



Gear Drum IRIS IRS-14-SN

Gear Drum is a relative newcomer on the e-drum market. The Italian company describes its founders as “digital artisans”, with the owners claiming to build their systems with innovative technologies. “We assemble and finish every single part by hand. We test each product to guarantee ... maximum reliability.”

Gear Drum is making the most of 3D printing, with unique parts printed as required, and the final products look slick and neat.

To date, Gear Drum has offered a PD-120-style rail system, followed by a spider web version similar to drum-tec or Rdrums, and a unique centre-mounted version which has now been augmented by a three-sensor solution. All are characterised by their tension mount which requires no screw attachments.

The original centre-mounted drop-in IRIS system consists of two platforms – one for the rim and a second for the head, supported by three tensioned arms which press against the shell.

It is indeed an elegant and simple-to-install system which requires absolutely no fiddling with lug screws. You just slip the arms inside the shell and adjust the tension. The sensor platform is also adjustable to fine-tune the cone height.

The electronic connections are via a 3.5 mm stereo jack which connects either to an inline ¼” jack or a custom jack assembly, which is one of the most impressive solutions I have seen to date. The assembly slides through the vent hole and has a solid jack housing on the outside.

The system does not ship with installation or set-up instructions, but there is an installation video on the website and although it is in Italian, it is clear and easy to follow.

This is an impressive-looking system, but how does it perform?

The true test of any centre-mounted trigger is the positional sensing-capable Roland TD-30, and here, the single-trigger IRIS shone bright. It performed brilliantly with a tweaked version of the PD128 preset. The trigger is quite hot, so the threshold had to be raised and the sensitivity lowered

significantly. The kit produced perfect positional sensing, and overall, performance was as close to the PD-128 which is optimised for this module as anything I have played.

On the TD-17, the trigger again proved to be a bit hot, and the stock PD128 preset needed a minor reduction in sensitivity and a raising of threshold to ensure excellent dynamics and sensitivity across head and rim.

Best triggering on the ATV aD5 was achieved with the Roland R-PD-128 preset, with quite a heavy dose of rim boost. Once dialled in, the snare was extremely responsive. Triggering was even across head and rim, and there was no hot-spotting, even with strikes on or near the cone.

The trigger was very hot when connected to a Yamaha DTX700, and I struggled to find a satisfactory setting. The best performance was with the XP80/70 Tom preset, which had to be dialled back and, even then, the dynamic range wasn't fantastic.

The trigger was equally hot in stock presets on the DTX502, but produced acceptable performance with the DT50 (external trigger) preset and a raised

threshold. It's now clear why Gear Drum doesn't list Yamaha as one of its compatible modules on its website!

Excellent performance was achieved right out of the box with the mimicPRO in stock R-PD-128 preset. There was great sensitivity across the whole playing surface, wide dynamic range from ghost notes to ringing rim shots and excellent cross-stick response. And despite the single centre-positioned sensor, there was no discernible hot spot.

Where the multi-sensor version (see p.19) was difficult to dial in on the 2box DrumIt Three, the single-cone IRIS had no such issues. It played well in stock PadPP preset, with threshold and gain both raised marginally and a minor tweak to rim sensitivity. But with that in place, excellent triggering was achieved across the whole head, without a hint of a hot spot.

The score

Price: €103.50

Ease of construction: 4.5

Non-invasiveness: 4 (air vent grommet needs removal)

Performance: 4.9

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