

MOOG MIDI MURF, FREQBOX & ANALOG DELAY EFFECTS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMANDA THOMAS





Moog MIDI MuRF, FreqBox & Analog Delay

£419, £309 & £549

Three new stompboxes from the company that produced some of the most popular synths ever *by Trevor Curwen*

The Moog name is synonymous with synthesisers, but the company has also put some of that analogue synth magic into a range of pedals (the Moogerfoogers) – three of which we’re taking a look at here. Not exactly your average stompboxes, the large and solid Moogerfoogers run off a supplied 9V adaptor and sport a signature Moog look – with wooden end-cheeks, white-on-black fascia and chunky knobs. They’re designed to work with a wide range of sound sources, including guitars, and have input and output level controls to facilitate this. In addition, all have multiple connections for expression pedals and footswitches to allow live control of effect parameters.

MIDI MuRF

The MIDI MuRF is the newest of the Moogerfoogers and combines the previous MuRF and Bass MuRF pedals into a powerful single pedal with MIDI control. MuRF is apparently shorthand for multiple resonant filter array and the pedal features a bank of eight resonant bandpass filters tuned to fixed frequencies, each with a slider to set its level. These filters are triggered in a pattern defined by the other controls, animating the sound for a wide range of results.

Sounds

There are 24 selectable sequenced patterns (two of which are static) featuring up to 64 steps that can trigger volume envelopes for the eight filters at a speed set by the rate knob, while another knob sets the envelope shape. You can set the envelope so all the steps in the sequence are distinctly heard, creating staccato or more

rounded rhythmic patterns and tremolo-style effects. You can also set it so that the steps blend into a smoother whole – giving a cyclic timbral change, as a flanger might produce, only with more control over the details. The static patterns offer fixed timbral changes based on the position of the sliders and phaser-style sounds with the onboard LFO turned on.

Having only 24 fixed patterns might seem limiting but this isn’t really the case. With careful juxtaposition of the knobs and sliders, the MIDI MuRF can yield a huge array of different sounds. And if you take advantage of the MIDI connection (including Clock Sync to stay in time with a song) to control the pedal from your DAW, you can vastly expand the sonic range.

FreqBox

Perhaps as much a modular synth as it is an effects pedal, the FreqBox offers a single oscillator (VCO) that can be modulated by an input signal – the input being your guitar in this instance. Technically speaking, the VCO, which has a continuously variable wave

shape, can be hard synced and the frequency can be modulated by the input signal. Additionally an envelope follower can track the dynamics of the input signal to modulate the frequency and amplitude of the VCO.

Sounds

The FreqBox takes a little setting up to get the best results with guitar. Without the sync switch engaged, any note you play on the guitar will trigger whatever note the VCO’s frequency knob is set for, which can be cool if you want to set a fixed drone note behind your playing in a particular key. With the envelope follower active, you can trigger a pitch depending on how hard you hit the string, which can generate weird synth squeals and sound completely mad. With sync engaged, the VCO will track your guitar’s pitch for a more controlled musical experience – you can dial in a raw fuzz-like

Having only 24 mixed patterns might seem limiting, but the MIDI MuRF can yield a huge array of different sounds

The Rivals

For conventional analogue delay, albeit with shorter delay times than the Moogerfooger, there’s the **E-H Deluxe Memory Man** (£195) and the **MXR Carbon Copy** (£219). An analogue delay with a loop in the feedback path is the **Diamond Memory Lane 2** (\$599), which offers 550ms of delay time. Sequenced pattern effects for guitar can be had from the **Roger Linn Adrenalinn III** (£322) and the **BOSS Slicer** (£173). For synth-style sounds you can plug into the **E-H Hog** (£287) and the **Pigtronix Mothership** (£425).

distortion that sounds best on single notes or simple root and fifth power chords, while bringing the pedal’s envelope follower into play will give you an expressive, vocal-like autowah sound that’s not dissimilar to a Mutron.

Analog Delay

While there are numerous analogue delays on the market, the Moogerfooger stands out from the crowd by being the only one available that can give you a whole second (1,000ms) of delay. The pedal can be used like any standard delay with controllable mix from 100 per cent dry to 100 per cent wet and





delay times set from slightly less than 50ms to slightly more than 1,000ms with the number of repeats set by the feedback control from a single echo through multiple repeats to the sort of out of control chaos that analogue delays are known for.

However, if you'd like to get more individuality out of the sounds produced, there's a selectable loop in the feedback path whereby, instead of the output of the delay just going straight back to the input, it can be routed there via the means of more signal processing.

Sounds

As a conventional analogue delay, this hits all the right buttons – the repeats having that warm blurry quality that lets them sit in the mix as an integral part of your core sound rather than something that's

been bolted on. Input and output levels are easily adjustable and the large knobs give precise control over mix, delay time and feedback to get you the exact sound you want. Most analogue delays will only allow a fraction of the 1,000ms time here, so if you're a purist who wants extra long analogue delays produced by a true bucket-brigade device rather than using a digital delay with analogue emulations then this pedal is exactly what you need.

Over and above standard analogue delay functions, the fact that you can control mix, delay, time and feedback via expression pedals offers many interesting sonic possibilities without taking your hands off the guitar, but it's the external feedback loop that's perhaps of most interest. And there's also the option of adding more

pedals for making the repeats change in pitch or timbre as they evolve.

Verdict

Quality pedals all, these Moogerfoogers each offer something quite different. Of the three, it's the sounds and functions of analogue delay that will be most familiar to guitar players, and the Moogerfooger is the classiest analogue delay out there – a fact reflected by its not inconsiderable asking price. Yes, it costs a fortune, but where else would you get the chance to put other effects into the feedback loop, plus expression pedal control over feedback, delay time and mix and the sonic potential that those facilities offer?

That expression pedal capability also gives the other

two pedals an extra edge when it comes to live performance and the constant morphing of your sound. But even without the foot control, these two push the sonic envelope and are about as far removed from conventional guitar sound as you'll get in any stompbox, making them ideal tools for experimentalists. Of the two, the FreqBox is capable of sounding completely barmy, but careful setting up will give you musically valid, uncompromisingly distorted autowah sounds or synths that can be subtly mixed in with your notes for added interest. The MIDI MuRF may be the more useful studio tool in that it can create modulation effects, subtle timbral changes and rhythmically synced guitar parts that can add real depth and texture to a recording. **G**

The Bottom Line

MF-105M Midi MuRF

We like: Solid build-quality; rhythmic transformation of sounds; comprehensive MIDI control; the mono or stereo operation

We dislike: No front panel LFO speed knob (expression pedal needed)

Guitarist says: A multi-faceted musical tool that's great for transforming your guitar sound

MF-107 FreqBox

We like: Solid build-quality, chewy autowah effects; variable waveform shape

We dislike: It can generate a lot of sounds, but most guitarists will probably have little use for many of them

Guitarist says: Weirdness if you want it

MF-104Z Analog Delay

We like: Solid build-quality; long delay time for an analogue unit; external feedback loop

We dislike: It's not what you'd call cheap...

Guitarist says: Classic analogue delay with some extra twists



Guitarist CHOICE

Moog MF-105M MIDI MuRF

PRICE: £419
ORIGIN: USA
TYPE: Resonant filter pedal (step filter)
CONNECTIONS: MIDI in; 6.4mm jacks: audio in, audio out (L/mono, R), tap/step footswitch socket, expression pedal inputs for rate, mix, envelope, LFO/sweep
POWER: 9V AC adaptor (supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 152 (w) x 229 (d) x 76mm (h)
WEIGHT (kg/lbs): 1.36/3
OPTIONS: EP-2 expression pedal (£35), FS-1 footswitch (£34)
Source Distribution
0208 962 5080
www.moogmusic.com

Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Moog MF-107 FreqBox

PRICE: £309
ORIGIN: USA
TYPE: Audio modulated oscillator
CONNECTIONS: All 6.4mm jacks: audio in, audio out, osc out, env out, expression pedal inputs for freq, wave, env amount, FM amount, mix
POWER: 9V AC adaptor (supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 152 (w) x 229 (d) x 76mm (h)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 1.36/3
OPTIONS: EP-1 (£TBC) & EP-2 (£35) expression pedals

Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Guitarist CHOICE

Moog MF-104Z Analog Delay

PRICE: £549
ORIGIN: USA
TYPE: Analog delay pedal
MAX DELAY TIME: 1,000 milliseconds
CONNECTIONS: All 6.4mm jacks: audio in, mix out, delay out, loop in, loop out, expression pedal inputs for feedback, time, mix
POWER: 9V AC adaptor (supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 152 (w) x 229 (d) x 76mm (h)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 1.36/3
OPTIONS: EP-1 expression pedal (£TBC)

Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★