synth means it is now a serious musical instrument."



2 ROLAND SPD-SX SAMPLE PAD

We say: "This is a must-have product which could make me run out of adjectives describing it – suffice to say the SPD-SX is as stunning as it is formidable!"

points for your own customised sounds. There are also hundreds of slots for user sounds to be saved. The 200 preset patches are split equally into four banks, lettered A to D. These range from more classic sounding drum machine sounds to heavier club kicks and claps, tuned percussion and more off-the-wall sound effects.

In terms of layout, the module controls are much the same as its predecessors, except for the main control dial which has been downsized and moved to the left-hand side. The core tonal controls have been set out as two rows of eight, with the previous 'row select' button being done away with. 'Shift' and 'lower param' buttons can then be used to access different controls using the same 16 buttons. There are two small LCD screens which display just two characters each. This

keeps functionality really basic but also means referring back to the manual is not uncommon whilst learning commands. As far as connectivity goes, there is a mini-jack headphone out (with no separate volume control), 1/4" left and right jack outputs, MIDI in/outs and one external 'kick' trigger input. There are no individual direct outputs.

Hands On

Upon opening the deceptively large box, I am surprised by how small and relatively

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FX

The unit now incorporates in-built reverb and delay FX

TRIGGER IN

One external trigger can be used

PADS

Six trigger pads are now built into the unit

COMPACT

The Nord Drum 3P is small and relatively lightweight

light the unit is. Also inside the box, alongside an instruction booklet and 12v power cable, is a plastic mounting bracket for use with drum hardware or clamps.

Now plugged in and with a pair of sticks at the ready, I find that the in-built rubber pads are rock-solid and provide a supremely bouncy surface on which to play. Playability is good and the unit keeps up with no noticeable latency. The dynamic range is vast but it takes a fair whack to trigger the highest velocity reading (indicated by a red LED arrow for

each pad). Following a quick scout through the instruction manual though, it soon becomes apparent that the sensitivity is easily raised for a softer player. It even becomes possible to play with your hands, should the occasion present itself.

When using the single external trigger input with a Roland KT-10 pedal, I found that I had to tweak the threshold and sensitivity settings somewhat to get a good balance. By default, the kick input will mirror the sound on pad one, making it much more fluid to play kit patterns. Some may be disappointed by the lack of extra trigger inputs, especially considering the previous model has six individual jacks. Of course, now they are built-in, that functionality has been preserved for the Nord Drum 2. With vast MIDI capabilities still factored in though, there is no doubt that the 3P is an incredibly usable piece of

kit, both on stage and in the studio.

The free Nord Beat app for iPad also goes a step further in unlocking a huge amount of potential in this machine. I also spent some time using it with a loop station to great effect. The instant ability to create custom sounds and timbres, not only percussive but also melodic, means you can essentially create your own tunes in no time. **R**

VERDICT: The Nord Drum 3P isn't leaps and bounds beyond its predecessors, but with a host of new and improved features, the all-in-one unit is well equipped for use both on stage and in the studio.

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
PLAYABILITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING ★★★★★

Essential spec

nord®

PRICE

£579

CONNECTIVITY

Mini-jack headphone output;
 Dual 1/4" jack outputs;
 1/4" jack trigger in;
 MIDI in/outs

NEW FEATURES

Integrated multipad, kick pad input and MIDI; Simplified user interface with easy sound selection; New preset 'Drum Select' library for kicks, snares, toms etc; Reverb and delay effects - adjustable amount for each pad

CONTACT

Sound Technology
www.soundtech.co.uk
www.nordkeyboards.com