



Roland Corporation U.S.
P.O. Box 910921
Los Angeles, CA 90091-0921
(323) 890-3700
Fax: (323) 890-3735
www.RolandUS.com
E-mail:
MIDistry@RolandUS.com



Worship Ministry

THE INFO SOURCE FOR CHURCH MUSICIANS

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CM Magazine

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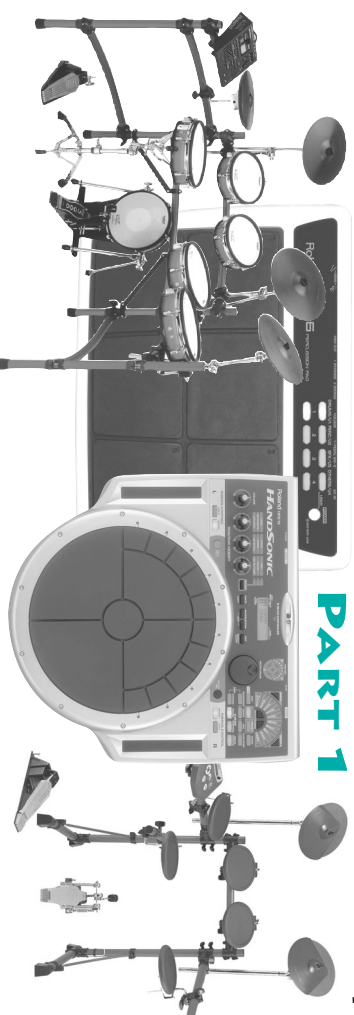
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E-Drum Invasion

How To Choose The Best Electronic Percussion For Your Ministry

PART 1



Electronic percussion is no longer a novelty, and in houses of worship the world over it's become a necessity. Worship teams and sound techs love having complete control of the stage volume. Drummers love the variety of sounds and features. Nowadays, the choices abound for electronic kits, with a wide range of configurations and prices. If you're looking into electronic drums for the first time or getting ready to upgrade to a new kit, this two-part guide will give you the tools to evaluate the options.

ACOUSTIC VS. ELECTRONIC

Just like electric guitars are different from acoustic guitars, electronic drum sets are different than acoustic drum sets. And, just like electric guitars have different advantages than acoustic guitars, an electronic drum set possesses some distinct and different advantages to those of an acoustic drum set. From live performing, to sequencing, to digital or tape-based recording, to silent practice with headphones, electronic drum sets can provide a lot of drumming enjoyment, and take you beyond the traditional drumming experience. Here are some tips on what to look for and what to ask when buying an electronic drum set.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR...

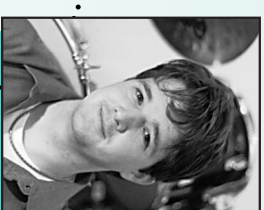
First, buying an electronic drum set is very different than buying an acoustic drum set. When purchasing an acoustic drum set, what you see is basically what you get. And, although electronic drum set manufacturers try to make their products as aesthetically appealing as possible, when you're buying an electronic drum set you

need to look more closely at the components — specifically the sound module. The percussion sound module, or “brain” is where the majority of the drum set's value lies. Therefore, knowing the features and comparing them is very important in making the right purchase decision.

Like acoustic drum sets, electronic drum sets come in price ranges from several hundred dollars, to several thousand dollars. What's also nice is that most electronic sets come complete. Although you can buy individual components to build your own, the better value is buying a complete package. Having such a wide selection of sets is beneficial so you can match the right kit with your specific needs and budget. The main differences in electronic drum set prices are due to these factors:

- 1) The features of the sound module
- 2) The type of pads used for the drum and cymbal pads
- 3) The number of components included

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5 MINUTES

with Will Denton

From tours with Mark Schultz, dc Talk and Steven Curtis Chapman to teaching at Maranatha Worship Leader Workshops, Will Denton has amassed a surprising list of credits in his young career as a drummer. He recently wrote the following article for his “Drumming Perspectives” column in Christian Musician magazine. But as you'll see, it is extremely applicable for all instrumentalists and singers – especially those serving in ministry. The topics he addresses are so essential, so universal, that as you read, simply replace the word “drums” with whatever instrument you play.

I've been doing a lot of clinics and teaching lately, both on my own and through my participation in the Maranatha Worship Leader Workshops. It has been very rewarding to spend time with so many wonderful musicians throughout the country. I am very grateful for the new friendships that have sprung up through these events and I continue to be reminded of how very real is the sense of family that exists among believers.

One such person I met recently who really left an impression upon me is a young man in Zeeland, Michigan. His name is Nate Weeber and he's an eight-

(CONT. ON PAGE 2)

5 MINUTES with Will Denton

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

teen year-old high school senior who loves playing drums. We had an opportunity to do a lesson together and I wanted to share some of the things I observed.

Whenever I have a first lesson with someone, I like to have them sit down at the drums and just play for about five minutes to give me an idea of where they are coming from technically, musically and otherwise. When I ask them to do this, I often get one of two reactions. The first one is sheer horror (see “Bob Smiley – My First Drum Lesson”). “What do you mean you play?” or “Heh, heh. I’m not sure what you mean.” It takes several minutes of reassurance to get them to finally play a couple of figures, a few bars, etc. Now, the second type of reaction goes like this – as soon as I pose the question, a maniacal look comes over their face (curiously enough, again, see “Bob Smiley – My First Drum Lesson”) and I am treated to an onslaught of the fastest, most furious cacophony of licks that the drummer knows. Before I go any further, I should say that I too have done those very things with my own teachers over the years.

It was so refreshing then, when Nate responded to my invitation to play by immediately laying down a smooth, flowing groove on his kick, snare and [hi-] hat. Not only that, he actually crafted a song as he played, using very musical fills to set up different sections of his piece. I could easily hear a verse, then a chorus with the addition of a ride cymbal, then a great decrescendo back into his well-established verse pattern. Later, he employed a completely different type of feel that made me think of a bridge. His timing was perfect, and never once did he overplay. When he



He's in there somewhere...

finished at the kit, I felt like I had listened to a real piece of music.

I have been sharing at my clinics that no matter what your instrument, if your playing was “solo-ed” on stage so that no other musician could be heard, the audience should still be able to hear a song being played. Different sections of the music should be obvious, along with dynamic peaks and valleys, and an overall thematic approach.

“...get past the notion that the music exists for our benefit and realize instead that our goals are best achieved by serving the music...”

It comes down to maturity. When we get past the notion that the music exists for our benefit and realize instead that our goals are best achieved by serving the music, a certain level of sophistication begins to emerge in our playing – one that bristles with excitement by our judicious use of our abilities. We need to display a level of maturity that hints of capabilities simmering just beneath the surface and that on occasion are brought to the forefront only when the music calls for it.

I mention Nate in such a glowing manner because very few players his age seem to have such a good grasp of this concept. Yes, practice like crazy on exciting fills, creative phrasings and blistering chops. But don't do it at the expense of learning to play music.

Congrats, Nate, and keep up the great work. And Bob, well, have you ever considered a career in comedy instead?

Will Denton writes a column in *Christian Musician* magazine called “Drumming Perspectives” and is currently on the Steven Curtis Chapman “Live Out Loud” tour. For more info please visit www.willdenton.com and www.stevencurtischapman.com. For information on upcoming Maranatha Worship Leader Workshops, visit worshipleaderworkshop.com.

ELECTRONIC PERCUSSION FROM PAGE 1

MAKE A SOUND DECISION

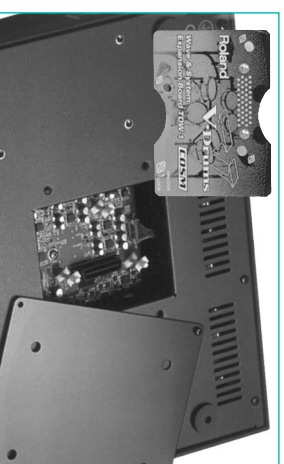
As mentioned, the majority of the drum set's value lies in the sound module. Many percussion sound modules include a variety of features. Some do more than others, and do a better job of performing different functions. Specifications are a good start for determining the best percussion sound module for you, but there are many features that you should personally experience and check out. For example, sound quality is a big issue. The module can have a million sounds, but if the sound quality is poor and the sounds don't “play” well, it really doesn't matter how many sounds it has. Here is a list of typical percussion sound module features and their benefits.

QUALITY VS. QUANTITY

Some percussion sound modules have anywhere from 300 to over 1,000 sounds. Imagine having 110 snare drums, 85 bass drums, hundreds of toms and cymbals, not to mention Latin, Orchestral, and World percussion, as well as sound effects at your disposal! That's what makes electronic percussion so useful, diverse and enjoyable. But just after you get wrapped up in the number and types of sounds, it's important to listen to the sound quality. Listen and compare the sounds to other electronic drum set modules. Either use a set of headphones you are familiar with, or run them all through the same amplifier. Then source to get a good head-to-head comparison.

SOUND EXPANSION

Some percussion sound modules offer “expansion cards” that can be placed



TTD-10 Expansion Board and slot on TTD-10

in the module to increase the number of sounds and at the same time, give the sound module new features. This type of expansion can keep your per-

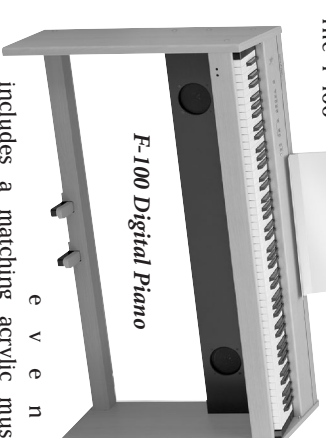
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NAMM SUMMER SESSION

July 19-21, 2002 • Nashville, TN

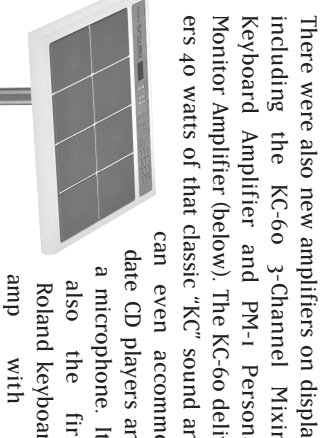
The Summer NAMM show in Nashville recently came to a close, and *MIDI In Ministry* was there to report on all the exciting new gear you need to know about. This year, Roland had plenty of stuff to enhance your ministry's worship.

Roland introduced two stylish digital pianos, the F-100 and F-30. Both feature 88-note Progressive Hammer Action keyboards, stereo-sampled piano sounds and onboard rhythms. The F-100



F-100 Digital Piano

includes a matching acrylic music stand and fixed pedals, while the F-30's compact design makes it easy to move around—great for churches who need a grand piano but don't have the space!



KC-60 Personal Monitor Amplifier

There were also new amplifiers on display, including the KC-60 3-Channel Mixing Keyboard Amplifier and PM-1 Personal Monitor Amplifier (below). The KC-60 delivers 40 watts of that classic “KC” sound and can even accommodate CD players and a microphone. It's also the first Roland keyboard amp with a



SPD-20 not included!

Subwoofer output. The PM-1, on the other hand, is a great choice for electronic percussion. Its unique angled design makes for a great floor or upright monitor, while the included percussion stand is ideal for mounting Roland's SPD- and HPD-Series percussion instruments.



Next up is the incredible new V-Stage™ Set. This affordable new V-Drums® configuration incorporates a high-quality TD-8 sound module and specially designed new V-Cymbals™ and V-Pads™, bringing the V-Drums sound and ultra-intuitive operation to a new level of accessibility.

Roland also unveiled the 1/2-rack XV-2020 64-Voice Expandable Synthesizer Module. Just MIDI it to your digital piano or keyboard, and you've got affordable access to Roland's flagship XV sounds and SRX expansions.

On the recording front was the incredible Studio Package Pro (below) and Edrol UA-700 Modeling USB Audio/MIDI Interface. The Studio Package Pro combines a high-quality mixing control surface with motorized faders (SI-24), PCI audio card (RPC-1), and Emagic's Logic RPC Pro sequencing and



Studio Package Pro

the ultimate computer-software to create based recording studio. And if you record on a laptop, you should check out Edrol's UA-700. This flexible audio/MIDI interface features 24-bit converters and low-latency monitoring, plus lightning-fast MIDI transmission. Best of all, you can tap into the onboard COSM® Guitar and Microphone Modeling—plus a variety of studio-quality effects—to make your recordings sound more professional.

Well, that should give you a few ideas of how to make your worship music even better. For the full story, just visit the Roland website at www.RolandUS.com.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

cussion sound module “fresh” giving you more creative possibilities.

DRUM KITS

Sounds are typically arranged in “kits” or “patches”. Some percussion sound modules have up to 100 drum kit locations. Some sound modules offer “pre-set kits” (non-editable) and/or “user kits”. The advantage of user kits is the ability to make your own personalized drum kit setups. This allows you to change-out a snare, toms, cymbals, etc. in a particular drum set and make a custom “kit” of your own.

SOUND EDITING

Sound editing is also important for designing your own sounds and kits. Typically, the more expensive the sound module, the more sound editing capacity it will have. Some modules simply offer pitch, decay, volume and panning, where some high-end professional sound modules have “modeling” capability. Modeling is a technology that allows you to make fine sound adjustments like changing the snare drum's shell material from wood to brass, or changing the type of virtual microphone used on the drum. Some modules even offer graphic, icon-based editing which makes a complex technology like modeling, very easy to use.

DIGITAL EFFECTS

Most sound modules include some form of digital effects. Whether it's reverb, delay, chorus, flanging, ambience effects (room simulation effects), or multi-effect algorithms, digital effects can greatly improve and drastically change your sound. Digital effects can turn your sounds into crazy effect-type sounds, or warm them up and make you feel like you're playing in a concert hall. Like sound editing, the more expensive the sound module, the more digital effects and effects editing it will have.

In the next issue we'll discuss features like Sampling, Sequencing and how to evaluate individual electronic drum components including drum pads, hi-hat controllers, cymbal pads and more. Plus we'll give you a list of all the questions to ask before making your final decision on an electronic percussion system for your ministry.