

# digitalDrummer

The global electronic drumming e-zine



What does the next decade hold?



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# welcome

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SINCE THIS IS a milestone edition, I think readers will permit me a bit of introspection.

In preparing this edition, I have looked over many of the 40 editions we have produced in our first decade and it's not hard to recognise how much electronic percussion has changed – and how much it has stayed the same.

We've seen brands and products come and go – and then we have some which are just as dominant in 2020 as they were in 2010.

There's no doubt that technology has moved on – and even the entry-level gear available today is streets ahead of my first Roland TD-3 kit. Playability, realism and aesthetics have improved and prices have fallen – but maybe not as much as drummers would like.

The latest crop of products on show at NAMM in Anaheim last month would have been unimaginable 10 years ago, but at the same time, the market expectations have risen even more sharply. In a world of mobile phones, digital downloads, streaming and social media, it's very hard to satisfy buyers. It's also hard to satisfy the information needs of consumers. When we started – and it was the main reason we launched **digitalDrummer** – there was no dedicated, credible source of information on electronic percussion. Sure, there were a few online forums, but those were dominated by fanboys on the one hand and knockers on the other.

The media landscape has changed and while **digitalDrummer** is still the only global magazine for electronic percussion, we are no longer a lone voice, with manufacturers and retailers devoting significant resources to slickly produced video content. Some do this very well, but let's remember that, at the end of the day, they are all trying to sell something. My reviewers and I strive to tell it like it is, and we're assisted by social media that has allowed us to open up the discussion, with our readers welcome to share their views in our Facebook group.

As we begin our next decade with 20/20 vision, we look forward to finding new ways to engage with those who have supported us from the beginning – and those who have joined along the way.

I'd like to thank you all for your encouragement and loyalty and acknowledge our tireless contributors, starting with Scott Holder, who wrote for our first edition and has been with us ever since. Thanks also to the advertisers who have helped fund this labour of love. I hope you have benefited as much as our readers have.

All the best.

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# feature

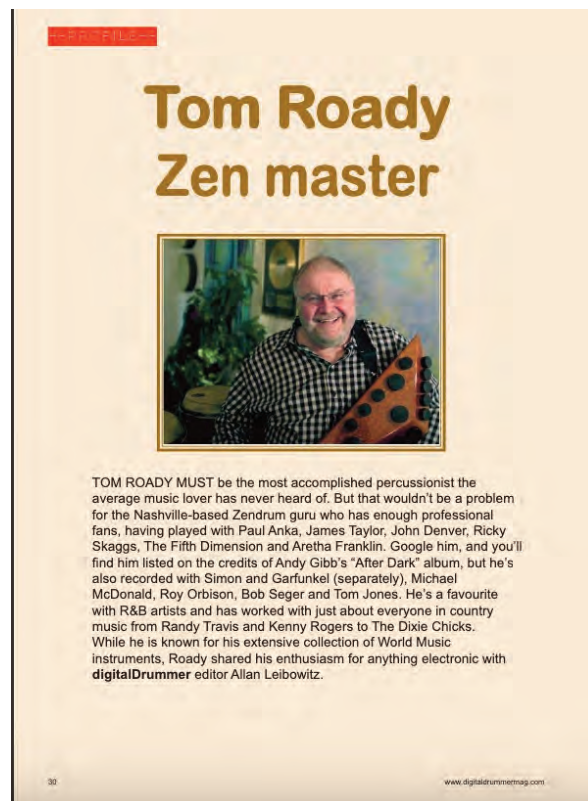


As digitalDrummer enters its 11th year, we reflect on our first year of a decade for electronic percussion coverage.

**January 2010:** Our first edition co-incided with Pearl's return to e-drums with the ePRO Live, which made its debut at NAMM. Other new gear featured in the magazine included Yamaha's DTX-M12 multipad, the Japanese maker's first entry into that instrument line – and a model that remains unchanged a decade later.

The first **digitalDrummer** head2head feature compared a range of e-drum monitors and introduced Scott Holder, who continues to contribute to this magazine today.

**March 2010** saw the first mesh head comparison which pitted nine models against each other, the sound level meter and the bounce measurement. This edition also saw the start of our Monster Kit feature, with Sam Schmeidel showing off one of the biggest arrays of electronic triggers, pads and cymbals we've ever seen: even a decade later, very few have come close!



The late Tom Roady was our first featured artist (top). The British invasion was covered in July, while Michael Schack made the first of many appearances in October 2010.



In **July 2010**, we took a virtual trip across the Atlantic to check out “the best of British”, looking at products from Jobeky, Diamond Electronic Drums, Traps, Koby (now defunct) and Kit-Toys, among others. Our comparison tested external triggers, with offerings from more than a dozen makers on our test drum.

**October 2010** was the first time we used the term “hybrid drumming”, and we wrote about the proliferation of triggered acoustic kits, including ddrum's hybrid kit and one from Brazil's RMV (which we never actually saw). This was also our first encounter with Michael Schack (and I'm sure we coined the moniker



‘Schack Attack’ before anyone else), whose name has become more and more linked to e-drums, culminating in a few E-drummer of the Year awards over the years and induction into the **digitalDrummer** Hall of Fame.

# Happy birthday to

Congratulations to **digitalDrummer** and Allan Leibowitz for providing a focus for all things e-drumming. It's good to have a single source that pulls together the different strands of a community and places them in an easily digestible format.

For me, it's been fascinating to see the march of improving technology bringing ever more performance for ever less money. So much has changed, but so much has stayed the same. Here's to the next 10 years of **digitalDrummer** and the advancement of e-drums.

**Dave Simmons**

In particular, the specialist magazines like **digitalDrummer** are incredibly useful resources and prove to be a gold mine of information. For me, the main benefit I feel is being inspired to try out new ideas featuring new gear and innovations that get covered in the mag. I have always been a great explorer and lover of the digital and electronic side of the music world, so my explorations are never far from the surface. The holy grail for me, though, is the creation of new sounds and textures rather than bothering too much with recreating acoustic sounds electronically. That's the least interesting aspect for me.

**Pete Lockett**

Thanks to **digitalDrummer**, drummers and percussionists have been getting the best full-length coverage on the latest e-drum products over these last 10 years.

Alternate Mode really appreciates the tireless work of Allan Leibowitz, bringing products like ours to light. Thank you, **digitalDrummer**. Here's to another 10 years!

**Mario J. DeCiutiis, Alternate Mode/KAT**







**digitalDrummer** has become so much more than just the edrum magazine. Allan has built an amazing community that connects drummers from all across the globe in our shared quest for digital perfection. Thank you!

**Konrad Müller-Bremeyer, drum-tec**

We think **digitalDrummer** has helped to grow awareness of electronic drumming worldwide in terms of product awareness and potential for using electronic drums for more than just practising. We like the fact that there is a fair and balanced awareness of all the brands and companies that make products for electronic drummers.

**Jim Norman, Guitar Center/Simmons**

Congratulations on your first decade, **digitalDrummer**! And thank YOU for sticking to the cause while many are still hesitant about drumming on a pad or triggering sounds out of a module. Many things have changed for the good these past 10 years and you're definitely part of the vision and the growing popularity of e-drums and hybrid drums add-ons. And the best thing? The potential is still huge! Also, on a personal note, being nominated and chosen by your readers as E-Drummer of the Year three consecutive times has been a personal highlight and inspiration. Let's grow older together playing and preaching what we love: one of the most technologically advanced instruments in music, which you can hit without breaking it. Try that with a synthesizer! We win! Happy Decade!

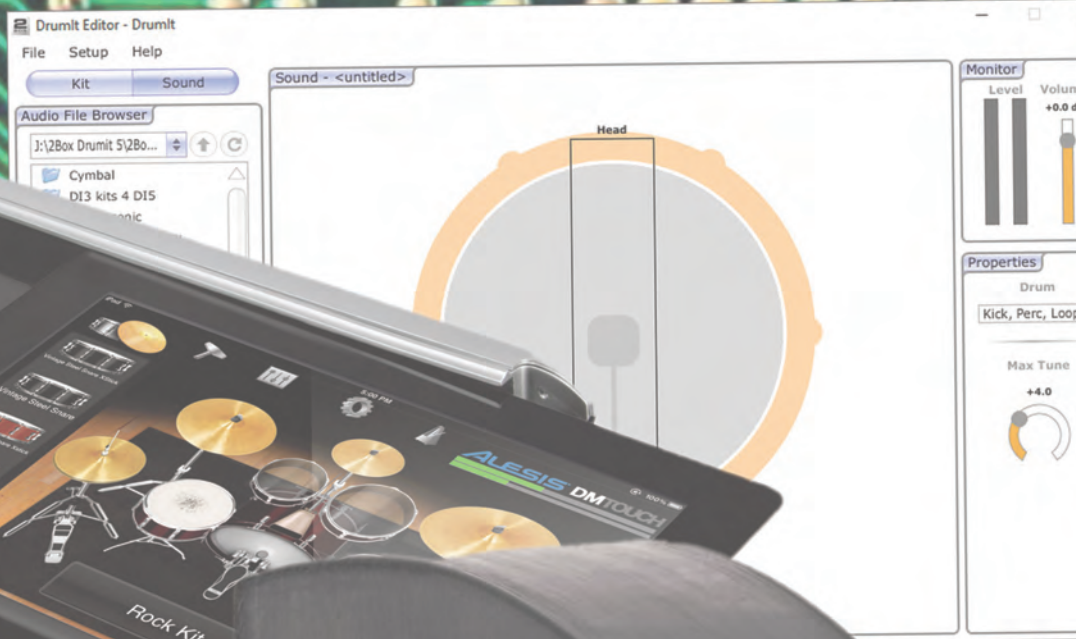
**Michael Schack**

In a world where there are bigger and better VSTs, electronic kits, pads, mesh heads, wireless triggers, and multi-output modules arriving every other day, where is the fledgling electronic drummer to turn? For the last 10 years, the go-to resource has thankfully been **digitalDrummer** magazine. From the reviews of the latest devices on the market, to the in-depth profiles of some of the world's best electronic drummers, like Bill Bruford and Chester Thompson to name but a few, **digitalDrummer** has been there. What mesh heads do I use? Which module is the best bang for your buck? Who makes the most reliable triggers? No worries, as **digitalDrummer's** "Head2Head" comparison series covers them all, as well as real-time product updates and answers on Facebook. I shudder to think where we would have been without them for the last decade and hopefully for the next one!

**Eric 'Doc' Smith**



gear




# Innovation: past and future

The last decade saw huge advances in electronic percussion, including products never seen before and refinements to existing technology.


LOOKING BACK OVER the first 40 editions of **digitalDrummer**, here are our top five innovations of the decade.

### 1) **Wireless triggering:**

VersaTrigger not only did away with cables, it made modules obsolete by transmitting MIDI direct from the trigger. It was an elegant solution which included a trigger device and transmitter in a tiny, self-powered box. And it works a treat. 




### 2) **iPad as a module**

When Alesis released the DM Dock, we were convinced this was the future of electronic drumming. Using the iPad to power a drum module seemed like a stroke of genius. But Alesis found how hard it was to keep up with Apple's development timetable and shelved the project before it took off. 




### 3) **Sensory Percussion**

Sunhouse turned electronic drumming on its head with its Sensory Percussion triggers and, more importantly, its software which translates audio into MIDI. The system uses the tonality of acoustic drums to generate MIDI notes which can be used to either play samples or modify sounds. In the right hands, the possibilities are endless. 




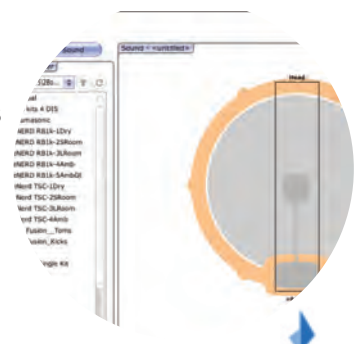
### 4) **Gen-16 cymbals**

Zildjian overcame one of the biggest challenges of electronic cymbals, creating a realistic playing experience by combining low-volume metal cymbals, electronic pickups and a digital processor. Unfortunately, development stopped before the system reached its full potential – but the cymbal design lives on and now has become a common practice instrument, while DIYers continue to add piezos for more playable e-cymbals. 



### 5) **2box sample editor**

While Sweden's 2box picked up where ddrum had left off to produce a sample-based e-drum module that has attracted legions of fans, its real contribution was enabling users to load their own multi-layer samples. The 2box sample editor is easy to use and has helped create a real "open architecture" module that is as impressive today as it was when it launched in 2011. 



# Looking ahead to the next decade

BASED ON WHAT we've seen in recent years and countless discussions with e-drummers around the world, here are our predictions for the direction of electronic percussion in the next 10 years. Note, these forecasts are extrapolated from the trends we are seeing, rather than specific knowledge of any products in the pipeline:

## 1) Real cymbal triggering

It's not a huge leap from acoustic drum sounds to cymbal articulations and it's only a matter of time until a Sensory Percussion-style solution for cymbals goes into production. There's already one patent in that field, and it's inevitable that the desire for a realistic playing experience combined with the growing appetite for the full range of cymbal articulations will make this a saleable product.

## 2) More wireless triggering

While VersaTrigger has struggled to get noticed in an industry dominated by big-name manufacturers, there's no doubt that drummers hate cables. Combine this with the Bluetooth revolution which is seeing everything connected wirelessly, and it's inevitable that we'll see cables disappear as connectivity improves.

## 3) TMI's with more inputs

VSTs are improving and becoming more affordable, and computing is now in everyone's reach, so the future of drum modules as we know them must be in doubt. Already, we are seeing small, cheap trigger to MIDI interfaces (TMI's), and it's likely that these will develop further, accommodating more inputs and working seamlessly with more devices.

## 4) iPad modules

Tablets and phones are gaining computing power and fast replacing laptop or even desktop computers. Once the latency of their sound cards has been improved, iDevices will become real alternatives to computers, able to handle the barrage of triggering data and process samples quickly enough and at sufficient quality to satisfy the needs of e-drummers.

## 5) More synthesis

Roland pioneered the art of drum sound synthesis, using algorithms to simulate the performance of drums. As we move to smaller drum "brains", the answer will lie in smarter synthesis. You don't need to load the drum controller with tens of thousands of real recordings when a clever algorithm can emulate how a "core" sound will alter under different playing conditions. We're already seeing this in VSTs like Modo Drum, and while real samples are all the rage now, modelling technology will evolve to the point of realistically replacing real sounds.





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 **Roland**

## Top drums, drummers and stores



The ballot results are in – and here are the winners:

**Roland's TM-1** was voted **E-drum Product of the Year (Hardware)** in this year's Readers' Choice awards.



As our August 2019 review noted, the TM-1, the latest offering in Roland's hybrid offering, is a two-input trigger module and probably the simplest Roland e-drum offering to date. Our review found the add-on to be "a well-designed, easy-to-use trigger module which allows drummers to add electronic elements to their acoustic drum sounds".

The win is notable in a field of finalists that included the Alesis Strike Multipad, the eDRUMin TMI, Pearl's new e/MERGE kit and the Simmons DA2012B drum amp.

The only "big entry" in the VST market, **Steven Slate Drums 5**, which debuted too late for inclusion in our 2018 poll, was the clear winner of the **E-drum Product of the Year (Software)** honours. Second place went to Superior Drummer Decades SZX, with Got Good Drums' Modern and Massive in third place.



Germany's **drum-tec** took its fourth title as **E-drum Retailer of the Year** for Europe. Once again, the independent retailer also grabs the title of top global e-drum store, far outranking any other rival, anywhere on the planet. Online retailer **edrumcentre.com** has ousted Sweetwater to nab the United States top store accolade while **Dawsons** became the third UK winner in three years (Professional Music Technology won last year and Andertons the year before).

**Long & McQuade** retained its title as top e-drum retailer in Canada, while **GH Music** in Melbourne was the overall winner in Australasia.



UK drummer **Cliff Hewitt**, runner-up in last year's **E-drummer of the Year** ballot, was a clear winner this time around. Hewitt, who shared his e-drum approach in our August 2014 edition, has played with Apollo440, Pet Shop Boys, Jean-Michel Jarre, Schiller and Robbie Williams. Hewitt plays drum-tec products – another win for the German retailer!

**digitalDrummer's** Hall of Fame this year welcomes **Rick Allen**, drummer with Def Leppard. Where many people would have quit music after the amputation of an arm, Allen turned to technology when he lost his limb in 1984 and is credited for raising the profile of electronic percussion. Besides his talent and pushing of drumming boundaries, Allen is also well-known for his charity work, including the Raven Drum Foundation, which he established to serve, educate, and empower veterans and people in crisis.

Congratulations to all the winners and those who made the short lists. And thanks to all who took the trouble to vote.



## Hall of fame posthumous award

Earlier this year, the drumming world was shocked by the death of Rush drummer and lyricist **Neil Peart**.

Peart is not only remembered for his playing genius, but also for his over-the-top kits.

In recent times, Peart had been closely associated with DW acoustic drums and such was his influence that, for many years, Roland had worked with DW to supply custom trigger baskets which were fitted into his acoustic shells.

As Roland notes on Peart's artist page: "Within his monstrous kit, Neil plays Roland V-Drums in various combinations of current modules and custom hybrid V-Pads designed exclusively for him. His preference of keeping the look of the kit a complete and exact match, finds the Roland V-Drums kick, snare and tom trigger technology housed into DW shells. The V-Cymbals and V-Hi-Hat system remain standard Roland designs."

Roland gear remained a staple within Neil's highly anticipated drum solos during concerts and provided him with a creative palette for ideas, both sonically and rhythmically.

Peart also triggered samples from some classic Roland samplers, supporting the



band's detailed and complex song structures.

The drumming world has lost a special person – and e-drummers will also mourn the passing of a hybrid pioneer, albeit one whose use of e-drums was not necessarily evident to those without sharp eyes or inside information.

In Neil's own words: "Suddenly, you were gone, from all the lives you left your mark upon."



# NEW FOR 2020

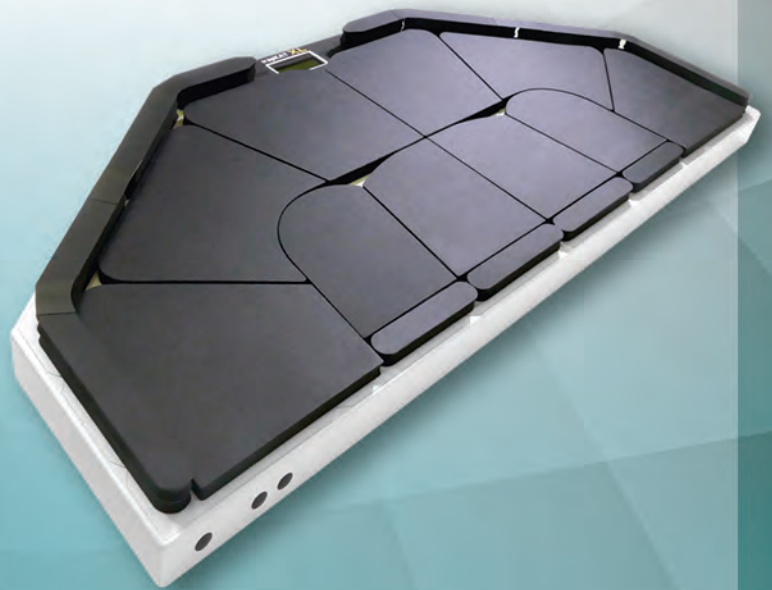
## KT-M1

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- The ability to precisely control velocity, curve and gate per pad



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for 10 years of providing the best  
news and information on the  
electronic drumming industry**



gear

# California drummin'

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES FOR NAMM

Winter NAMM 2020 will go down as the show dominated by full-size electronic drum kits, as **Allan Leibowitz** reports.



Roland's new VAD line picked up a NAMM award while Simon Edgoose was again busy showing off Yamaha's EAD10



THE WORLD'S BIGGEST e-drum maker has not launched new products at NAMM for some time, but this year, **Roland** came out with both barrels blazing at Anaheim, with two highly anticipated launches.

The first was a new mid-level module to replace the TD-25. The new TD-27 module combines the ease of use of the highly successful TD-17 with technologies and sounds derived from the flagship TD-50 as well as some samples from the TM-6 Pro.

Of particular interest to many e-drummers will be the ability to trigger Roland's digital snare and ride (and future digital hi-hat), something previously only possible with the much more expensive TD-50.

The new module is ready to ship as part of a new Roland TD-27KV kit – with a PD-140DS snare and CY-18DR ride, three PDX-100 tom pads, CY-12C and CY-13R cymbal pads, a VH-10 V-hi-hat and a KD-10 kick pad – for \$2,999.99. Already, some retailers are quoting prices for a stand-alone module and for a “digital upgrade pack” consisting of the module together with the digital snare and ride.

The second major launch sees Roland following the example of ATV (and before that, the likes of ddt, drum-tec, Field, ATV and Muzzio) with a full-size shell pack powered by the TD-27.

The new V-Drums Acoustic Design range initially consists of three models: the premier VAD506 and VAD503 kits and the “more affordable” VAD306 kit (powered by a TD-17 module and sold without the digital snare/ride combo).

The VAD attracted a lot of dealer interest and picked up a NAMM Best in Show award.

The VAD506 and 503 V-Drums Acoustic Design kits feature full-size wood shells, custom heavy-duty chrome shell hardware, thinner cymbals and standard acoustic mounting. Every kit projects the premium look of high-end acoustic drums, providing a familiar presence that's the centerpiece of any stage, according to Roland.

And why is the VAD not paired with the TD-50? The thinking is that there are two types of e-drummers. One group consists of tweekers who are focused on sound and



need the rich, deep editing capability of the TD-50 module. These drummers, it appears, are less obsessed with the aesthetics and more into the sonics.

And then there are those for whom it's all about the looks (and performance). For these drummers, full-size pads and cymbals are more important than deep diving into sound shaping (or so the thinking goes). And I guess economics also comes into it. Combine the expensive shell pack of the VAD range with the cost of the TD-50 and you're looking at serious cash.

**digitalDrummer** will share our reviews of the new products after our in-depth testing. Having spent a bit of time on the TD-27 and the VAD506, I can confirm that I am looking forward to these reviews!

Those expecting to see new e-drum offerings from **Yamaha** had to be content with a software update for the successful EAD10 electronic acoustic drum module. The update is covered in detail on page 58.

Demonstrator Simon Edgoose, who was part of the development team on the breakthrough product, was kept busy showing the capabilities of the system.

Meanwhile, Yamaha also demonstrated its latest electronic drum monitor system alongside its full range of e-kits.

The MS45DR, reviewed on page 28, is a 2.1 loudspeaker system, with two compact, lightweight left and right satellite speakers and a subwoofer.

There were predictions that **ATV** would reveal its ATV Link module expander and/or its sample import software, but there was no sign of either.

Instead, there was a debut of the AD5 Mixer app which adds more control to the module.

The Japanese company also premiered the fruits of its collaboration with Canopus, the highly regarded Japanese acoustic drum manufacturer. The two companies are now co-producing new drum sound instruments for ATV's aDrums line of electronic drums. These additional sounds will be available for purchase and download from ATV's online Sound Store.

The union also doubled ATV's exposure at the show, giving the manufacturer some presence at the Canopus stand, where an aD5 sound module were loaded with three Canopus snares.

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The free Simmons Advanced app adds sampling and also simplifies kit editing to create your own sound.

## SIMMONS

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## The EF Note kits seem to tick all the boxes

Could this be the one to watch? Southern California's Artesia unveiled some kits sourced from newcomer **EF Note** Japanese Drum Company, a manufacturer which is staffed by former Roland employees and seems to be following the same path as ATV. There were two new Legacy electronic drum kits showing the rising standard of entry-level and mid-range e-drums.

The kits feature mesh heads on dual-zone pads, a triple-zone ride cymbal, 10 preset drum kits and user kits with "hundreds of percussion voices", an onboard sequencer with 100 preset patterns, built-in real-time recording, auxiliary input and metronome.

But the products likely to get the most attention from e-drummers were the two higher-end kits - the EF Note 3 and the EF Note 5.

The kits feature full-size shells with independent lugs, three-zone snare and two-zone toms, 360 degree three-zone cymbals and even the kick pad has multiple sensors. The touchscreen module

has a USB eight-channel audio output with ASIO, four analogue audio outputs and Bluetooth audio in.

The EF Note kits look like the real deal, and **digitalDrummer** hopes to have full reviews of the line in a future edition.

**Alesis** first showed its Strike Pro kit – albeit not a fully functional kit – at the 2016 NAMM Show. So, when shipping started in mid-2017, interest was already strong. The value proposition of a large kit with real wood, acoustic-size shells and a module capable of importing multi-layer samples was appealing to say the least. Well, four years on, the Strike Pro has got bigger – and arguably better.

Alesis' NAMM offering this year is dominated by the new Strike Pro Special Edition with its distinctive 20 inch kick drum. As we note in our review on page 26, the kit has undergone a number of improvements including new white mesh heads.



### Eric Moore put the GEWA G9 through its paces

The Alesis stand also displayed the popular Strike MultiPad which debuted last year and is proving a hot seller around the world.

Sweden's **2box** had a limited presence at NAMM to show off its DrumIt Five MKII module. Based on the original drum brain, the new version benefits from the enhanced compatibility with third-party triggers unveiled in the DrumIt Three. It retains the six outputs of the original but gets a significant memory boost - 32 GB, as opposed to the original 4 GB.

Importantly, the MKII gets an external SD card slot – something that users were doing themselves with the first 2box module. The USB slot, which became redundant on the hacked modules, has been removed, and owners will now load new sounds directly onto the card.

Conspicuously absent was 2box's new Speedlight kit comprised of the DI3 module, three toms, snare with stand, 12 inch crash cymbal with choke and 14 inch three-zone ride, hi-hat and stand and all cables.

On paper, this kit should fare better than the original 2box offering. Firstly, its mesh heads will no longer fall foul of patent infringement claims and secondly, it has avoided its divisive orange pads in favour of a less controversial black finish.

The bigger news for the Swedish developer was, however, at the Hal Leonard stand, where the DrumIt Three appeared under a new identity – as the **KAT** KT-M1. According to sources at Hal Leonard, the module hardware is identical to the DI3, but the sounds built in have been chosen by KAT. Additionally, the KT-M1 will include turnkey kit set-ups for the trapKAT which was also on show at the booth.

Sources say we shouldn't read too much into the 2box/KAT collaboration and the move does not mean that Hal Leonard is taking over distribution of 2box in the US.

Germany's **GEWA**, which debuted its Drum Workstation G9 last year, brought out some big guns to demonstrate the new kit. Drummers Eric Moore, Ben Barter and Jost Nickel drew large crowds at their demos.



Pearl's eMerge and dbdrums' Julian Berenstecher.



There was no word on a shipping date for the kit which features one of the biggest screens of all the modules out there. Despite the absence of an arrival date, European retailers like Thomann are accepting pre-orders for the GEWA G9 E-Drum Set Studio 5 kit at €4,059.

The Thomann website lists the components as an 18" bass drum with riser, two 10" tom pads, one 12" tom pad and a 12" snare drum - all with dual-ply mesh heads. There are two 14" crash cymbal pads (three zones), an 18" ride cymbal pad and a 14" hi-hat cymbal pad, including controller and stand.

The **Pearl** stand had plenty of new acoustic products, but nothing to debut on the electronic side.

The booth displayed the mimicPRO module and the eMerge kit which had been shown in Winter NAMM 2019 and officially launched in Europe at last year's UK Drum Show. The only real "news" at the booth was that the kits should start

shipping soon in the US to customers who have pre-ordered.

While much of the attention was focused on the 'big name' brands, there were a number of smaller manufacturers and distributors. Argentina's **dbdrums**, which has been manufacturing electronic drums since 1998 and now exports its products globally, was at NAMM to demonstrate a new offering in the multipad market.

Looking very similar to the Alesis Strike Multipad – although the manufacturer insists it is not a rebadged OEM product but rather dbdrums' own work, the instrument has nine pads, three of them raised bar triggers.

The npad has 620 in-built sounds with multilayer samples and the ability to trigger user sounds via a USB drive.

The multipad has four trigger inputs and MIDI in and out and is expected to be launched as a Kickstarter project, with a price of around \$500.





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# Two Strikes and you're in



Alesis recently updated its flagship Strike Pro kit with a Special Edition version. **Allan Leibowitz** checked it out.



WITH A NEW full-size bass drum, an updated hi-hat, new mesh heads and new firmware and kit sounds on the module, the new Strike Pro SE is undoubtedly Alesis' best-ever electronic drum kit. But how does it stack up?

### **What's in the box**

The Strike Pro SE kit consists of 11 drums and cymbal pads mounted on a full-size, sturdy steel rack. The kit ships with a snare stand, but no hi-hat stand or kick pedal.

The pads are all full-size, from the new 20" kick to the 14" dual-zone mesh snare, 8", 10", 12" and 14" toms, 14" movable hi-hat, 16" three-zone rubber ride and three 14" rubber dual-zone chokeable crashes. To distinguish the SE kit from its predecessor, Alesis has opted for black hardware and gold-coloured tension rods on this kit.

The black mesh heads of the previous kit have been replaced by new white dual-ply heads with a fine tight weave, very reminiscent of the drum-tec Design heads.

Alesis says the cymbals are covered with a new thick comfortable rubber "that creates the perfect blend of feel, control, bounce and volume". I never got to review the original Strike kit, so I'm not sure if the new

ones are at all improved, but they do have the feel of well-made e-cymbals.

The brain is unchanged from the original Strike line-up, except that it has new firmware and 20 extra kits. Owners of the original module can unlock the new material through a free download.

### **In action**

The first impression, of course, is the acoustic-like appearance of the kit. The full-size drums and cymbals mean acoustic drummers feel right at home.

If anything, the rack was a touch too generous and Alesis could have got away with something a bit smaller and lighter. That would make life easier for gigging drummers and also create a smaller footprint for garage players. On the upside, there are additional inputs on the module, so the rack can easily accommodate more drums and cymbals. Similarly, they could have saved some weight with shallower shells on the toms – but most drummers will be happy with the proportions.

The new 20" bass drum is clearly a reaction to growing demand for these full-size drums, and while it looks great and triggers well, there are some downsides.



Firstly, it is heavy and bulky and not ideal for schlepping to gigs. Secondly, the large mesh heads are not quite mylar-like in their feel – they have more bounce and take a bit of adapting to. And then there’s the noise: the kick is louder than its compact predecessor. The acoustic sound can be reduced by backing off the tension, but that affects the feel. Some owners have resorted to stuffing pillows into the void, which does dampen the sound considerably.

The kit was easy to set up, although with 11 pieces, it took about an hour to position everything comfortably.

The supplied cable bundle is efficient and ergonomic for a right-handed set-up with the module on the left – the way most users will configure the kit.

The module is quite straight-forward and easy to navigate, with a generous 4.3” colour LED screen.

The pads and cymbals required little tweaking for good performance. For each pad, you’ll find the usual sensitivity, threshold and curve adjustments as well as

crosstalk and retrigger settings and you can also choose from piezo or switch triggering if you’re adding third-party pads. There’s no head/rim balance adjustment, so you have to dial those in separately. One unique feature is the sensitivity knob on each drum which allows you to increase or decrease the output on the fly.

Hi-hat calibration is very simple, with just a few adjustable parameters.

### Sounds like

The Strike module comes preloaded with 136 kits, more than 1,800 instruments and 45,000 samples. The stock kits cover most of the popular genres, and the sounds are excellent – and fully editable. It is also easy to apply a range of FX - reverb, EQ, compressor and FX processors - in the dedicated FX mode.

In line with the move to content compatibility, the Strike module has both the ability to directly record samples and also to import multi-layer samples using a free companion editor programme available in both Mac and Windows versions.

# MAKE YOUR E-KIT SOUND SUPERIOR.

**Superior Drummer 3** is the world's most all-encompassing software for limitless drum production and e-drummers. **Take control today and dial in your e-drums to sound like you.** At the same time, revel in more than 230 GB of drum sounds recorded by George Massenburg, create custom kits from the insane amount of instruments and enjoy the market's most extensive set of tools for sound design. Welcome to the future.



## E-DRUM FEATURE SPOTLIGHT

- Get started playing instantly with e-drum presets for a variety of e-drum brands
- Easy setup for positional sensing pads and multiple articulations
- No need for a DAW – capture your performance directly in the 'Song Track' of Superior Drummer 3
- Manageable library size with up to 25 velocity layers per instrument
- Quick access to controls for snare and hi-hat CC
- Optimal response and humanization



New vs old (*above*) and the new pads and cymbal (*below*)

The sound import process is well documented and fairly logical, and enables users to add rich, multi-layer samples – including various open/closed articulations for the hi-hat. Provided you are able to generate suitable .wav files, you can create totally customised instruments and kits – similar to the approach pioneered by 2box and so highly sought-after by advanced ATV and mimicPRO owners. The sample import ability gets a big tick.

Regardless of whether you're using stock or custom kits, the Strike is very responsive – and it's easy to dial in nuanced playing, from ghost notes to machinegun-free buzz rolls and cymbal swells. I was impressed with the playability – especially the rim response on the drums. We have a Strike module on the **digitalDrummer** test bed for third-party triggers and almost universally struggle to get decent rim triggering with most pads. With Alesis' own offering, however, that was not the case – and performance was flawless.

Gigging and recording drummers will appreciate the eight direct outputs: kick, snare, hi-hat, ride, toms (left and right) and left and right channels for the crash cymbals. It's also nice to see individual physical sliders to control instrument volumes in addition to the virtual mixer.



## Overall

With a full kit priced at a bit more than double the cost of a rival's full-size bass drum, the Alesis Strike Pro SE delivers a lot of bang for buck.

The kit includes more pads and cymbals than many of its costlier competitors – and they look and feel good. And, unlike most of its rivals, this Strike Pro comes with an easy-to-use editor which allows users to add their own real samples.

So, on paper, the Strike Pro SE is a no-brainer. But the new kit still has to overcome some of the negative baggage of the original Strike offerings. In particular, the original drum pads were plagued by failures, with the trigger plate cracking and breaking. There were also some concerns about the performance of the original hi-hat controller.

It appears that Alesis has corrected the design and manufacturing issues and that the company has gone out of its way to keep customers happy. So, provided the new pads survive the rigours of hard playing – and that Alesis continues to support its products, the Strike Pro Special Edition should sell like hot cakes.

## Specifications

### Kit:

**Drums:** 20" kick, 14" dual-zone mesh snare, 8", 10", 12" and 14" dual-zone toms

**Cymbals:** 14" movable hi-hat, 16" three-zone ride and three 14" dual-zone chokeable crashes.

**Hardware:** rack, snare stand

### Module:

**Kits:** 135 preset factory kits, unlimited user kits, depending on SD card size

**Instruments:** 1,600 (4 GB total)

**Display:** 110 mm full-colour LED-backlit

### Connections:

**Inputs:** 13 ¼" TRS trigger inputs, ⅛" stereo Aux input, 5-pin MIDI input

**Outputs:** 2 ¼" TRS outputs, 8 ¼" direct TRS outputs, 5-pin MIDI output and ¼" stereo headphone output USB: Type-B port

**SD:** card slot for a 32 GB (maximum) Class 10 card

**Latency:** 6.4 ms\*

**US street price:** \$2,499

\* Latency measured using *Electronic Drums Latency Meter (EDLM)* from ONYX Apps

## Join the conversation



**digitalDrummer is on Facebook.**

- Join our group and keep up with the latest views and opinions.
- Read how members are using their e-drums.
- Find out about fixes to common problems.
- Pick up a bargain – or sell off your unneeded gear.
- Share your videos – or watch others in action.

**There's no better place to discuss electronic percussion**

# Best Simmons of the new era



**digitalDrummer** was among the first to get hold of the new Simmons flagship kit and we've had time to put it through some thorough testing.



THE SIMMONS SD1200, released late last year, is a more conventional take of the SD2000 kit which marked the collaboration of original Simmons founder Dave Simmons and the brand's more recent custodian, Guitar Center.

The SD2000's quirky hexagonal pads and cymbals are gone, replaced with more conventional playing surfaces, but much of the tech under the hood is the same.

### What's in the box

The kit consists of a 12" dual-zone snare; two 8" and one 10" dual-zone toms, and a 6" kick drum. The cymbal offering includes a 12" two-zone crash cymbal and a 14" triple-zone (bell/bow/edge) ride cymbal with choke. A variable pedal controls the 12" dual-zone hi-hat.

The SD1200 sound module features a large, full-colour graphic LCD screen, dedicated faders, knobs and buttons for kit customisation and Bluetooth MIDI for wireless connectivity.

Users can load their own one-shot samples or loops via USB.

The kit inherits the hexagonal rack design from the SD2000, but the SD1200 rack is a more subtle raw metal finish with more rugged hardware. While the hex design may be firmer than tubular racks, it does make it harder to tilt the pads – in fact, I found it easier to tilt the crossbar rather than trying to reposition the tom mounts.

The cymbals are mounted in the vertical posts – which does save space, but it limits their positioning somewhat.

The clamps seem pretty robust and look less fiddly than their SD2000 predecessors.

Overall, the rack is generously sized and quite steady and stable.

As I mentioned, the hexagonal pads of the SD2000 are gone, replaced with more conventional shallow shell pads covered in a classy blue wrap. These pads are reminiscent of Alesis pads, although





internally, they are close to Roland's PD-128 design – right down to their triangular platform and the foam cone. They do look classy, with smart metallic Simmons badges on the sides. The snare stand supplied for the main drum is another classy touch. The pads are fitted with tight-weave dual-ply mesh heads – another nod to Roland's expired patent.

The cymbals are pretty standard fare at this pricepoint – plastic cymbals with dimpled rubber playing surfaces and standard piezo and switch internals.

The kick pad is a solid piece of gear with a 6" mesh-style head, but not a regular tensionable playing surface – rather a mesh sandwich over layers of foam.

### **In action**

I'll preface my comments by pointing out that my US colleague, Scott Holder, has done most of the recent lower-end kit reviews, so smaller pads in this kit took some getting used to.

I had no problem with the 12" snare, which was comfortable, easily adjusted thanks to its stand, and nicely responsive.

The 8" hanging toms and 10" floor toms formed very small targets and really kept me on my game – I had to concentrate hard to avoid mishitting, mostly unintended rimshots. I understand this kit is built to a budget, but I do wonder how much profit 12" toms would have eroded. The upside, of course, is that anyone starting out with this kit will develop very good playing accuracy which could come in handy later on in their career.

The pads triggered well, with even triggering across the head and little perceptible hot-spotting. Cross-stick and rim shot triggering was excellent.

The kick pad had a good natural feel and responded very well in stock settings. And it seems big enough to handle a double kick, if that's your weapon of choice.

The cymbals were far easier to play than the drum pads because they are much closer to "standard" sizing. And their feel was pretty much what we've come to expect from rubber pies.

The cymbals were responsive and bell triggering on the ride was natural. With a



bit of tweaking, it was possible to get decent edge rolls on the crash.

I listened really closely and struggled to hear any significant difference between the edge and bow triggering of the dual-zone hi-hat. But that may have more to do with the similarity of samples than the module's detection ability. If you really wanted noticeably different sounds, maybe it would be worth editing the samples and loading contrasting sounds.

## The module

Although it looks very different from the SD2000 module, with the hexagonal shape of the former being replaced with clean squared sides on the new module, it's hard to tell the two apart in functionality and performance.

The SD1200 module is compact – a little smaller than the Roland TD-17, but fully featured, including individual volume sliders for the drums and cymbals.

Like most modules these days, the pads connect via a DB25 serial jack with two additional input jacks on the side of the module.

There are two ¼" output jacks as well as MIDI In and Out and USB. Unlike the SD2000, this module also has MIDI (not audio) via Bluetooth.

One of the main features is a 7 cm colour screen with pictures of the kits and pads, etc. To be honest, I found the pictures a waste of screen space which meant tiny fonts for the text and it actually makes it harder to see what you're doing – but that may be a generational bias.

Luckily, it is possible to bypass the screen and do some of the tweaking using the Advanced Simmons App. To use the app,

you need to connect the module to your iPhone and iPad using an Apple Camera connection adapter – even though the module has Bluetooth.

With the app, you can edit kits and drum sounds and tweak parameters such as volume, pan, tuning, reverb, chorus, decay and sound assignments.

The Sampling Tool lets you record and edit your own samples with your iPhone or iPad, then upload and save them to your module for performance – but there are ways of importing higher-quality sounds as well from your computer.

While there are only four play-along songs on the module, you can use the Play Along function on the app to access your music library and play along to your favourite songs. (I wasn't able to test that as the app was not totally compatible with the version of iOS I was running – but I'm sure that will be addressed soon.)

## Sounds like

The SD1200 kit comes with 50 preset kits drawn from 764 individual sounds. Of course, sounds are subjective, but overall, I was impressed at the stock kits which cover all the major genres from pop to jazz, with lots of ethnic/world sounds and, of course, some classic electronic sounds.

The sounds are high-quality and realistic (they are real samples), but they are also highly editable. For example, it's possible to tune all the instruments and, something rarely offered at this price range, link pitch to velocity so that a drum plays higher notes when you hit harder.

It is also possible to import your own samples into the module – although this is a bit of an exercise. Firstly, you need to

download the WAV Upload programme which allows you to convert .wav files and export them to the module while it's connected to your computer. Then you need to go into the module's editing functions and allocate your samples to instruments. You can allocate up to four samples – one for each 'layer' – to each instrument and that does create some sound variety between hard and soft hits.

I really liked many of the stock kits and enjoyed playing them – but I found it necessary to adjust a lot of instrument levels on many of the kits. For example, the crash would suddenly be very loud on one kit and soft on the next.

It's worth noting that this is one of the few kits with two-zone hi-hats, although, as mentioned, I'm not convinced that feature is fully exploited.

Although the module doesn't have positional sensing, the Simmons Variable Attack Response (VAR) engine, described in our Simmons SD2000 review, does provide some sonic variation and does a good job of eliminating machinegunning.

## Overall

The SD1200 is, without doubt, the best Simmons kit of the new era. It looks good, is well built and sturdy and includes many of the must-have features – dual-zone mesh pads, dual-zone chokeable cymbals (three-zone ride with decent bell response), the ability to import samples and a reasonably quick module (latency is just 5.7 ms).

There are lots of good sounds and usable kits, and the responsiveness is better than Simmons has ever had before – from ghost notes on the snare to easy bell triggering on the ride.

Bluetooth is another advantage – although the absence of MIDI note editing on the module and some incompatibilities with programs like GarageBand are a bit of an issue at this time.

I was also impressed with the Simmons app, which frees you from the limitations of the small screen, especially with a decent-sized iPad, and makes tweaking a breeze.

Simmons gets another tick for designing a nifty phone/tablet mount that allows you to easily access your device and your module at the same time.

The kit is a serious contender in the mid-level market – even more so with competitive pricing around the \$900 mark (the kit was originally priced near \$1,200). But it is up against some formidable offerings in the sub-\$1,000 sector, with Roland's TD-17-KL and Yamaha's DTX532K recently discounted.



## Specifications

### Module:

**Polyphony:** 64 voices

**Kits:** 50 preset and up to 25 user kits

**Sounds:** 764 preset sounds, 128 user sounds

**Songs:** 4 demo songs, 25 user songs

**Effects:** Room, stage, hall and plate reverbs, delay and echo 2-band EQ per kit

**External connections:** Headphone out, master stereo outputs, 1/8" TRS Aux input, MIDI In and Out jacks, USB connection

**Click/Metronome:** click voice, time sig

**Latency:** 5.7 ms\*

### Drums:

**Snare:** 12" mesh dual zone

**Toms:** 8" (x2), 10" mesh dual zone

**Hi-hat:** 12" dual-zone with multi-position controller

**Crash:** 12" dual zone

**Ride:** 14" triple zone

**Street price:** \$899

\* Latency measured using *Electronic Drums Latency Meter (EDLM)* from *ONLY Apps*



# 682DRUMS

## CELEBRATING DIGITALDRUMMER'S 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY!

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The t-Rigg is a perfect solution for adding an additional trigger option to your electronic or acoustic drum kit. It can be used for sound effects, percussion sounds or any other sounds you want to trigger. Great for percussionists!

Only needs a mono connection. Works with all sound modules, pad like the Roland SPD-SX, Alesis soundpads and can be connected to a computer in combination with a trigger/midi converter.

The outer shell of the t-Rigg is covered by a special rubber compound, allowing it to be struck anywhere. The end that fits in the clamp also has a rubber surface, which reduces cross-talk substantially.

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Use the KTR-7 as an extra kick drum for your E-kit. A perfect additional E-kick for an acoustic drum kit (fits beneath floor tom).

The KTR-7 is the perfect companion for sample pads such as the Roland SPD-SX, SPD-S or Alesis Performance pads.

# monitoring

## Is small the way to go?



After all the huge thumping drum amps, **Scott Holder** tries something a bit tamer - the Yamaha MS45DR e-drum.

AFTER YEARS OF virtually no activity in the dedicated e-drum monitor market, the last several have seen a relative explosion of product offerings. They are split between a single cabinet (Roland, Alesis, Simmons, KAT Percussion) and 2:1 system (Simmons and KAT). Yamaha has been the big e-drum player noticeably absent from that market since it discontinued the MS100DR 2:1 system. That's now changed with the release of the MS45DR 2:1. We lined it up against several of the new competitors.

Unlike what I've done in previous e-drum monitor reviews, I tested it only as a personal monitor with no view toward stage monitor or general PA usage; it's clearly not designed for that.

## What's in the box

The set-up is essentially like its predecessor: two small, passive satellites connected to a powered subwoofer. A single cable connects the sub to the satellites via RCA connectors and then a ¼" L/R line to the sound source. If you have a source that doesn't have a split ¼" L/R output, you'll need a splitter.

There are just three controls, all on the subwoofer: on/off button, master volume and a bass volume controller. This is a stereo speaker as you'd expect in a 2:1 system. The 6.5" sub is rated at 20 W, as is each of the satellites. The latter have a 3" midrange cone and a 0.8" dome tweeter.

The satellites are attached to 1.5" pipes, allowing you to clamp them onto most drum racks with the included pipe clamps.



## The performance

Everybody makes a “quiet at rest” system now, the MS45DR is no different: no hum even with the master volume cranked. I then set out one of my Simmons DA200S cabinets as well as the newer Simmons DA2012B. Virtually all my side-by-side comparisons were with the DA200S because the newer Simmons model is significantly different than the Yamaha, thus, not a real apples-to-apples comparison.

Separation testing always starts with the Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs CD release of Pink Floyd’s *Money* via a 1/8” to 1/4” splitter. Separation was extremely distinct, better than the DA200S (not surprising, given the satellites were about 5 ft. apart) and on par with the other 2:1 systems we’ve tested (KAT’s HD400, dD Nov 2016 and Simmons’s DA350, dD Aug 2017). I panned three toms on my DTX502 L-C-R and they flowed right across my sound field. Also nice was the sound in the middle; this is particularly true when playing music along with the drums. Things panned centre really did sound centre.

Sound quality on the mids and highs was superb. I liked the timbre and overall presence of the satellites far better than the DA200S I’ve always used as a benchmark. When compared to the two other 2:1 systems, the MS45DR is as good as the HD400 and far better than the DA350.

Low end, however, is how most e-drummers judge a monitor. In that category, the MS45DR is significantly lacking. That shouldn’t be surprising given the size and wattage of the cone. Nonetheless, no amount of mid and high separation, clarity and sonic goodness makes up for an almost complete lack of oomph. This is where I toggled back and forth between the MS45DR and the DA200S and there was no comparison. I harkened back to our review of the KAT KA1/2 (dD Feb 2014) and from memory, the MS45DR doesn’t have the low end of something as modest as the KA1.



I sat the sub on the floor, following the manual and various Yamaha online guides for initial listening. I still wasn’t getting any punch. To squeeze something out of the sub, I then tilted it upwards and moved it right next to the throne which helped somewhat but still not nearly enough.

By this point, I had the bass volume maxed out and gradually turned the master volume up; that did help. The problem is that it also turned up the satellites to the point that they were too loud. Going above a certain point then resulted in distortion from the sub. I will say the satellites never distorted, no matter how high I pushed the volume.

I then hooked everything through my little Crate mixer to boost the lows while toning down the satellites. I could boost the low end right to the distortion level. That brought it to about the DA200S at perhaps a quarter up, meaning I still had tons of headroom with it, unlike the Yamaha. Turning down the higher frequencies on the mixer minimised the shrillness of the satellites, but not necessarily their volume. I never did find a balance I liked: either I



was distorting the lows or flattening the mids and highs. The lows never had any punch or presence.

As I always do, I played a variety of songs, drum tracks and then representative kits to judge the overall dynamics. Full songs sounded pleasant due to the separation. Cymbals and associated percussion sounded nice, as I expected by this point. Kits or specific sounds with booming lows, like a trance mix on the DTX502, sounded okay if you didn't expect to feel the kick or timpani, but that was with the sub right next to me, tilted up with the bass volume cranked.

I was not willing to seriously mess with the internal EQ settings of any unit from which I was feeding a signal into the MS45DR, in this case a Yamaha DTX502, the Alesis Strike I had for review and a Roland TD-12. That's a rabbit hole because if you want to then play through a regular PA, you're back to changing everything. Moreover, I really shouldn't have to do all of that, be it on the module or through an external mixer. Therein lies the problem with a monitor with virtually no controls. We remarked on that with the Roland units. You don't need a 12-band equaliser but you do need something more than what's on there.

## The bottom line

Eleven years ago, I wrote a review piece for an online forum about the state of e-drum monitors/amps at that time. The closest thing back then to the MS45DR was Roland's PM-10 or PM-30. The verdict back then on the PM-10 was that it was underpowered and anaemic. In terms of the low end on the Yamaha, that unfortunately is my verdict.

The MS45DR will work as a personal monitor in a small rehearsal space. The satellites provide sizzle and a crisp sound, they are very nice, but the overall feel isn't any different than a good set of headphones. If I wanted headphone sound, I'd use headphones. Going with any e-drum monitor means the drummer wants to feel more bass and experience



the sound in the space as opposed to inside the proverbial cans. The Yamaha doesn't effectively do that.

I had to keep reminding myself that its aims are modest which is why I never made any comparisons against the relative behemoth Simmons DA2012B: they are entirely different pieces of gear. I realise that we're talking about 20 W boxes so adjusted my expectations accordingly. One thing is clear: that modest power rating is sufficient for the satellites as they're designed but not nearly enough for the subwoofer. I'm puzzled as to why Yamaha took this approach when it came to the subwoofer when there are now several other models available that do the same thing but provide a better overall "feel" for sound and the room it inhabits. Admittedly, an e-drummer will be using a play-along track and the MS45DR does that very well and probably "sounds better" than any of the smaller, single-box monitors like the DA50 or KA1. However, those models still get enough bass out there to make you think you're not on headphones.

We've said this many times before: most e-drummers are looking at a cabinet's power vs pristine sound quality and separation. For the same amount of money, there are other options that make more sense for e-drum monitoring.

# monitoring

## From mics to headphones



GERMAN MICROPHONE GIANT Neumann has moved into the headphone market, with a high-end studio model launched last year at NAMM. **digitalDrummer** tried it out.

### What's in the box

Where some headphones come with cases, adapters and other add-ons, the NDH 20 comes with a simple cloth carry bag, a generous curly cable, a straight cable and a ¼" adapter. That's it!

What this tells me is that all the focus is on the headphones, which are designed for professional use, rather than movie watching on aircraft or listening to your iPhone on the bus.

Inside the classy box, there is a solid-looking pair of headphones – large brushed aluminium ear cups, plush generous ear cushioning and a robust band – almost 400 g of monitoring equipment all up.

The headphones are powered by 38 mm drivers, a bit smaller than the 45 mm drivers in the e-drum stalwart ATH-M50 and the popular Beyerdynamic DT 770 PRO. But the NDH 20 shows it's not all about size.

### In action

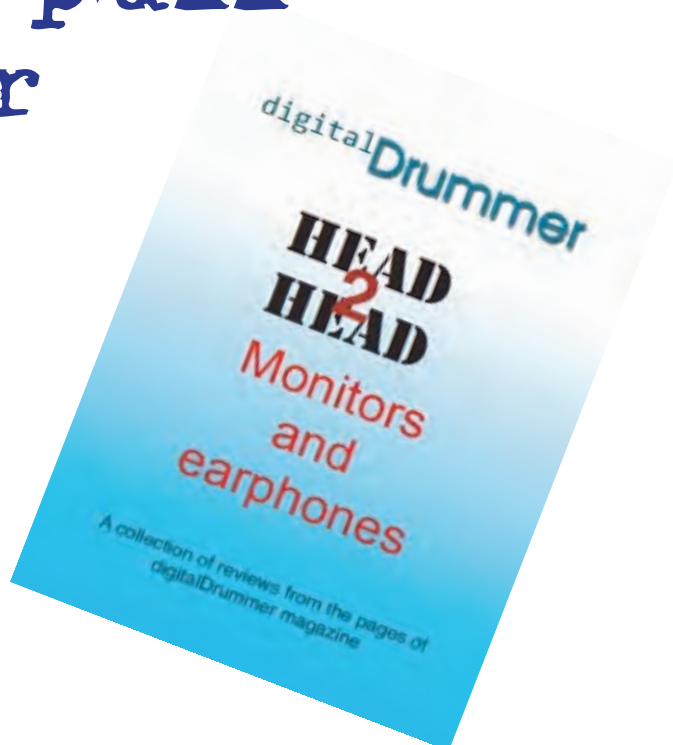
The NDH 20 are extremely comfortable. They are generously sized, providing plenty of ear room, and the adjustable headband makes it easy to find a firm fit.

Isolation is excellent and certainly enough to totally mask mesh and rubber pads - and it's almost impossible to hear stick noise on dampened metal cymbals.

The Neumanns are relatively high impedance - 150 Ohms, meaning they require a bit more power to drive them and you'll probably find yourself cranking up your module a bit more than if you were using cheaper headphones. In my case, I got an earful of sound at 10 o'clock on the

# Before you pull the trigger

... Check out  
our reviews





reference Roland TD-30 – around the same level I use for my 770 PROs. They worked well at modest volume settings with the 2box DrumIt Five, which is a bit underpowered in its headphone output.

But it's obviously about more than volume – the headphone experience is about accurate reproduction. And this is where Neumann's microphone and studio monitor pedigree shines.

Listening to just kit sounds, I was instantly struck by the warmth and balance of the NDH 20. All the frequencies were there – from thudding bass to jingly treble, but I was struck by the presence of the midrange and the cleanness of the sounds.

The bass was not in your face, but it had a reassuring solidity. Similarly, the treble was able to cut through with absolutely no shrillness.

The overall sensation was smoothness – a balance and harmony that one associates with a studio. And they sounded even better with music than they did with drums, displaying an excellent sound range devoid of distortion.

## Overall

The NDH 20s look great, fit comfortably and deliver excellent e-drum reproduction

without pushing the output level of the module.

They produce a natural, full sound, with excellent mid-range and impressive but not overbearing highs and lows.

E-drummers will particularly welcome the generous, industrial-strength curly 3 m lead which allows you to move around freely at some distance from your module's headphone jack.

The only downside, for some, will be the price tag. The Neumanns sell for \$500 – more than twice the price of the DT 770 PRO and probably hard to justify the difference unless you're very fussy and you're going to be using them often - and for long periods of time. If money's no object, it'll be hard to fault the NDH 20.

## Specifications

**Driver:** 38 mm dynamic

**Frequency response:** 5 Hz-30 kHz

**Sensitivity:** 114 dB at 1 kHz

**Impedance:** 150 Ohms

**Maximum power handling:** 1000 mW

**Total Harmonic Distortion:** 0.1%

**Street price:** \$500



# MalletKAT 8

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- Water resistant
- Dampening and deadstroke
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# Gibraltar®

Electronic Mounting Stands and Accessories



## SC-EMMP Electronics Module Mounting Plate

Designed to fit most digital modules and percussion pad units with universal mounting specs.



## SC-EMARM E Mounting Arm Attachment

Attaches to a cymbal stand, or hi-hat stand tube allowing you to directly mount your electronic module. Includes two 360° grabber clamps with an 18" boom arm.





## Sonor story retold

As e-drum nostalgia gathers momentum, a German enthusiast has compiled the story of an often-overlooked chapter in the history of electronic percussion.

MARKUS EINHEUSER RECENTLY launched a website dedicated to Sonor's Mammuth e-drums.

Einheuser says his interest in the instruments stems from his youth in Westphalia, near to the Sonor factory.

"When I was a kid, I often flattened my nose at the shop window of the local music store when Sonor drums were displayed."

His teen years co-incided with the golden age of electronic drums, dominated by Simmons, Dynacord and Tama. At that time, "Sonor set out to win the favour of customers with their new, stunning e-drums."

Einheuser's website stems from some research in 2012 which yielded very little information about the now-defunct Mammuth (German for Mammoth) line, prompting him to decide to "write it himself".

The result is a comprehensive chronicle of the short-lived brand and its products. It traced Sonor's lofty ambitions for the new line of electronic drums, and details the February 1987 launch of the Mammuth Digital Drum System, explaining that the six-year delay after the arrival of the Simmons SDSV made the launch "a difficult undertaking".



#### Markus Einheuser with some of his Sonor collectables

On the new website, you can find details of the system's development as well as a comprehensive list of all the products produced by Sonor.

Einheuser, as you would expect, owns some Mammut gear – not as much as he would like as “the system's components are very rare nowadays and hard to find”. In fact, the site also lists some online Mammut gear offerings, the most recent of which was a module on offer in February last year. But he points out that since around 2015, “hardly any components were offered”.

Einheuser's collection, photos of which are included on the site, include four Mini Mammut modules (one of which is “new old stock” and has never been used), two operation manuals, 16 cartridges (serial and prototypes with surrounding cases), prototype cartridges without cases, prototype 8” and 12” pads, two serial 10” pads, two Trigger Sticks (a trigger that enabled the drummer to switch quickly and easily using a drumstick) and other bits and pieces.

Those bits include a C8 microphone, a special mic which fed directly into the module.

Einheuser sourced most of his collection from eBay in Germany, but he also sourced some from Dr. Andreas Plaas-Link, the father of the Mini Mammut, lead developer and great-grandson of the Sonor founder, whom he visited in May 2019.

Einheuser's account is more than a bout of nostalgia. It reflects some significant innovations which originated up the road from his childhood home and which were largely overlooked, although they are now back in vogue.

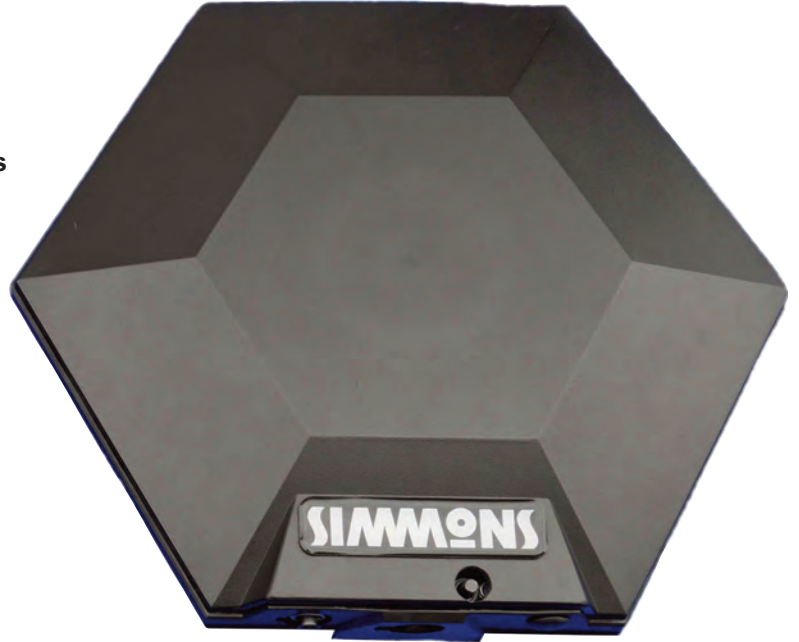
In particular, the Mini Mammut is now being recognised as a pioneer of hybrid drumming.

Unlike the other products at the time which consisted of pads and modules, the Sonor system was an e-drum add-on for a regular acoustic drum kit.

Where other e-drums often overlooked the feel of the heads, Sonor's were designed to replicate the sensation of acoustic drums.

Another innovation, the Trigger Stick, had two rubber-coated prongs, each with four sections or zones, each of which could select or change up to eight triggered sounds.

A Sonor pad and one of its Simmons counterparts



information on a little-known product line. It is entertaining and informative and will make fascinating reading for anyone interested in vintage electronic drums.

Alas, the [website](#) is written in German, but Google Translate does an excellent job for English speakers. There are scores of detailed images which also help illustrate the Mammut.

Finally, it is not difficult to detect Einheuser's enthusiasm, even reading the translation, and the high esteem in which he holds the Sonor factory, its people and, more specifically, those associated with the now extinct e-drum line.

And finally, the C8 microphone must be seen as a precursor to current innovations like Yamaha's EAD 10 system, Zildjian's Gen-16 electro-acoustic cymbals and Sunhouse's Sensory Percussion.

Einheuser's website provides a wealth of



## INTERESTED IN E-DRUM HISTORY?

**feature**  
Back to where it all began

It was 20 years ago that Simmons drums were silenced. But the legend lives on, with many kits still being played and the hexagonal pads and characteristic sounds indelibly etched into music culture.

To mark the passing of an era, digitalDrummer rounded up some of the old gang for a virtual Simmons reunion.

**Some Simmons ads from the Simmons Museum archive**

**Glyn Thomas: US Distributor**  
Glyn Thomas was a key figure in Simmons' success, having set up Simmons USA Inc, the American distributor. He recalls being contacted by Dave Simmons who, at the time, was an unknown electronics engineer with a small workshop in Saint Albans, Hertfordshire, England.

"I was a pro-drummer doing gigs and sessions in London. Dave contacted me and asked me if I could try an EDDV kit on a session and give my evaluation of it. The session was a total success, so much so that I was convinced that the kit was destined to be 'hot' and 'totally beloved'."

After selling Simmons gear in the UK, Thomas moved to Los Angeles to set up Simmons in the US — on his own and totally self-financed.

"I formed Simmons USA and set about marketing the kit to drummers and drummers all over the USA. I set up a small studio with an EDDV kit in my office and invited the drummers in LA to come by it," he says.

He now recalls that what Dave Simmons and the team created was not just a business. "We started the whole electronic drum revolution."

Thomas, who is mentioned by so many of the Simmons alumni as a key figure in the brand's success, is now "happily retired" in a beautiful Georgian house in a little village in the Cotswolds, England — with no Simmons gear in sight. Like so many of his colleagues, Thomas didn't hold onto any of the equipment which has retained its appeal and still has a cult following.

Check out our May 2019 edition which marks the 20th anniversary of the end of production of Simmons.

The feature catches up with some of the key people involved in the Simmons story, gathers their memories and tracks their careers since the end of the Simmons era. [Click here](#) to read.



# HIT LIKE A GIRL

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courtesy of  
**digitalDrummer**

# performance

## How I use e-drums



Australian percussionist **Maarten Stenakur** relies on electronics for variety and sound control.

I AM A drummer and music producer from Victoria, Australia. My interest in drumming started back in 1986 when I heard the Genesis track *Domino*. It features Phil Collins blazing around a Simmons drum kit. From then on, I studied drums and tuned percussion with Sydney-based teachers Brian Nixon, Iain Scotland, Michael Hall and Milan Troha.

Since the early '90s, I have played many styles of music ranging from rock, metal, big band, jazz, Brazilian styles, alternative country and electronic music. While I have done the corporate covers thing, I prefer to play original music in bands like The Pryor Theory, Slimey Things, the Drivers Eyes, Black Paul, Astro, etc. I have also played alongside Kate Ceberano, Richard Pleasance, Xani Kolac, Rod Bustos and others. These experiences have seen me play the Big Day Out, St Kilda Festival, One Movement for Music, Bacardi Latin Festival, Ritmo Brazilian Day, Manly World Music Concerts, Castlemaine Jazz Festival, etc.

While I still play with other artists and bands, my primary focus at the moment is building on my solo music catalogue, also adding drumming and music videos to my YouTube channel. My music style and sound is traditional world music combined with a cinematic film score type of vibe.

For live performance, I use a basic acoustic set-up of kick, snare, hi-hat, floor tom and crash ride. To this, I add a Yamaha DTX-Multi 12 to trigger off loops and sounds. I use a DT50S snare trigger to ensure the back beat cuts through the mix. Sometimes, I will use a HH65 hi-hat pedal connected to the DTXM12. For some gigs, I will replace the snare drum between my legs with the DTXM12 which I can play with my hands. For venues that do not allow a drum kit, I use the same set-up but replace the acoustic kick drum with a KP65 kick pad. These set-ups give me more hands-on control over the type of sound that I want coming from my drum kit. It helps me to create the right sound for the mood of each song, just like keyboardists and guitarists have been able to do for many years.

For the recording, I program guide drum and percussion parts into Ableton Live using a Push controller. Then, in my studio, I perform and record those actual instrument parts playing an

Alternate Mode trapKAT XL and a Yamaha DTX920K drum kit using MIDI straight into a drum rack in Ableton. I add samples to the drum rack from my sound library, and often use presets from libraries such as Cinematic Percussion by ProjectSAM, Soundiron Apocalypse Percussion Elements, Uppercussion Vocalisms and Soniccouture Balinese Gamelan. I really like that a lot of those drum racks provide me with a responsive touch through the multiple velocity layers and how those presets allow me to design my sound using effects like attack, release, pitch and pan.

With this technology, I can easily access the sounds I want without having to own lots of space-crowding acoustic drums and percussion. I also don't have to own expensive microphones, and it is a quick and easy way to make recordings.

The drumming videos on my [YouTube channel](#) showcase the Yamaha EAD10 system on my hybrid drum kit. I am looking forward to continuing my e-drum explorations well into the future. It's an exciting time to be an e-drummer.

## Equipment List:

- Yamaha DTX-MULTI 12
- Yamaha EAD10 electronic acoustic drum module
- Yamaha DT50S and DT50K drum triggers
- Yamaha DTX920K electronic drum kit
- Alternate Mode trapKAT XL
- Allen & Heath ZED-10FX mixer
- AudioTechnica ATH-IM70 and ATH-M50x headphones
- Macbook Pro with Ableton Live 9 Suite
- Ableton Push Controller
- Focusrite Scarlett 18i8 interface
- Odery Drums acoustic kits



# performance

## Using e-drums

# live



No matter what kit you're using, a few basic rules will ensure you sound good live, as **Allan Leibowitz** reports.

SOUND RESTRICTIONS, QUICK changeovers, the need for special sounds – a number of factors are driving the increased use of electronic drums on stages around the world.

Whether you're playing a club in Hackensack, New Jersey or a stadium in Stockholm, Sweden, once you connect your lines out to the PA, your sounds are largely someone else's concern, so we spoke to some of those folks for their advice.

According to New York-based audio engineer Michael Lawrence of Precision Audio Services, one advantage of e-drums is that they overcome the volume challenge posed by acoustic drums which forces the sound engineer to bring the other mix elements up loud enough to balance with the drums. "E-drums can greatly reduce stage volume, allowing the mix engineer to achieve a balanced mix at a lower level. We can still turn up if we want certain parts of the show to be louder, but we no longer have a lower limit that requires the show to be loud. It also really cleans up the mix at any level, because we don't have snare and cymbal wash bleeding into all the vocal mics, and this makes a huge difference out front," he explains.

Gary Grimm, drum tech to stars like Mick Fleetwood and Mark Schulman (P!nk), sees consistency of sound as another

major e-drum benefit. "Engineers would have the same parameters of the sound(s) and levels every time," he says.

Of course, not all e-drums are created equal and Grimm notes that some don't allow drummers to manipulate the parameters as needed because the module doesn't have the editing capability. He cites the examples of volume, channel separation of different sounds, pitch, left/right/middle, etc.

Another challenge which Lawrence sees is amplification limitations. "With e-drums, we're asking the PA system to do a lot more work than it usually does if we're used to simply balancing the rest of the mix against a largely-acoustic or slightly-reinforced drum sound; so in a small venue environment, you may find that the PA doesn't have enough gas to get to show levels cleanly," he explains.

A common issue discussed in e-drums forums is module output. Some modules are only capable of sending a stereo signal with separate left and right feeds to the desk. Others have direct outs for every instrument, while some have banks of outs for toms and crashes, and only separate feeds for kick, snare and hi-hat.

Grimm believes you don't have to have separate outs, but it helps. "Having separate channels would allow the user and the sound engineer to possibly mix

# Tech talk

**Click:** A metronome/sound used to synchronise the band.

**Desk:** A mixing desk, used to combine and modify the instruments and vocals before amplification.

**Direct outs:** Dedicated outputs for each instrument or channel.

**EQ:** Equalization or the tweaking of frequency responses.

**FOH:** Front of house or audio output the audience hears.

**Out:** The audio feed from a module to the mixer.

**PA:** Literally, a public address system or amplification system used to send the band's mixed sound to the audience.



**Gary Grimm has handled sound for Mick Fleetwood and Mark Schulman**

more succinctly. Using only a left and right mix out can be fine as well. Also, the engineer may only have enough channels to receive all the direct instruments individually.”

For Lawrence, individual lines out is a must. “I’d certainly want direct outs - consider the fact that a FOH engineer is used to looking at eight-plus inputs from the drum kit. Having this granularity allows us to balance - in level and tone - the kit components themselves, and in the mix as a whole and the required balance can change from song to song.

“If we only have a pair of drum inputs, we are pretty limited with what we can do to fit the mix elements together - we can no longer use level, EQ, and dynamics processing on the individual kit elements.

“How do you cut some ring from a tom, or

roll some harshness out of the cymbals, if you only have one EQ choice for the whole kit?

“It also prevents us from doing popular types of processing - for example, routing the kick and snare mics into a bus for parallel compression, and then mixing this back in with the drum sound. And do we really want all that snare reverb on the cymbals as well? Combined outputs will end up tying the hands of an experienced mix engineer, and would very likely lead to compromises in a mix.”

If all that sounds too confusing, Lawrence suggests leaving it to the pros: “If you’ve got a mix engineer out front, it’s best to let them do their job.”

Of course, less well-endowed e-drummers can still strut their stuff on stage. This does, however, mean optimising the two-



**Audio engineer Michael Lawrence** channel output by applying some thought and planning.

For Grimm, the key advice is to keep 'like' sounds together. "In other words, if you only have left/right mix outputs, don't mix cymbals and other percussive pitches that are in the upper register with drums that would be in a lower register (on the same channel). Or, if you are only using drums, then bass drum and toms on one side and snare(s), etc. on the other.

"If you are using a click track (metronome), that should have its own channel, if possible." Some modules allow you to send the click to headphone only.

Lawrence agrees about the need to use two channels wisely. "Rather than use the two outputs chasing an elusive 'stereo' mix that doesn't tend to hold up in larger rooms anyway, I'd use the two outputs as 'stems' that at least give some control over the blend. Probably kick/snare/toms on one output, and hi-hat/cymbals on the other would be my recommendation. That will allow at least some basic balancing ability out front."

# "With e-drums, we're asking the PA system to do a lot more work than it usually does."

For gigging drummers, Grimm suggests starting out with the best instrument you can afford. "With electronics, you can only get out of it what it offers."

Grimm's other advice is to keep it simple. "Don't make your work more complicated than necessary. And definitely make notes. You may need them when editing or if you accidentally lose your sounds."

Lawrence is a big believer in communication. "If it's a venue with a house engineer, let them know that you can adjust your levels at the module, if need be. This is a great example of how important communication is - don't be afraid to have a conversation with the engineer out front about this. It's our job to help you sound the best possible and have a great show, and we can do that job better if you talk to us!"

On the technical side, his advice is to be careful with the effects. "Reverb sounds awesome in headphones, but in a space, it might be too much. The mix engineer can always add more, but they can't take it away!"

"Additionally, once levels are set, try to avoid futzing with the master volume. If you change the level at the module, you'll change what's going into the mixing console, so you're changing the mix out front and everyone's monitor mix, not just yours. If you want more or less in your monitor, just ask," he suggests.



# How VSTs work

WE SEE LOTS of questions about VSTs and it's clear there's quite a bit of confusion about this technology.

So, here is a quick guide to VSTs – or Virtual Studio Technology.

The formal definition of a VST is an audio plug-in software interface that integrates a software synthesizer and effects in digital audio workstations.

Still confused?

VSTs are a software solution that plays sounds when it is triggered.

Let's look at what you need for drum VSTs.

Obviously, you need the VST software itself.

That's a program like Superior Drummer or Addictive Drums.

These programs consist of samples or sounds and some tools to tweak them.

But you still need to be able to make the sounds happen. And there are two ways that works. Some VSTs operate as stand-alones, which means they don't need any other software to make them play – and others need a host to run in the background. The host is also known as a DAW (digital audio workstation).

**Definition: A digital audio workstation (DAW) is a software program used for composing, producing, recording, mixing and editing audio and MIDI. DAWs facilitate mixing of multiple sound sources on a time-based grid.**

In plain speak, a DAW is a virtual audio mixer and one of the best-known is GarageBand.

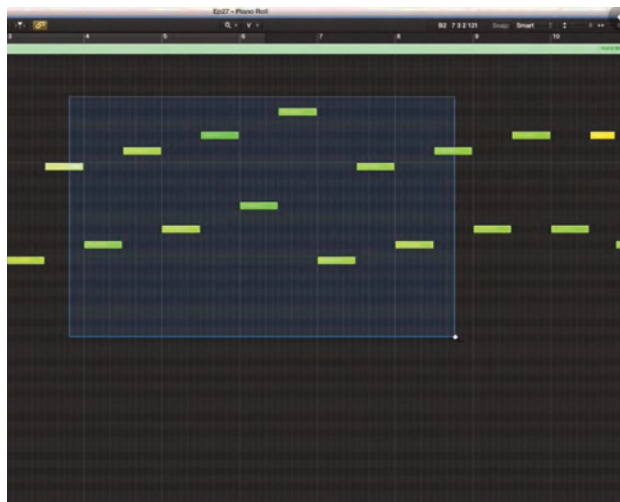




So, the DAW actually sits between the trigger and the VST.

Next, clearly, we have to discuss the triggers. You can use almost anything to make notes in a DAW – but most musicians use a keyboard to send MIDI to the program.

**MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) is a communications protocol – like a musical description that tells the DAW what notes, what instruments and what volume to play.**



**What MIDI looks like in Logic Pro X**

Drum modules can also send MIDI data, with each drum or cymbal having a different MIDI note. But there are other MIDI messages which tell the DAW if you're playing the head or rim and how loud or soft you're hitting the drums.

You don't really have to understand MIDI to use VSTs, but you do need to know how the hardware and software fits together.

## **VSTs in action**

So, let's look at how you connect your drums to a VST. First, you'll need a TMI (trigger to MIDI interface). That's a device to turn your strokes on the kit into MIDI messages. Today, most drum modules have built-in MIDI, and you can connect them via USB to your computer. Older modules might not have this easy connectivity, and you might need to connect the MIDI Out from the module to a separate interface, which then connects to the computer. But pretty much every module built in the last five years will have a direct connection to the computer.

Once you've connected the module to the computer, you need to make sure that it is selected as an audio device. On a Mac, you do this using the Audio MIDI setup app, which you'll find in the Utilities folder. Depending on your module, you might also have to load a driver which you'll find on the manufacturer's website.

Let's assume you're using a VST that needs a host. One of the easiest and cheapest is Reaper which even offers a free trial.

The first step is to open the DAW and select your MIDI device (most likely your drum module) and make sure your audio device settings are also correct (so that the audio is directed to where you want to hear it).

Then create a new project and insert your VST, which should appear under the Virtual Instruments tab. (This, of course, assumes that you have installed and activated your VST.)

Once you've selected your VST, it should open up with a screen that lets you choose your input instrument (under MIDI devices) and, just as importantly, load a MIDI map that directs all your triggers to the appropriate instrument. In other words, when you hit a snare rim, it should tell the VST to play a snare rim sample.

If you've loaded the correct map and it doesn't work, the most common cause is that the computer is not looking for MIDI data in the right place – specifically, the right "channel". Most modules send e-drum MIDI on channel 10, so try selecting that or "omni" (any channel) and you should hear the right sounds.

Once you're hearing sounds, you can start digging around in the VST, where you can select different kits, different instruments, various tunings and a bunch of other controls and effects.

There's much to learn about VSTs – and although there are lots of similarities between the common ones, there are also lots of differences, and you're best to look for further instructions relating to your specific VST.

# updates

## Strike Multipad

The Alesis Strike MultiPad, reviewed in the November 2019 **digitalDrummer**, has just received a feature update.

The v1.2 update is the second update since its introduction at NAMM in January 2019.

The update includes the ability to save and arrange custom Setlists of any Preset or User Kits.

Kit navigation and loading times have also been improved, while a Hi-Hat Playback Mode has been enhanced to allow users to assign open and closed sounds to a single pad for quick and easy hi-hat pedal set-up.

A Footswitch Playback Mode enables players to switch between Wave A and Wave B of a pad with the click of a footswitch.

The update also includes a Quick Wave Copy function.

Strike MultiPad feature update v1.2 is available now as a free download at [www.StrikeMultipad.com](http://www.StrikeMultipad.com).



## Yamaha EAD10

Yamaha is offering a free firmware update for the EAD10 electronic acoustic drum module, adding new creative functionality and customisable settings for drum recording, rehearsal and teaching applications.

One of the major enhancements is a TalkBack function, especially useful for YouTube content creators. The new setting raises the gain on the microphone while dropping out any of the effects. This means drummers can now talk directly through the EAD, without having to lean in or add a microphone. Users can activate the TalkBack function by pressing the Sensor Unit button, hitting a pad or pushing a footswitch.

Another improvement allows users to record for 90 minutes straight into the USB drive without it cutting out.

For live performances, the click function is now routable to the main stereo outputs and/or USB audio output, providing the option of having the click track in performances and recordings.

Yamaha has also recognised the growing use of silent practice kits with mesh heads and low-volume cymbals and included 42 new 'scenes' (or presets) optimised for triggers in quieter setups such as electronic drums.

Lastly, the firmware update brings options for reducing unwanted background/ambient noise, hum and/or hiss from the mics. The three new settings include the Mic Noise Gate Threshold, which sets the gate's opening noise level; Mic Noise Gate Release Time, which sets the length of time the gate takes to close; and Jack Noise Reduction, which decreases any unwanted static noises from cables.

The updates are both very simple if you follow the instructions included in the download.



# MODO mapped

I'd like to think that the **digitalDrummer** review had something to do with it, but the latest update of MODO DRUM now includes MIDI mapping.

**digitalDrummer's** November 2019 review concluded that MODO "combines excellent sounds with awesome virtual editing capability to deliver a VST standalone that can, in theory, produce almost any sound you need".



The major drawback for e-drummers was the lack of MIDI mapping, with no ability to edit the note assignments.

Well, thanks to the version 1.1 update, there's now a Custom MIDI Mapping section where you can load some MIDI presets – GM, Alesis DM10 or Roland (TD-10 or 50).

Admittedly, that's a fairly limited preset list which ignores about 90% of the modules out there, but it does provide a good starting point.

Furthermore, all the MIDI allocations are editable and there's a learn function, so you can quickly customise any module.

It was a breeze to customise MODO for the Alesis Strike Pro module I had on the test bed, for example.

There are, of course, other enhancements in the 1.1 update, but none as important for e-drummers as the MIDI tweaks which turn this into a very capable and easy to play VST.

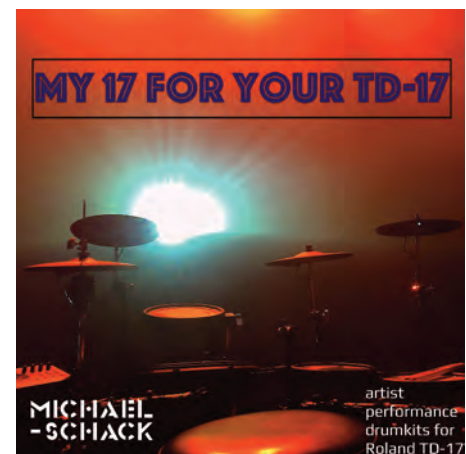
## New Schack pack

Roland artist, producer and drum DJ Michael Schack has released a sample pack for the Roland TD-17.

The 17 Michael Schack TD-17 Artist Kits allows TD-17 owners to recreate Schack's #PushYourDrumming and TD-17 live performances with exclusive live and studio performance kits that can be adapted to many different music genres.

Unlike previous Roland packs, these kits are not just tweaked settings, but also include new embedded samples not previously loaded on the TD-17.

The new pack joins Schack's TD-25 Artist Kits package and his personal TD-30 Artist Kits and are available for sale on Schack's website.



Schack has been a key contributor to the sounds of all the recent Roland modules and his personal kits push the modules even further, replicating his personal "in your face" performance style.

The new Schack kits come hot on the heels of an extensive new sample pack from Chris Whitten for the TM-6 Pro, a module on which the two collaborated. **digitalDrummer** will include a review of that pack in the May 2020 edition.



## My **MONSTER** kit

This month's monster, by **Rodney Hiner** from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, is a combination of DIY and out-of-the-box components.

THIS KIT STARTED its life as an Alesis DM10 MKII, although very little of it remains other than a few of the cymbals and a couple of drum internals. Most of the original kit was sold off piece by piece. I cannot put a total price on this kit because I have bought and pieced out several electronic drum kits on eBay and Reverb to fund the project.

Both Strike modules were removed from full kit purchases and the rest of the kits pieced out and sold. I actually made several hundred dollars on both of those kits even after keeping the modules!

All the Strike pads were purchased individually, all new and well below the average prices.

I totalled up every piece I bought down to cymbal felts and then totalled up all my

sales through eBay and Reverb and believe it or not, I've made \$353 putting this kit together!

This kit is about the details and customisation of the pieces from conversions of the matching pedals to the design of the bass drum trigger and electronic drop clutch.

One of the highlights of the kit is the 22x12 bass drum with my own designed trigger system. It started with a Mapex 22x18 bass drum that I cut down and designed and installed my own trigger system. The drum triggers and feels fantastic. I used the name Rock Hard Triggers and designed a logo, playing on my own initials RH (Rodney Hiner), and applied it to the trigger system for a professional look. The kit looks as good as it plays and feels. I



think the smaller design complements the look of the kit better than a full-size kick would have.

Another custom-designed item is the electronic drop clutch that puts the hats into the closed position using a footswitch for double bass play. Other items include an electronic woodblock and electronic cowbell.

I also converted a Pearl P930 pedal using a Demon Drive footboard to match my Demon Drive double bass pedals. Couldn't stop there, so I converted the footboard on a Tama HH905N Iron Cobra Lever Glide hi-hat stand to match as well to give me all matching pedals.

To clean up the floor area, I converted a Pearl 930S snare stand to make a one-leg stand which is fully adjustable, using Gibraltar hardware.

Some other tom conversions are a 14X14 floor tom converted using a Mapex Voyager drum. This easy conversion was done by mounting Alesis DM Pad internals into the tom using angle brackets on the lug mounting screws. I also took another 14X14 Mapex Voyager floor tom and cut it right above the floor tom mounting holes to

create a 14x10 hanging floor tom, using the same conversion procedure - except I used the bottom of a Strike pad instead of a mesh head on the bottom and mounted it using a Pearl ISS mount and Pearl TH88S tom holder. I used the rest of the Strike pad to make a 13" side snare, mounting just the trigger from the strike pad inside an old drum shell. I made the shell smaller than a normal Strike shell to give it a piccolo snare look.

On my main snare, which is basically the new version 2 Alesis Strike snare, I used eight-lug (stock is six) die cast hoops and added a snare throw-off and butt plate to give it a real snare look.

I'm running dual Strike modules, with the main module running toms, bass, hi-hats, three crash cymbals and ride. The only splitter I'm using is the head/rim on the 10" tom for the 8" tom. This is actually the easiest way to set up the stock kits or add new kits by just raising the pitch up on the 10" tom to create the 8" sound.

On the second module, I run the rest of the cymbals which I have - a few splash cymbals and chinas and a set of auxiliary hi-hats. I also run the electronic cowbell,



electronic woodblock and the Alesis Stealth kick trigger which I use for any auxiliary percussion sounds like a tambourine, claves, etc.

I use Roland VH-11 hi-hats with a bottom hat integration modification. I used the same modification using a Goedrum controller with a DM Pad crash as the top hat. I did address one of the concerns with the Goedrum controller by drilling holes in the washer from the Pearl H930 hi-hat stand and mounting it to the bottom of the controller to give it a firm metal and larger base.

I originally converted the Pearl H930 to a no-leg stand and used it with the Goedrum before switching to the VH-11 and Tama HH905N stand. I really notice no difference between the Goedrum setup I was using and the VH-11, but the VH-11 does seem to be better quality and, for the price, I'm not leaving it to sit on a shelf.

My goal with this kit was to make it closely mimic my acoustic kit in its set-up so the transition to and from would be very easy.

And of course my kit wouldn't be complete without some cymbal-playing chimps!

This kit is a stay-at-home kit due to its size and complexity.


The Strike module is a very versatile drum module and the sounds you can get out of it are some of the best out there.

The hardware has its shortcomings which can be modified to work very well, which I have done. I chose to mainly use the DM Pad cymbals which are cheap to replace if one should break, but I've never had any issues with any of them yet, knock on wood, and I love the look I've given them with the paint and logos.



## 2BOX ENHANCEMENTS

## E-CONVERSIONS



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Hi-hat & 3 Zone Ride conversion modules for 2box™ DrumIt Five Supporting Roland™ FD-7, FD-8, FD-9, VH-10, VH-11, VH-12, VH-13, CY-13R, CY-15R and ATV™ aD-C18, aD-H14 (DrumIt Three) and more!

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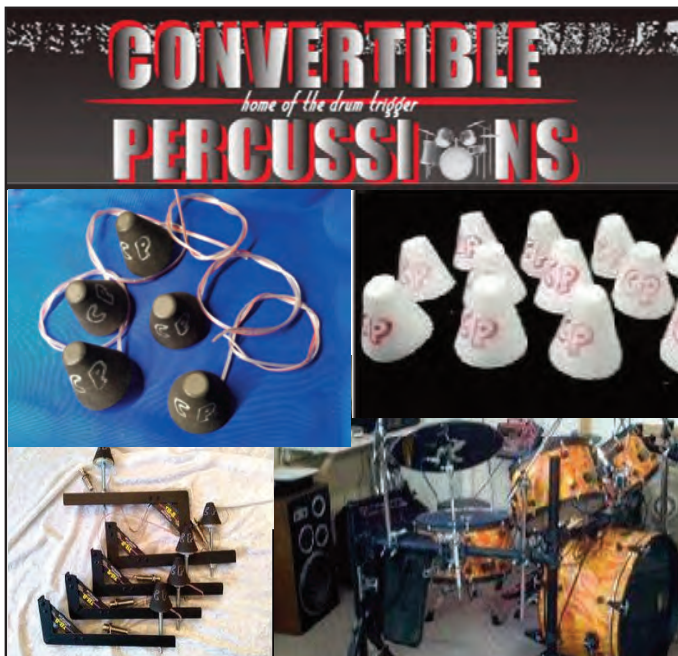
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## CONVERSION KITS

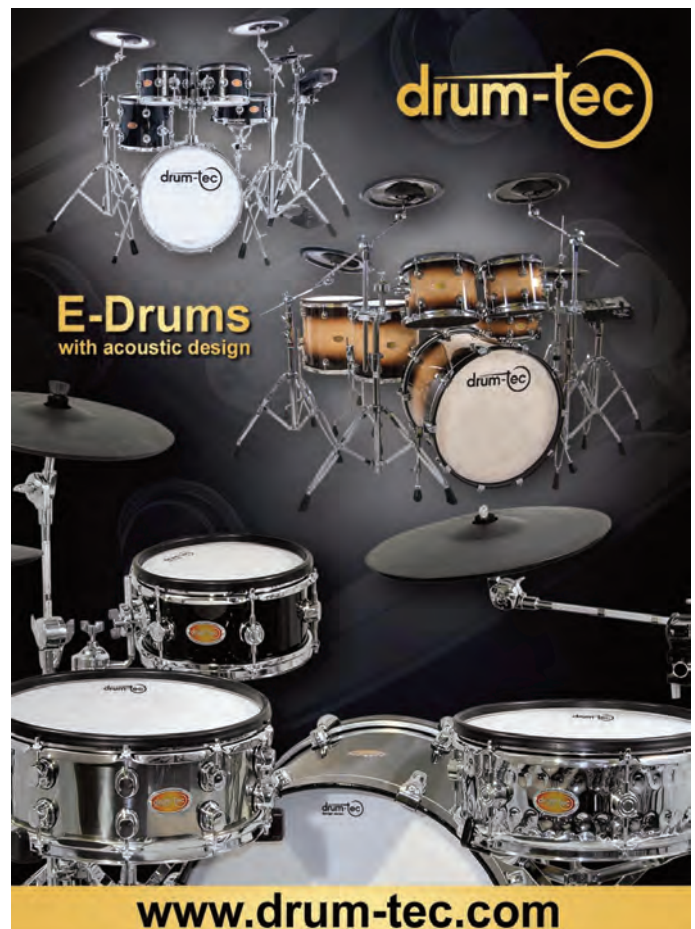
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