

SoundLab Nº.1

Roland Electronic Drum Amplifiers

by Norman Weinberg

Details, Details

MODEL: PM-1
PRICE: \$499
SIZE: Approximately 25" wide, 20" deep, 22" high, 48 lbs.
POWER: 60 watts
SPEAKERS: 1-12" woofer, 1-1" tweeter
INPUTS: 4 mono: 1-microphone/line, 2-line, 1-monitor
EQUALIZER: 2-band: treble, bass
OUTPUTS: 1 mono line out, mono headphones

MODEL: TDA-700
PRICE: \$1,199
SIZE: Approximately 20" wide, 21" deep, 40" high (with casters), 10 lbs
POWER: 300 watts: 240 watts woofer, 60 watts horn tweeter
SPEAKERS: 1-15" woofer, 1-horn tweeter
INPUTS: 4 stereo: 2-V-Drums, 2-line
EQUALIZER: 3-band: treble, middle, bass; 1-"bottom" switch, 1-"punch" switch
OUTPUTS: 3 stereo: 1-XLR, 1-1/4" phone, 1-headphones
STEREO LINK: 1/4" in, 1/4" out

Now Drummers Can Turn Up To 11

Believe it or not, electronic percussion has finally grown up. The electronic percussion user base has expanded to such an extent that Roland recently introduced two e-drum-specific amplifiers. The introduction of these amps is both a credit to the strength of the medium and to Roland's leadership in this area. First up is the PM-1, the Personal Monitor

Amplifier. In shape and function, the unit's structural bloodline is the wedge monitor similar to those found at the stage apron for vocalists. The PM-1 differs from a standard wedge monitor in that it's

powered by a 60 watt amp. This amp has four inputs, a two-band equalizer, and drives a 12" speaker and a 1" tweeter. Included with the PM-1 is a two-part stand that inserts directly into the top of the amp. This stand uses the 48-pound weight of the amp as its base, and with Roland's APC-33 (or other similar multi-clamp), supports a SPD-20 or HPD-15 (Octapad or Hand-Sonic) percussion controller. The stand extends to about 48", so if

you play standing or sitting, you'll be able to find a comfortable height. Having your stand serve as your audio monitor is cool. Together, they make a nice, tight, compact system for live playing applications.

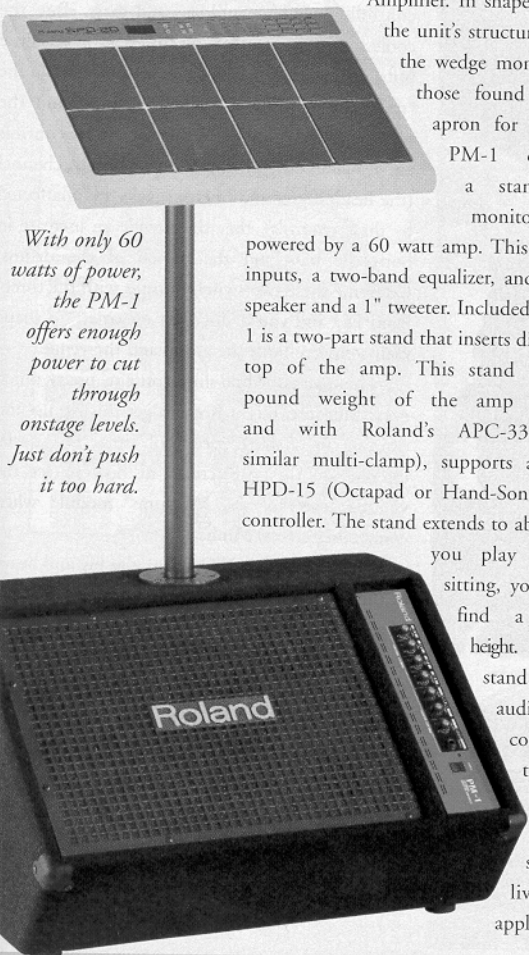
Inputs and outputs are located at the back of the unit and all performance controls — including the power switch and headphone jack — are at the front of the amp. The control panel of the PM-1 is clean and well organized. There are four volume knobs dedicated to each of the inputs and simple treble and bass knobs with center detents that control the two-band equalizer. A master volume knob determines both the speaker and the headphone output levels.

The first input accepts levels from -50 dBu to -20 dBu. This is handy for plugging a microphone into the PM-1. In addition to the standard 1/4" phone jack, this input also sports a balanced XLR input. Channels two, three, and four use standard 1/4" line inputs. Channel four serves as a monitor input. Signals entering through this jack are sent to the speakers and headphone output, but not to the main line-out jack. This can be a real asset if you're looking for talk-back capability from the main PA or when you want to hear a click or sequence track through the PM-1 but not in the house mix.

Plugging a set of headphones into the PM-1 will disconnect signals from the main speakers. This feature makes sense for a box designed as a personal monitor (after all, if you're going to monitor signals through the headphones, you won't want the audio materials bleeding into the phones from the main speakers). Also note that all of the inputs are mono, the headphone output is mono, and the line-out jack is mono.

Who benefits from this amp? Well, if you play a HandSonic, or SPD-20-style controller, this baby's for you. Take the mono-output of the HandSonic into the PM-1, run a cable from the line-out jack to the house system, have your sound man run a monitor feed back into the PM-1, and you'll be in heaven. You'll have the ability to hear yourself well, hear the group's mix, and control the relative volumes of each.

The sound of the PM-1 isn't going to rattle any windows or shake down the house. Sixty watts is not a whopping lot of power. In addition, the 12" speaker and 1" tweeter pair sound somewhat hollow. While the tone controls are basic, they do boost or cut enough to make a significant change in the tone quality. A mid-range tone control might have been a nice feature. If you're used to hearing your sounds through a bigger rig, then the PM-1 might be a sonic disappointment, but remember that it's designed as a personal monitor — something you're going to put pretty close to your ears — not a stand-alone sound system. If you're looking for something larger, check out the next paragraph.



With only 60 watts of power, the PM-1 offers enough power to cut through onstage levels. Just don't push it too hard.

Your first glance at Roland's new TDA-700 will tell you that this unit is big. With casters, this beast is over 20" wide, 21" deep, 40" tall, and over 110 pounds. You'll definitely need a friend to move it over anything besides a smooth-tiled floor.

Basic features of the TDA-700 include 300 watts of bi-amped power (240 watts for the low frequencies and 60 watts for the high frequencies), pushing a 15" woofer and a single horn tweeter. If you're not familiar with the idea of bi-amping, it simply means that there is a separate amplifier for the low and high frequency drivers.

The three-channel mixer includes an input

designated for the V-Drums that is taken from the stereo headphone jack on the V-Drum brain or its left and right stereo outputs. That makes a total of three input jacks for the first channel. Channels two and three each contain a left (for mono) and right (for stereo) pair of input jacks.

This amp was designed to provide a dedicated rig for working drummers who use V-Drums as their main kit. With two more stereo inputs, there's room for your additional sound modules too. Just as a guitarist would bring his Fender twin to the gig, plug in his guitar, and start rippin', now the V-drummer can do the same. Plug your V-

Drums into this amp and you'll have a high quality rig able to drive a pretty good size room. If you're truly adventurous, you can get two of these babies and run them in stereo!

Available on a few of Roland's other amps, the TDA-700 comes with a feature called "stereo link," which makes it possible to hook two units together with a single audio cable. It allows one unit to serve as the main (configured as the right side of a stereo pair), and one as a sub (the left channel). Stereo link works very well, and lets you set your stereo field as wide as you want with a minimum of hassle. The stereo headphone jack has its own dedicated volume control. Note that adjusting the headphone level is independent of the line-out levels, which are controlled by the master volume knob.

This unit includes two pairs of line outputs: One set of XLR-style jacks and a pair of unbalanced TRS 1/4" phone jacks. The XLR line-out jacks have a ground lift switch that can be used to counteract noise that may be present at these outputs from a ground loop hum. With such flexibility, an e-drummer can use the TDA-700(s) for stage and run a stereo signal to the house's sound system.

The TDA-700 has several controls for adjusting timbre. There is a three-band equalizer controlling treble, middle, and bass. But the coolest things on this machine are two little buttons that are going to spend a lot of time in the "on" position. One is called "bottom" and the other is called "punch." While these tone controls are available only on the V-Drums input channel (the headphones and line-out jacks are unaffected by these controls), they do provide an increase in both the bass and the punch of the drums. Combine these two switch settings with the three-band EQ and you've got a lot of variety to shape your sound to both the group and the venue.

The manual, while slim, contains pretty much everything you might need to get this rig up and running in a short period of time. Of special interest are the instructions of how to set the volume levels of the V-Drums' module when connecting it to the unit.

The sound of the TDA-700 is as big and heavy as the box itself. With plenty of power, a speaker large enough to handle the low frequencies that e-drums require, and a horn tweeter, the amp sounds tight, crisp, and clean. You should be able to tweak your tone and hold your own in just about any musical situation. Even though Roland markets the TDA-700 as an amp for their V-Drums, you could certainly use this rig with any type of electronic percussion instrument from other manufacturers. 🍿

"it's all good"

-abe cunningham
deftones

"Nice overtones! This drum is crisp and articulate. Sensitive, but with the balls of brass. If you do a nice press roll, it's really responsive. When I cranked it up, it definitely cut. The new throw off is beautiful, very cool, very smooth. Some throw-offs have a tendency to get caught on things when you're jamming, but this is really low profile with a nice locking action on it. This snare drum will do fine in any setting, any situation. It's all good"

Power Brass PBS255 Snare
5.5" x 14" • 1.5mm thick • hairline nickel plated brass shell • 2.3mm Steel Mighty triple flanged hoops • MC70A/70B snare system. Also available in 4", 6.5" and 8" depths.



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