

Moog Moogerfooger MIDI MuRF | £419

The MuRF and Bass MuRF get combined with added MIDI. **Robbie Stamp** considers the implications...



WHAT IS IT?

CV and MIDI controllable 'animated' 8-band resonant filter array effects pedal with bass and mid frequency instrument voicings

CONTACT

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Far reaching MIDI control
- 2 Excellent sound quality
- 3 Classic Moogerfooger design

The Moogerfooger MuRF already comes in two flavours, the standard version and the bass version. This latest

revision rolls these two variants into one unit with a switch to change the filter ranges between mids and bass, but the most important change is the addition of a MIDI input. Though the MIDI MuRF still possesses CV (Control Voltage) inputs for parameter control, as with all Moogerfoogers, the introduction of a MIDI input allows for full external parameter controls via this more widespread medium. Before looking at what can be done via MIDI

let's first look at what the MIDI MuRF can do on its own.

The MIDI MuRF is an array of eight resonant bandpass filters, the individual levels of which are set by the eight sliders. These filters are controlled by the animation parameters (Pattern, Rate, Envelope and LFO), whilst the Drive (input), Mix and Output knobs adjust the overall effect blend. The animation controls can be adjusted via CV and/or foot controllers/switches via the input jacks at the rear of the pedal. The Pattern selector accesses 12 animation step sequences per frequency type (toggled via the

Freq switch). The first of each 12 has no animation and turns the MuRF into a static filter array which can be used to achieve some lovely scoops and peaks. The LFO switch adds some basic movement to the sound as it sweeps the filter frequencies as a group, though this requires CV or a foot controller to adjust the rate. The essential character of the MuRF kicks in with the other 11 patterns, which are pre-programmed sequences with anything from eight to 64 steps. These sequences trigger an envelope for each of the eight filters, the shape of which is determined by the Envelope knob (more later). The clever part is that the triggering can either be momentary (on for a sequence step only) or latched (on until the next trigger which turns it off again). This produces rich variations in patterns that may take several revolutions around the sequence to resolve. Changing the filter levels further adjusts the balance within the patterns to radically change their rhythmic emphases. This effect is generally referred to as 'step filtering'.

Pushing the Envelope

The Envelope control is just one knob and sets the behaviour for all the filter triggers. At its 12 o'clock position the filter attacks and decays are even and resemble a triangle wave, but by rotating clockwise/anti-clockwise the attack/decay is lengthened, thus smearing the filter overlaps in time. Further rotation starts to shorten the whole envelope so a more pulsed shape is achieved, which works wonders for harder rhythmic patterns. The Rate knob controls the overall stepping speed, with a corresponding LED flashing red to indicate it. When a foot switch is used in the Tap/Step socket the LED will flash green to indicate the tempo – a small detail, but it really helps when it's on the floor amongst a mass of other pedals. On the subject of LED colours the Drive knob controls the input gain and can be used to introduce some smooth distortion into the signal, and so the corresponding LED goes from green (signal present) through yellow (optimum level) to red (clipping occurring). Another detail that impresses me about the MIDI MuRF is that when both output jacks are used the filters are split so that the odd numbered ones go to the left and the even numbered ones go right, which creates great stereo panning tricks.



Like all the Moogerfoogers this unit works its magic on pretty much anything you throw at it: guitars, bass, vocals, drums, etc., though an analogue monosynth really takes some beating for sheer fun. I like the tonal shaping possible in the static mode, and with a foot controller or two plugged in very pleasing and subtle tone shifts can be coaxied out. Of course when the step sequenced animations come in, a world of filtered rhythmic excitement opens up. The potential for variation between the filter levels, pattern selections and envelope shapes keeps throwing up new sounds, from subtle tremolo filters to vocoder-esque effects to ever-evolving bass pulses. The sound quality is excellent throughout and has enough bandwidth and headroom to make it a flexible studio and performance tool.



really surprising is how far Moog have taken it, as every control can be adjusted via MIDI, even the input, mix and output levels. What's more, they have also introduced a whole other level of pattern control that isn't possible by other means. By sending MIDI clock to the MuRF the step sequence tempo syncs to the incoming

messages (see the 'White Note Stepping' section). The clock syncing is bang on and rate changes don't result in a loss of rhythm, though it can take a fraction of a beat to adjust, and all of the CC controls show no sign of the stepping associated with the 7-bit MIDI resolution. Though sequencing and editing MIDI CCs can become an

arduous task the results are well worth it. It also means that the pedal can integrate seamlessly into a MIDI performance setup.

The fact that Moog have gone so far reaching with the MIDI control is a testament to the range quality

It's not as universal as the lowpass filter, or as wild as the ring modulator, but there is a wealth of tonal shaping that will suit instrumentalists and producers alike.

MIDI magic

So what can you do with MIDI input? The answer is more than ever. What is

clock and the rate knob becomes a clock divider to achieve subdivisions from four whole notes to 1/64ths. This clock subdivision can also be set via MIDI CC09. The manual lists which CC numbers control which parameters, from bypass to LFO rate to bass/mids switching. The filters can also be individually controlled via note on/off

Conclusion

By rolling the two frequency types together Moog have created a more flexible sound shaping tool and by adding MIDI have increased its appeal and integration potential by a large factor. The fact that they have gone so far reaching with the MIDI control implementation is a testament to the quality of this product range. The price difference between this unit and the non-MIDI MuRFs is significant but easily justified. Though it may not have the appeal of a more standard effect, such as delay or envelope filtering, it is a unique and high quality tool that is worth the expense for those that want something more original. **FM**

White Note Stepping

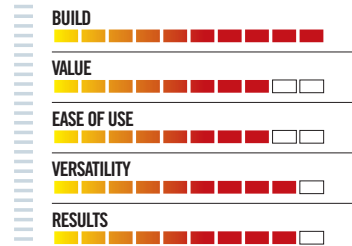
The MIDI MuRF has a unique feature for controlling the individual filters. Note On messages sent via MIDI from groups of eight keys (the white notes from C to C) will control the firing of the eight filters in three different modes. The first mode, Mute Mode, uses notes C0 to C1 to mute the corresponding filters within a Pattern as long as the note is held down. In Triggered Mode notes C2 to C3 trigger the envelopes for the corresponding filters in accordance with how the Envelope knob is set and in turn stops the step sequence so the filters

can be played in any pattern the user may want. The Sustained Mode also stops the Pattern and allows the user to play the filters via the notes C4 to C5, with the filters sustaining until the note is released. In

this mode the filter levels are set by the note velocity and it ignores the Envelope knob setting. The last Note On trick is that C7 can be used to step through a pattern in accordance with the Envelope knob setting.



FutureMusic VERDICT



A unique and high quality effect with unprecedented MIDI control.

SPECS

Rotary Controls: 5 x non-stepped for Drive, Mix, Output Envelope and Rate, 1 x stepped for Pattern

Slider Controls: 8 x 200mm throw faders for filter controls

Switch Controls: 1 x Bypass foot switch, 2 x single throws for LFO on/off and Freq (bass or mids) for filter sliders

Audio Input: 1 x 1/4" TS for instrument/line level from -16dBm to +4dBm

Audio Outputs: 2x 1/4" TS with -8dBm nominal max level and +8dBm absolute max level

CV inputs: 4 x 1/4" TRS (Rate, Env, LFO/Sweep and Mix) for CV and expression pedal control

Other Input: 1 x 1/4" TRS (Tap/Step In) for external foot switch/CV Gate tap tempo and pattern step advancement

MIDI In: 1 x standard 5-pin DIN socket

Dimensions: 152 x 229 x 64mm
Weight: 0.9kg

ALTERNATIVES



Line 6 FM4
£309

An excellent digital modelling alternative that boasts a whole range of filtering effects including step filtering. What it provides in variety it lacks in sheer originality and also doesn't come with external control such as CV or MIDI, though you can use an expression pedal.

line6.com



Electro Harmonix Microsynth
£225

Another big hitter in the 'unique filtering effect' category this long running envelope driven filter/octaver will deliver some dramatic effects to guitars and synths, and like the MuRF there's also a bass version. It doesn't do step-filtering or sound like the MuRF, but then what else does?

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