

Arturia MiniLab 3

€99

The popular mini keyboard controller is back with a refreshed new look. **Jon Musgrave** runs it through its paces

CONTACT WHO: Arturia **WEB:** arturia.com **KEY FEATURES** 8 velocity/pressure sensitive pads, 8 rotary encoders, 4 sliders, Capacitive touch-sensitive pitch bend and modulation, Mini screen with push button rotary encoder, Mackie Control support and dedicated DAW scripts, Arturia Analog Lab integration, Built in arpeggiator, Chord mode, MIDI 5-pin output, USB Powered, Recycled plastic components





THE PROS & CONS



Quality construction and stylish design

Good DAW support

High quality smooth knobs and faders

Great Arturia Analog Lab integration

Pressure-sensitive, backlit pads

Excellent value



Not necessarily worth an upgrade, if you already own a MiniLab MkII

MiniLab 3 is the latest incarnation of Arturia's 25-minikey MIDI controller keyboard.

Available in black and white versions, it has the same footprint as the MkII and weighs the same, but now has a slicker overall look. It's also made with 50% recycled plastic and a 5-year guarantee.

The new overhauled top panel is now graced with eight ultra smooth continuous controllers, four sliders and a mini display with accompanying push action rotary encoder. You also get eight velocity and pressure-sensitive RGB backlit pads with a 2-bank configuration. The MiniLab 3 keyboard has an excellent positive action that's consistent across the keys with minimal mechanical noise. The pitch bend and mod wheel are the touch-sensitive slider type and these work incredibly well. It's also great to see polyphonic aftertouch generated by the pads and this dovetails with many patches in Arturia's Analog Lab (the Intro version is in the software bundle). Above the pitch bend are four buttons including Shift, which

combine with the pads and display for further onboard features including chord memory and the arpeggiator.

Connectivity and power is via a USB C connector and the box includes a 2m USB C to USB A cable with handy angled USB C plug. On the back there's also a 5-pin MIDI out and a ¼" pedal controller input. The controller input can be configured for sustain, foot switch or expression, and these settings along with many others are handled via Arturia's MIDI Control Centre application (Mac/PC).

The build quality is impressive, but it's also important that it integrates properly with your software, and this is an area that Arturia have focused on. MiniLab 3 has two factory modes (DAW and Arturia) and five user configuration memory modes and also supports Mackie Control protocol. In DAW mode, four of the eight pads combine with the Shift button to provide transport controls, and there are also DAW-specific scripts that extend the DAW mode features. This worked particularly well for Live, with pads assigned to clip and scene functions, and sliders controlling track, pan and send levels.

Arturia mode is designed for use with their Analog Lab and offers an excellent integrated experience. The

mini display handles preset browsing, meanwhile knobs and sliders on the Analog Lab layout match the MiniLab 3 layout, with parameters including brightness, timbre, effects levels, master EQ and output level. Switching between modes and user memories takes only two buttons and the overall experience is super slick.

If you already own a MiniLab MkII and are thinking of upgrading, you'll need to weigh up the extra options such as MIDI out and the reconfigured panel. For new users it's definitely one of the best in its class and offers fantastic value. If you need a little more persuasion, there's an excellent software bundle too! **FM**

FM VERDICT

9.3

Not only great value but upgrades the feature set and quality to deliver one of the best mini keyboard controllers available