

Akai Force vs Akai MPC Live: Which Standalone Beat-Production Studio is Right for You?

If you are a beatmaker, DJ, or music producer looking for an inspiring tool to add to your arsenal, Akai Force and Akai MPC Live are both viable options to look at.

CAUTION: Before you read any further, you should know that these are both pricey, hybrid gadgets that are meant to work as standalone instruments. If you are looking for a simple MIDI controller with the sole purpose of controlling your laptop, take a look at the [Akai MPD218 Pad Controller](#) or [Akai APC40 MKII](#) instead.

SUMMARY: Both the Force and the MPC Live offer good value to add to your music-production workflow. Both come with their own onboard production software. The MPC Live comes with more conventional MIDI capabilities, which the Force doesn't offer. But the latter is more expansive and offers a host of other features like Mic preamps and clip-launch-type keypads.

Akai's branding has evolved into the very personification of a drum machine over the years. These newer additions to the family stand testimony to the spirit of innovation that got this brand that status. The landscape of beat-making and music production continues to evolve at a high pace. So choosing the right tools can be a daunting process with all the options out there. Here's the lowdown on these two to help you gain some clarity.

Overview

Akai Force

An obvious competitor for Ableton's Push at first glance, the [Akai Force](#) is primarily a clip-launch controller. It aims to facilitate non-linear music composition and beat making.

While it doesn't offer MIDI control in the traditional sense, its compatibility with Ableton Link integrates it seamlessly into your workflow. That being said, it works equally well as a standalone device as well. The Mic preamps complete with 48V phantom power are great for recording your own samples. It gives you a very convenient 'all-in-one' quality.

Akai MPC Live

True to its name, the [Akai MPC Live](#) comes across as an updated avatar of the legendary MPC drum machine. Use it as a standalone device with Akai's own MPC software or with your computer via USB to control your DAW of preference.

Note: It includes no Mic preamps.

Build and Portability

Akai Force

The Akai Force comes with 64 back-lit RGB pads. These are velocity-sensitive and work well both as a clip launcher and for finger drumming. The velocity sensitivity has a deep curve which gives you a high degree of responsiveness. This captures the nuances of your performance well.

It is 2.85 inches high, 13.8 inches wide, 15.3 inches deep. And weighs in at 8.53 lbs.

Akai MPC Live

The touch screen on the MPC will make classic MPC users right at home. Scrolling and zooming through the patches and menus are a breeze.

A major plus with the MPC live is battery-powered functionality, which runs up to 4 hours. This enables producing music on the go. For those Mondays where your studio walls are just not cutting it, head to the park with this for inspiration.

The MPC Live is 16.7 inches tall, 8.8 inches wide, 2.7 inches deep. It weighs in at 5.9 lbs.

Connectivity

Akai Force

Inputs:

- Two XLR combo inputs. You can plugin and record both instruments and microphones.

Outputs:

- Master outputs are standard stereo 1/4" TRS.
- Additionally, you get two 1/4" TRS individual outs, which you can assign to your requirements.

Headphone:

- Standard 1/4" headphone out.

MIDI:

- The Force comes with three 1/8" MIDI (In/Out/Thru) connections.

A debatable decision that has had many Akai fans somewhat befuddled. Most would have preferred standard MIDI connections.

USB:

- 1 x Type A and 1 x Type B.

Additional connections:

- Four CV/Gate outs and an Ethernet connection. (The latter can be used for connecting to Ableton, for example).

Akai MPC Live

Inputs:

The Akai MPC has four inputs in total. A pair of 1/4" TRS inputs and two RCA inputs (1 stereo pair).

Outputs:

- Six 1/4" TRS outputs in total. One pair acts as master out while the other four are assignable.
- Headphone: One standard 1/8" output.

MIDI:

- Two 5-pin MIDI inputs
- Two 5-pin MIDI outputs

USB:

Two USB type A ports.
One USB type B port.

Price

The Akai Force retails at \$1099,00

The Akai MPC Live has been discontinued. But if you're lucky, you can find the last ones available online for about \$999,00

(Please check your local dealer for details).

Verdict

Here's how the Akai Force and Akai MPC Live stack up against each other:

- Build and portability: Akai Force wins due to the extended battery-powered operation it offers.
- Connectivity: Akai MPC Live wins. Standard MIDI connections make the difference.

- Price: Tie. For the value they offer, both are solid investments.

Further Reading and Links

[Akai Force on the official Akai website.](#)

[Akai MPC Live on the official Akai website.](#)