



MIDI *in* MINISTRY

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Ed Kerr on the Roland XV-88 Using an 88-Key Synthesizer in Worship



Renown keyboardist and songwriter Ed Kerr takes the XV-88 through its paces and provides a worship leader's insight into Roland's first ever 88-key weighted-action expandable synthesizer. With 128-voice polyphony and 24-bit sound quality, this is a powerful tool that Ed shows to be a vital asset to any music ministry...

THE FOUNDATION

One of my greatest hopes as a keyboard player is that the music I create will have that effect on those who hear it. Picture your congregation. Think of people you know well, their personal struggles, the relationship challenges they're facing, their weariness over long-term battles with sickness or financial difficulties. Then imagine music coming through your fingers from your keyboard that becomes a song of deliverance for them.

I am finding that my expression of "songs of deliverance" today is being greatly enhanced through my use of Roland's 88-note, 128-voice synthesizer, the XV-88. Its weighted keys feel great, much like a real grand piano. The variety of sounds contained within it is incredible. Any of these sounds can be played individually: great pianos, very convincing Rhodes, Wurlitzers and organs, realistic strings, oboes, and bells. Hundreds of sounds.

With built-in effects, and the ability to edit these effects to your personal preference, the potential here is staggering.

ADDING LAYERS

But beyond all these great individual sounds, the feature in the XV-88 that I find most useful for worship settings is the ability to layer sounds. I typically choose one of the excellent acoustic piano sounds to be the basis for my layer. I'll use the piano alone much of the time. Then, when I want the texture of my sound to become richer and more expressive, I can use a volume pedal to fade in strings or a pad sound. I can fade a hint of the strings or pad in, or I can bring it in fully. Fade it in for the chorus only, fade it out for the verse, etc. The possibilities for layers you can create are literally infinite. Layer the grand piano with an electronic keyboard. Layer pads with strings. Layer two pads that have contrasting textures.

(CONT. ON PAGE 3)



5 MINUTES

with Danny Bridgens

Born and raised in South Africa, Danny Bridgens now serves as Worship Pastor for the South Hills Community Church in San Jose, California. He mentors two worship teams for the church and also happens to be a world-class guitarist. Danny's been using Roland/BOSS guitar effects processors and guitar synthesizers at his church and in his work with the Promise Keepers bands. He's also a clinician for the Maranatha Worship Leader Workshops, where he teaches classes on guitar technique and the uses of guitar technology in worship.

MIDI in Ministry: How do you go about using technology help you in your worship services?

Danny Bridgens: Using technology in a worship setting can be an obstacle if a unit is too complex to program or use. If your goal is to be worshipping while, at the same time, leading the congregation, then the technology can't be distracting you from that purpose.

(CONT. ON PAGE 2)

5 MINUTES with Danny Bridgens

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The BOSS GT-3 Guitar Effects Processor allows me to focus on [the worship service] rather than worrying about my equipment.

MiM: Why is that?

DB: It's a very easy unit to use and program, and lends itself well to an adaptable live environment like worship. For instance, I've programmed a group of eight patches with different effects options that fit most any worship situation. So if I decide to go off in a different direction, like turning the delay off of a patch, I just have to switch the patch and kick in the options that I want.

MiM: What other features do you like about the GT-3?

DB: Well, I don't use an amp at all because our church room is very live. This is where the GT-3's ability to simulate preamp settings is really amazing. The fact that you can simulate different speaker enclosures and microphone positions on the enclosure is a huge thing for me. Without that, I would not be able to do what I'm doing.



Bridgens teaching a WLW guitar class using the GT-3.

MiM: You also use the GR-33 Guitar Synthesizer on occasion. Talk about that.

DO: When playing a guitar synth, you have to switch gears mentally and think "controller" rather than guitar. This is another situation where the equipment should not get in the way, especially as it relates to tracking. I really like the tracking on the GT-33. Especially for solo sounds, like flutes or lead synth parts, it's just amazing. I've not had to adjust the way I play at all.

MiM: Don't you also have a VG-88 V-Guitar System?

DB: I just got one and I haven't had a chance to use it too much yet. But I'm really looking forward to working with it at the church.

MiM: You do a lot of workshops. What do you talk about?

DB: I teach the beginning to intermediate level players in a class setting, so I try and get through some general things that each individual should know in terms of the approach of playing on a worship team.

MiM: Such as?

DB: One – you have to be in tune. I encourage the use of a good guitar tuner, like the BOSS TU-12. And the other aspect is you have to have good timing. A lot of guys don't emphasize that, but I believe it's vitally important.

MiM: What else do you talk about in the workshops?



Using his Fender "GR-Ready" Strat, Danny can play GR-33 Synth & GT-3 simultaneously.

DB: I talk about approach. In my team we have this thing we call the "100-percent rule," where, if you're playing by yourself, you own 100-percent of the musical space. The minute you add another person, you are now 50-percent of that space, and so on. This encourages listening to one another.

MiM: What trends have you noticed in worship music today?

DB: I started leading worship in South Africa back in 1994. At the time, there was "church music" and there was everything else. The thing that's changed over the years is that, in churches today, a lot of the sounds in the music you hear on the radio, you also hear in church. This is where technology like what Roland offers has helped enhance the worship setting.

For information on Danny's guitar workshops, visit the Maranatha website at www.maranathamusic.com or call (800) 245-SONG.

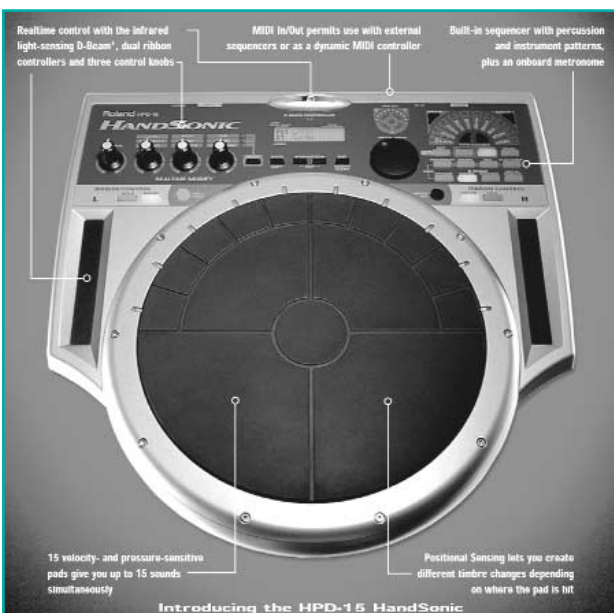
The HPD-15 HandSonic

Hand Percussion for All

by Doug Mathews

More than ever, our music is influenced by music of different cultures. The cross-pollination of culture and the availability of recorded music from the far reaches of civilization has influenced even the music of the church.

Because of my love of multi-cultural music, I was excited to get my hands on the Roland HPD-15 HandSonic. Not only because of the promise of an incredible array of 500 sounds including percussion instruments from around the world, but also for the opportunity to



incorporate them into our worship experience (dumbeks and djembes and gongs, oh my!). Add to this the joy of being able to play this amazing pad setup *with your hands*, and you have a winning combination.

Right out of the box, the HPD-15 is easy to play. It's truly plug-n-play. Yes, you play with your hands, but it doesn't hurt like acoustic drums do. It knows if you are muting with a hand or slapping and translates it all into sound. The truth is, anyone can play these pads with ease. There are 15 pads set up in a circle, four large pads, a center pad, and 10 small pads around the upper semi-circle. The triggering of the small pads, large enough for single-finger

play, lights an LED to indicate that it has been hit. Very hi-tech. The unit can be stand-mounted for use in live situations, giving anyone access to an awesome palette of sonic textures and percussives from around the world—and some that are really out of this world.

The preset Groups, (sounds that fall into different ethnic, dance or orchestral formats), all have usable sounds and they're easy to get to. The HandSonic has an easy-to-navigate sequencer (which has a great quantize-on-input feature, among others, for when you want to record yourself or create a loop to play along with) and a very cool thing called a D-Beam*. The D-Beam emits an infrared light beam and can be used to trigger sounds, create sound effects, change pitch or tempo and more, simply by waving your hand across the beam.

There are also two ribbon controllers on either side of the pad that can be used for many hip effects like conga "moos" and cuica "squeaks".

Editing of the sounds is easy and straightforward, and the manual is clear about the more advanced editing possibilities. You can also modify the sounds in real time for pitch and pan and level and many other parameters from the array of knobs on the left-hand side of

the unit.

I can imagine using the HPD-15 in a small group worship situation, because of its size and portability (it even sounded good plugged into my stereo), and in the worship band because everybody who has ever tapped on a desk or table can now be a part of the worship experience. And isn't participation what it's all about?

Doug Mathews is a studio drummer and percussionist in the Los Angeles area. He is also an instructor with Maranatha's Worship Leader Workshops. Visit www.maranathamusic.com to get more information on these events.

*D-Beam Controller technology has been licensed from Interactive Light, Inc.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

EXPANSION

Besides using any of the great range of sounds shipped with the keyboard, you can also increase the number of sounds with any of Roland's user-installable expansion boards. The XV-88 can hold a total of four of these cards. That's a lot of sounds to choose from! I currently use the Keyboards of the 60's & 70's card (SR-JV80-08), the 64MB Concert Piano card (SRX-02), and the Hip-Hop card (SR-JV80-12). Check out all the available cards at your local Roland dealer. I'm sure you'll hear a sound that could be a great addition to your sonic resources in worship.

Many of these sounds have become an important resource for my work as a songwriter and as a studio musician. I've had the privilege of playing keyboards and singing on each of the last four of Maranatha!Music's Praise Band recordings, and Roland keyboards, especially the XP-80, have been an important part of these productions. Besides using the sounds shipped with the XP, the 60's & 70's expansion board added great sounds to several of the songs.

Whether you play solo keyboards or are part of a rhythm section, I am confident that your contribution to your church's worship times can be enhanced through the use of keyboards like the XV-88. Take advantage of today's technology to bring your congregation the most powerful and moving music possible.





Roland Corporation U.S.
5100 S. Eastern Ave.
P.O. Box 910921
Los Angeles, CA 90091-0921
(323) 890-3700
Fax: (323) 890-3735
www.rolandus.com

E-mail:
MIDIstry@rolandus.com

In This Issue:

- ▶ **"5 Minutes with..."**
An interview with
Danny Bridgens



- ▶ **Ed Kerr on the XV-88:**
Making the most of a
synthesizer in worship
- ▶ **Exploring the HPD-15**
HandSonic with Doug
Mathews
- ▶ **Keyboards in Worship**
instructional video

New Keyboards in Worship Video

www.kerrtunes.com

Ed Kerr has been a professional songwriter and recording artist for over two decades. In the past eight years he has written more than 100 songs recorded by Integrity Music. His playing is featured on several recent Maranatha Praise Band recordings.

Along with his work on these recordings, he tours as an instructor for Maranatha's Worship Leader Workshops. "One of the questions I consistently hear from attendees relates to the use of 'pad' sounds in worship. I've addressed this and many other related questions in my instructional video, *Keyboards In Contemporary Praise And Worship, Volume 1*."

In this video, Ed is joined by Paul Baloche, composer of 'Open The Eyes Of My Heart', and many other well-

known choruses, to demonstrate how a pad can be used when playing keyboards in a rhythm section with acoustic guitar. Specific pad voicings are demonstrated and Ed's hands are shown so that you can easily reproduce the voicings on your own keyboards.

Please visit Ed's website, www.kerrtunes.com, for information on how you can obtain a copy of the video and other resources. Ed can be

contacted directly via email at ed@kerrtunes.com.



an instructional video