

Studiologic Sledge v2.0 | £799

Sledge v2.0 offers significant improvements to the yellow beastie! **Dan 'JD73' Goldman** checks it out...

INCLUDES AUDIO

WHAT IS IT?

Three oscillator VA polysynth with multimode filter and now splits/layers, increased polyphony, user samples and more!

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Though it's lightweight, it's well put together and stands out on stage
- 2 The Waldorf designed sound engine sounds rich, full and suitably analogue-like
- 3 The new user sample capability vastly expands its appeal and sound palette

The original Waldorf-engineered Sledge launched in 2012 and, despite being pretty reasonably priced and offering a very solid synth engine, it has largely fallen under the radar. However, v2.0 will get people taking it a lot more seriously.

The Sledge is big, yellow, plastic and adorned with 32 large knobs ready for tweaking the onboard sounds. All the knobs also transmit and receive MIDI, so it makes a great controller for plug-ins and other MIDI gear. It's pretty imposing size-wise and quite deep from back to front. Build quality is good despite this being a lightweight board (you can pick it up under one arm) and the knobs and switches feel pretty solid.

There's a simple two-line blue backlit display for displaying deeper functionality (though reliance on the screen is minimal which keeps this board nicely performance-oriented) and there's a numeric keypad for direct program access to the 1,000 user-rewritable program slots onboard.

The keyboard feels good under the fingers and, whilst it's not got the super-fast high-end feel of a Moog Voyager (for example), it doesn't feel cheap either. It also features that rare beast called

aftertouch, which is often missing from even more expensive boards these days! Basically, whatever you have assigned to the mod wheel is what is triggered when you use aftertouch. It would be nice to be able to send the mod wheel and aftertouch to separate destinations (next OS update perhaps?).

Spaceship Sledge

There's no doubt that the Sledge's front panel has been largely influenced by the Minimoog with its classic three oscillator + filter + dual envelope layout. It's a great choice of front panel design as it's tried and tested and very familiar to most people and it flows very nicely. It's certainly inspiring to tweak and addictive too, and the oversized dials make you feel like you're firmly in

Samples And Splitting/Layering

When the pulse wave and wavetable LEDs are lit, you're in sample mode and, using the wavetable dial, you can select a sample from the 60MB onboard sample memory.

This feature adds hugely to the appeal of the Sledge: you can load up your own samples in WAV format using the Spectre utility over USB (the same software utility as the Blofeld but re-skinned for the Sledge); and, using the new splitting/layering



function you can come up with some fantastic VA+sample/loop patches.

For splitting sounds, select a patch, hold down a note and that becomes the split point/lower sound. Keep holding the

note, select another patch via the keypad and that becomes the upper sound. For layering, select a patch, hold down multiple notes and select another patch using the numeric keypad. Easy.



