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Alesis DM5

Alesis DM5 18-bit Drum Module User Manual

Model: DM5

Introduction

The Alesis DM5 is a versatile and powerful 18-bit drum and percussion sound module designed for drummers and MIDI composers. It offers a comprehensive selection of high-quality drum, percussion, and special effect samples, making it suitable for a wide range of musical applications. The DM5 features advanced technologies like Expanded Dynamic Articulation™ and Random Sample, which contribute to its realistic and dynamic sound reproduction.
This manual provides detailed instructions for setting up, operating, and maintaining your Alesis DM5 drum module, ensuring you can fully utilize its capabilities.

Key Features

- Over 540 high-quality drum, percussion, and cymbal sounds.
- 21 programmable drum sets, many recorded in true stereo with ambient effects.
- Expanded Dynamic Articulation™ technology, which modulates tone and pitch based on playing dynamics for enhanced realism.
- Random Sample feature to vary drum sounds for more natural performance.
- Ultra-fast trigger-to-MIDI converter with 12 trigger inputs.
- 5 programmable parameters for each trigger input.
- Full MIDI In, Out/Thru connectivity for integration with other MIDI devices.
- Four audio outputs (two 1/4-inch stereo pairs) for discrete processing and control.
- 18-bit sample resolution and 48kHz sample rate.
- 16-voice polyphony.
- Seven-position, user-programmable panning.
- Dedicated 1/4-inch TRS headphone output with variable gain.
- Assignable 1/4-inch footswitch input for hi-hat control or program advance.

Setup

Front Panel Overview

The front panel of the Alesis DM5 provides access to all primary controls and the display for navigating sounds and

settings.



Figure 1: Front Panel of the Alesis DM5 Drum Module. This image displays the module's rack-mountable chassis, the central LCD screen showing sound and trigger information, the large 'VALUE' knob for parameter adjustment, and an array of control buttons for functions like 'STORE', 'VOICE', 'MIX', 'DRUM SET', and 'MIDI', along with headphone and volume controls on the left and a power button on the right.

- **PHONES / VOLUME:** 1/4-inch headphone jack and associated volume control.
- **DISPLAY:** LCD screen showing current sound, drum set, trigger levels, and parameter values.
- **VALUE Knob:** Large rotary encoder used to adjust parameter values and navigate menus.
- **PREVIEW Button:** Used to audition sounds.
- **PARAMETER Buttons (<, >):** Used to navigate between parameters within a menu.
- **FUNCTION Buttons (STORE, NOTE CHASE, VOICE, TUNE, MIX, OUTPUT, DRUM SET, EXT TRIG, GROUP, MIDI):** Dedicated buttons for accessing various editing and setup functions.
- **POWER Button:** Turns the unit on or off.

Rear Panel Connections

The rear panel houses all input and output connections for integrating the DM5 into your setup.

- **TRIGGER INPUTS (1-12):** Twelve 1/4-inch inputs for connecting drum pads, cymbal pads, or other trigger devices. Each input has 5 user-adjustable trigger parameters.
- **AUDIO OUTPUTS (Stereo Pairs):** Two 1/4-inch stereo pairs for connecting to a mixer, amplifier, or recording interface.
- **MIDI IN, OUT/THRU:** Standard 5-pin DIN connectors for MIDI communication with other MIDI devices.
- **FOOTSWITCH:** 1/4-inch input, assignable to hi-hat control or program advance.
- **POWER INPUT:** Connection for the included 9V AC external transformer.

Initial Connection Steps

1. Connect your drum pads or trigger devices to the **TRIGGER INPUTS** on the rear panel using 1/4-inch cables.
2. Connect the **AUDIO OUTPUTS** to your mixer, audio interface, or amplifier. Use the main stereo outputs for a standard setup, or utilize the individual outputs for discrete processing.
3. If using MIDI, connect your MIDI controller or computer to the **MIDI IN**, and connect the **MIDI OUT/THRU** to other MIDI devices as needed.
4. Connect the footswitch (if applicable) to the **FOOTSWITCH** input.
5. Plug the included 9V AC external transformer into the **POWER INPUT** on the rear panel, then plug the transformer into a suitable AC outlet.
6. Ensure all volume levels are set to minimum before powering on.

Operation

Powering On/Off

Press the **POWER** button on the front panel to turn the DM5 on. Press it again to turn the unit off. Always ensure connected audio equipment is powered off or muted before powering the DM5 on or off to prevent sudden loud noises.

Navigating Sounds and Drumsets

The DM5 features 540 sounds and 21 programmable drumsets. Use the **VALUE** knob to scroll through sounds or drumsets displayed on the LCD. The **DRUM SET** button allows you to switch between drumset mode and individual sound editing mode. Use the **PARAMETER** buttons (<, >) to navigate through different parameters within a selected function.
To audition a sound, press the **PREVIEW** button. When a trigger input is active, the corresponding trigger level will be displayed on the LCD.

Dynamic Articulation™

Alesis's exclusive Dynamic Articulation™ technology enhances the realism of the DM5's sounds. Instead of simply changing volume, this feature allows drum and cymbal sounds to change their timbre, tone, and pitch based on the velocity (how hard they are hit) of the incoming trigger signal. This mimics the natural behavior of acoustic instruments, providing a more expressive playing experience.

Random Sample Feature

The Random Sample feature introduces subtle variations to the sound each time it is triggered. This prevents static, repetitive sounds and adds a layer of organic realism, making performances sound more natural and less machine-like.

Trigger Input Parameters

Each of the 12 trigger inputs on the DM5 has 5 programmable parameters. These parameters allow you to fine-tune the response of each trigger to your specific pads and playing style. Refer to the full Alesis DM5 manual (if available from Alesis) for detailed instructions on adjusting these parameters, which typically include sensitivity, threshold, retrigger cancel, and curve settings.

MIDI Functionality

The DM5 can function as a sound source for any MIDI-compatible device. Connect your MIDI controller (keyboard, sequencer, computer) to the DM5's **MIDI IN**. You can then trigger the DM5's internal sounds using MIDI notes. The **MIDI OUT/THRU** port allows you to pass MIDI data through or send MIDI messages generated by the DM5 (e.g., from trigger inputs if configured) to other devices.

Maintenance

To ensure the longevity and optimal performance of your Alesis DM5, follow these general maintenance guidelines:

- **Cleaning:** Use a soft, dry cloth to wipe down the exterior of the unit. Avoid using abrasive cleaners, solvents, or waxes, as these can damage the finish and internal components.
- **Environment:** Operate and store the DM5 in a clean, dry environment away from extreme temperatures, direct sunlight, and excessive dust or moisture.
- **Ventilation:** Ensure proper ventilation around the unit, especially if rack-mounted, to prevent overheating.
- **Cables:** Regularly check all cables for signs of wear or damage. Replace faulty cables immediately to prevent signal issues or potential hazards.
- **Power Supply:** Always use the original Alesis 9V AC external transformer provided with the unit. Using an incorrect power supply can cause damage and void your warranty.

Troubleshooting

If you encounter issues with your Alesis DM5, consider the following basic troubleshooting steps:

- **No Power:**

- Ensure the power adapter is securely connected to both the DM5 and a working AC outlet.
- Verify the power outlet is active by plugging in another device.
- Confirm you are using the correct 9V AC Alesis power adapter.

- **No Sound Output:**
  - Check all audio cable connections from the DM5's outputs to your mixer/amplifier.
  - Ensure the DM5's master volume and individual output levels are turned up.
  - Verify that your mixer/amplifier is powered on and its input levels are correctly set.
  - Check headphone volume if listening via headphones.
  - Ensure a sound is selected and the trigger inputs are properly configured and receiving signals.
- **Triggering Issues (No Sound from Pad/Inconsistent Response):**
  - Confirm the drum pad is correctly connected to the corresponding trigger input on the DM5.
  - Check the trigger cable for damage.
  - Adjust the trigger parameters (sensitivity, threshold, etc.) for the specific input. These settings are crucial for optimal response.
  - Ensure the correct sound is assigned to the triggered input within the selected drum set.
- **MIDI Communication Problems:**
  - Verify MIDI cables are correctly connected (MIDI OUT of controller to MIDI IN of DM5).
  - Ensure the MIDI channels on both the DM5 and the transmitting device match.
  - Check MIDI settings within the DM5 to ensure it's configured to receive MIDI data.

If these steps do not resolve the issue, consult the comprehensive Alesis DM5 user manual (if available from Alesis) or contact Alesis customer support for further assistance.

Specifications

Parameter	Value
Sounds	540 drum, percussion, and cymbal sounds
Drum Kits	21 programmable drum sets (memory locations with defaults stored in ROM)
Sample Resolution	18-bit
Sample Rate	48kHz
Polyphony	16-voice
Trigger Inputs	12 x 1/4-inch (each with 5 user adjustable parameters)
Audio Outputs	2 x 1/4-inch stereo pairs
Headphone Output	1/4-inch TRS with variable gain
MIDI	In, Out/Thru
Footswitch	1/4-inch, assignable to hi-hat control or program advance

Panning	7 position, user programmable
Tuning Scheme	Coarse (chromatic) and Fine (cents)
Data Input	Data knob, front panel keypad (sound auditioning via velocity sensitive Preview button)
Power	9V AC external transformer, UL and CSA approved
Dimensions (LxWxH)	19 x 5 x 1.75 inches (48.26 x 12.7 x 4.45 cm)
Weight	3 pounds (1.36 kg)

Warranty and Support

Specific warranty details for the Alesis DM5 18-bit Drum Module are not provided within this document. For information regarding warranty coverage, technical support, or service, please visit the official Alesis website or contact Alesis customer service directly. Retain your proof of purchase for warranty claims.

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