

Nokia 5800 XpressMusic

Price: From free on contract
www.nokia.co.uk

Tube strike

The **5800 XpressMusic** is Nokia's first-ever full touch-screen handset and comes with one year's free unlimited music downloads. It looks and sounds too good to be true



MONTHS before its official launch, gossip and speculation surrounding the Nokia 5800 XpressMusic handset was spreading across the web as feverishly as news of another Britney meltdown.

Widely known as the Nokia 'Tube' phone, the Nokia 5800 had been causing a real cyber-stir among the online tech fraternity because it happens to be Nokia's first-ever full touch-screen device.

At long last, a Nokia handset that could be squarely pitched against touch-titans like the BlackBerry Storm and Apple iPhone 3G.

Although the device's large screen and TV and video functionality have been grabbing the headlines, Nokia is promoting the device, first and foremost, as an XpressMusic phone. The 5800 will also be the latest handset to join Nokia's burgeoning Comes With Music range, following the 5310, N95 8GB and N96.

So, as well as getting a phone with oodles of functions, users will also gain access to unlimited music downloads for one year, which is a major plus. And the positives don't stop there.

Tactile design

The 5800 is far less bulky than the BlackBerry Storm and a little more compact than the iPhone, although it is a tad thicker. Even so, it's an exceptionally ergonomic and well-balanced device.

It also possesses the sleek, minimalist good looks that you'd expect from a keypad-less phone.

The phone's fascia features three mechanised keys, a large display and a little touch-sensitive

icon above the top-right of the display, which provides shortcut access to the music player and other multimedia functions. The phone's attractive smoked-glass face is framed by a smooth raised edge, which would help protect the screen if the phone was placed face down. We're not sure if it serves a practical purpose, but it feels rather nice and, aesthetically, reminds us of a designer air-hockey table.

Our review phone was black (although we did detect a hint of aubergine) and sported a subtle crimson accent on the sides. It looks and feels fabulous. It's also extremely tactile, thanks to a matt, rubberised rear casing, which gives the phone added grip.

On its left side, the 5800 provides slots for both a microSD memory card and a SIM card, so you don't have to remove the rear casing and battery to access your SIM, which is a welcome benefit. Meanwhile, on the right of the phone, you'll find the audio volume controls, a screen unlock key and a dedicated camera key.

The spring-loaded screen unlock key is another clever addition because it negates the need to press two separate keys simultaneously as you do with most phones. Instead, to unlock or lock the screen, you simply slide the key down and it automatically springs back into place.

At the top of the phone, you'll find the adaptor socket and 3.5mm headset port, which makes so much sense when you consider that most people listen to music with the device in their pocket. So it is much neater to plug the headphones into the



top of the phone rather than a port on the side.

Touch-screen interface

At the rear base of the phone, there's a little slot that houses a lightweight stylus to assist with touch-screen operation. Although most of the 5800's functionality can be controlled satisfactorily using your fingertips, we'd also advise using the stylus for the virtual QWERTY keypad, as it gives you a little more control.

The phone also features a handwriting recognition feature, which converts your scrawl into text and can only really be used with the stylus.

The 5800's main menu consists of 12 colourful touch-sensitive icons and, as with the BlackBerry Storm, the target key lights up (in red rather than blue) when you touch them, which helps to eliminate erroneous key presses.

You don't get the touch-screen

gimmicks – like pinching and swiping – on the 5800 that you'll find on devices like the HTC Touch range and iPhone, for example. And unlike the BlackBerry Storm, it's not a clickable touch-screen, but you do feel a very gentle haptic response. We found the 5800's touch interface very responsive and relatively fiddle-free.

As with all touch-screens, the virtual keyboard can be a bit of a faff, so to eliminate mistakes and frustration when texting we'd recommend choosing full screen QWERTY mode and using the stylus rather than your fingertip to type messages and text.

TV and video

One of the major advantages of full touch-screen devices are the bumper-sized screens, which are perfect for rich multimedia functions like internet browsing, streamed

TV, videos and games.

This is certainly the case with the Nokia 5800, which – like a number of other Nokia Nseries devices – features a pre-loaded BBC iPlayer application.

To access the iPlayer, you need a data connection, which the Nokia 5800 enables over either a HSDPA or a Wi-Fi connection. Although the phone boasts HSDPA speeds of 3.6Mbps, we took advantage of our office's Wireless LAN connection and had iPlayer up and running in less than five seconds.

We watched snippets of a recent classic *Gavin and Stacey* episode plus a few minutes from *Homes Under the Hammer* and found that, as with our programme choices, the picture quality is extremely variable, with the iPlayer regularly prone to pixelation.

On a more positive note, when the picture is sound, the screen is

More reviews online at
www.mobilechoiceuk.com



Nokia 5800 XpressMusic

- **Size** 111x51.7x15.5mm
- **Weight** 109g
- **Display** 3.2-inch TFT touch-screen, 16 million colours
- **Camera** 3.2 megapixels
- **Video recording/playback/streaming** Yes/yes/yes
- **Video calling** Yes
- **Audio playback** MP3, WMA, WAV, eAAC+
- **Ringtones** Polyphonic, MP3
- **Radio** Yes
- **Operating system** Symbian S60
- **Connectivity** Bluetooth, A2DP, Wi-Fi
- **Internal memory** 81MB
- **Memory card slot** microSD (8GB card included)
- **Messaging** SMS, MMS, email, instant messaging

- **Internet browser** WAP 2.0, XHTML, HTML, RSS
- **Java** Yes
- **Games** *Bounce*, *Global Race*
- **Data speed** HSDPA 3.6 Mbps
- **GPS** Yes, A-GPS
- **3.5mm headset port** Yes
- **Frequency** Quad-band
- **Talktime** Up to 525 minutes
- **Standby** Up to 406 hours

Features

- Full touch-screen
- BBC iPlayer
- Free music downloads (Comes With Music)
- HSDPA
- Wi-Fi
- A-GPS



Also consider Apple iPhone 3G

The Apple iPhone 3G may be facing competition from other well-equipped touch-screen devices, but it remains a force to be reckoned with.

Pros

A great-looking phone with a good interface and excellent video and music features, including one year's free music downloads.

Cons

The BBC iPlayer was prone to pixelation.

MC SCORE

★★★★★

Verdict A premium phone with crunch-beating appeal, great features, an enjoyable user interface and free music downloads for one year add up to a very desirable package

Look and feel	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Features	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Battery life	★★★★☆

some idea of its killer application. It's certainly well equipped.

The phone comes with a 3.5mm headset jack, an 8GB memory card boxed with the phone, the multi-format Music Player, a stereo FM radio, and a Nokia Music Store application, plus one year's free Comes With Music subscription.

In case you're unfamiliar with Nokia's groundbreaking new service, Comes With Music gives people one year of unlimited access to the Nokia Music Store, which includes the major record labels Universal Music Group, Sony BMG Entertainment, Warner Music Group and EMI, plus a selection of independent labels. So users get access to millions of tracks from a wide range of artists, with the capability to keep all downloaded tracks even after the year's subscription ends.

Unlike other XpressMusic phones, there are no mechanical

music keys, but the display does offer virtual music keys when a track has been chosen.

Audio quality sounds pretty good to our relatively untrained ear and improves when you plug in a set of quality cans. The music player is simple to use and includes a stalwart crowd-pleaser with album cover art.

Camera and sat nav

Although music and video are this phone's calling cards, its other features are none to shabby either. The 5800's camera boasts a very respectable 3.2-megapixel camera with a fine array of components including a Carl Zeiss lens, auto-focus and flash, plus a wide variety of scene settings. Photos are clear and sharp, and are easy to edit, blog or print with a couple of clicks. The video camera, meanwhile, shoots in VGA quality and there's also a secondary video-call camera on the front of the phone.

Sat nav is fast becoming a pre-requisite on today's top phones and the 5800 duly obliges with built-in A-GPS as well as the latest touch-screen version of Nokia Maps. Users can get basic location-based services for free, but you'll need to subscribe for voice-guided navigation and to download the latest city guides.

The verdict

With Wi-Fi, RSS reader, TV out, instant messaging and email also on board, together with a very respectable battery life, it's hard to find a chink in the Nokia 5800 XpressMusic's armoury.

We even quite like using the stylus. This is a great-looking phone with a user-friendly touch interface and a fabulous set of features that really do justify the fanatical online interest pre-launch.

With the Mobile World Congress just around the corner, it may be too early to bet on the 5800 as the phone of 2009, but it certainly has the wow factor.

Huw Morgan
huw.morgan@nhmedia.co.uk

Continued overleaf >>