MANUFACTURER	PRICE
BOSS	£263
MODEL	**CONTACT**
RC-10R RHYTHM LOOP STATION	ROLAND UK 01792 702701 / WWW.ROLAND.CO.UK

BOSS

RC-10R Rhythm Loop Station

This compact looper with complex rhythms provides a creative platform

Words Trevor Curwen   **Photography** Phil Barker

The latest in Boss's Loop Stations earns its 'R' suffix by having a built-in rhythm generator. Now, while it's true that the RC-3 and RC-30 both have onboard rhythm patterns, too, what you have here is altogether more sophisticated in the rhythm department, making it almost a hybrid unit – a looper crossed with a drum machine.

There are 280 preset rhythms covering a host of musical genres and each includes two unique sections (Pattern 1 and Pattern 2) with transition fills and an intro and ending. What's more, there's onboard storage space for 50 imported user rhythms in SMF (Standard MIDI File) format that you can create on your computer. All of the rhythms are played back by your choice of 16 onboard drum

kits with sounds from the Boss and Roland rhythm libraries. For your actual looping (with or without the drums) there's a stereo looper with two independent tracks, six hours' recording time and 99 onboard memories for storing phrases.

IN USE

The RC-10R is built into the same chassis as the Boss 200 series pedals, so it has two easily accessible footswitches – one for looping and one for rhythm. Besides standard pedalboard mono operation there's true stereo in/out operation if you want it, and you can also utilise the L and R outputs to send loops and rhythm to separate destinations – typically loops to your guitar amp and rhythms to a PA or similar. If you're sending the rhythms

to your guitar amp alongside your guitar then there are some very useful output filtering/EQ options available to apply to the rhythm tracks, likewise for tweaking your sound if it's not going to a guitar amp.

The front panel is a model of simplicity with separate volume knobs and excellent rotary LED displays for loops and rhythm. Besides these, there's just a pair of buttons and a press-and-turn encoder knob to take care of adjusting parameters in the small but very clear display panel.

To use rhythm patterns you select a genre (funk, rock, and so on), choose a named rhythm pattern in that category and set the tempo in bpm. Hitting the footswitch will play an intro then the basic pattern, but you can hold the footswitch down to move to the second (usually

01. LOOP FOOTSWITCH
Footswitch for looping functions: single presses for recording, overdubbing and playback; two presses to stop playback; hold for undo/redo

02. RHYTHM FOOTSWITCH
Press once to start the rhythm; hold to change to the next pattern. Pressing once during playing will bring in a fill, while pressing twice will stop the rhythm with an ending fill

03. CIRCULAR DISPLAY (RHYTHM)
This displays your rhythm as it progresses, one LED per beat. A contrasting coloured LED indicates the first beat of each bar

04. CIRCULAR DISPLAY (LOOP)
The LEDs here change colour to indicate the status: green for playback, red for recording, orange for overdubbing

05. DISPLAY & VALUE ENCODER
The Value encoder in conjunction with the display lets you select your rhythm patterns and phrases as well as taking care of housekeeping tasks

Guitarist **CHOICE**

9/10

slightly busier) variation on it (Pattern 2). Fills are automatically inserted when transitioning between the two patterns and you can chuck in a fill at any time by hitting the footswitch once. There are some great patterns here that will really entice you to play along: excellent for creativity and sparking new musical ideas, but also extremely practical if you need to hone your timing. If you don't like the sound of the kit that comes as the default with a particular pattern, it's easily changed for another and you can adjust the reverb on it, too.

For looping you choose a free memory slot and get started, with single presses taking you through either a record/overdub/play cycle or a record/play/overdub cycle. You can hold the switch to undo and redo loops and press it twice to stop. With two tracks available you can record two different song sections, and these can play serially with switching between Track 1 and Track 2 carried out by holding down the Rhythm switch and hitting the Loop switch.

All of that is with rhythm and loops operating separately, but using them simultaneously is facilitated by the very practical SYNC mode that lets you initiate loop recording by setting the rhythm going and having the looper change to Track 2 when the rhythm changes to Pattern 2. It's all very intuitive and great for looping newbies. If you wish to expand your control options then external footswitches and expression pedal can take on a number of roles, or you can use MIDI.

VERDICT
An inspirational tool for songwriting and practice: its rhythms can feed creativity and stretch your playing. Of course, the RC-10R is also perfectly capable for live use, too, and if you don't choose to use the rhythms, you still have a looper that works like the Boss compact models. That's not to say the rhythms aren't useful live: a solo act may find them invaluable for a bigger sound, especially as the facility to load your own enables ready access to tailor-made backing tracks. Impressive. **G**

PROS *Ease of use; large variety of usable rhythms; instantly switchable between two song sections; visual loop indicators*
CONS *A headphone output would have been useful; no battery power for buskers*