

News

Surgin' USA: Alesis storm the market

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A swathe of new products from Alesis



Alesis presented an impressive range of new products at the NAMM show, including two new electronic drum kits. Both the DM5 Pro and the USB Pro are equipped with real drum heads (albeit foam-dampened), and what they're calling Surge cymbals. These are essentially real metal cymbals with a plastic damping layer and touch pad on the underside which can be used for muting, or 'catching' the cymbals.

The DM5 Pro kit (left) has much improved hardware over earlier versions but still uses the old faithful DM5 module, which has 540 sounds with 21 programmable drum kits, as the sound source. The kit comprises a dual-zone snare, bass drum pad, three tom pads with rim triggers, a 12-inch electronic hi-hat, a 13-inch crash cymbal, and a 16-inch dual-zone ride cymbal, all mounted on a rack-style stand. The DM5 can also function as a stand-alone trigger-to-MIDI converter, and features 12 trigger inputs.

For the studio user, Alesis' USB Pro kit offers similar hardware but with an Alesis Trigger IO instead of the DM5, and a bundled 'light' version of FXpansion's BFD virtual drummer software. The hardware offers 10 TRS inputs for single or dual-zone triggers, 20 programmable presets and a hi-hat pedal input for on/off or continuous control of the hi-hat sound. The hardware connects to a computer (both PCs and Macs are supported) using USB, and it also has a MIDI output.

Those who prefer to program their drum parts might like to take a closer look at the new SR18 (right), which improves on the still-current SR16 with a much larger sound set (32MB), an on-board bass synth, and built-in effects. It covers both traditional and modern drum sounds and can be run from batteries or a mains adaptor. The SR18 boasts 24-voice polyphony, an instrument input and a library of 175 presets, with space for 100 user patterns. Footswitch control is available for starting and stopping playback and recording, and for controlling the count-in and fill functions.



Alesis were one of the first companies to produce gear designed to team up with Apple's iPod, and their new Multiport (left) turns your iPod into a stand-alone desktop stereo recorder that has USB connectivity for hooking up to a computer. It works with all docking iPod models when used through iTunes, and is able to play back one piece of audio while recording another. The unit offers both mic and line inputs, as well as level metering and decent-sized controls.

Also new from Alesis is the iMultimix 16 USB (below right), which might suit you if you're wanting to use your iPod to record gigs or provide backing tracks. It is based around a tabletop mixer with an integral iPod dock and features 100 digital effects, a built-in peak limiter, and transport controls. Four of the 16 inputs are mic/line preamps with 48V phantom power and there's a three-band EQ on each channel. However, if you'd rather record to a computer than an iPod, Alesis also have the Multimix 8 and Multimix 16 USB mixers, which can stream multiple audio channels into your Mac or PC. The Multimix 8 USB 2.0 has 10 direct outputs for recording and two return inputs for monitoring. For processing there are 100 on-board effects, including reverbs, delays, chorus, flanging, pitch and multi-effects, though if you need something a little larger, the Multimix 16 will give you 18 direct outputs for recording and two return inputs for monitoring. Both models offer 24-bit/96kHz operation and are compatible with Mac OS X and Windows XP.

The USB format must be contagious in the Alesis paddock, as even the diminutive M1 Active 320 USB monitors are able to plug directly into a computer. They operate as a USB audio interface and feature a headphone output, an eighth-inch stereo mini-jack input and magnetic shielding. Each one has a three-inch woofer and a one-inch silk-dome tweeter, covering frequencies from 58Hz to 25kHz.

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