



WHAT IS IT?

A virtual instrument plug-in that aims to faithfully recreate the sound and quirky sonic imperfections of a cutting-edge analogue/digital hybrid synth from 30 years ago

CONTACT

Who: Waldorf
Web: waldorfmusic.de

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Authentic emulation of the original's quirky grittiness
- 2 Importing of user 'transients' (samples)
- 3 Sonic individuality



Waldorf PPG Wave 3.V | £119

Waldorf have updated their range of instruments with a re-engineered classic. **Bruce Aisher** takes a listen and ponders the virtual analogue-digital pioneer

Waldorf, has a history dating back to the late 1980s, though its origins go back over ten

years before this (see *PPG Hardware History* box). Very much known for its hardware – with synths such as the Microwave, Pulse and Wave – Waldorf was also one of the first into the game at the inception of mainstream virtual instrument technology. The PPG Wave 2.V (from 2000) was intended to replicate the sound of its earlier (and now classic) forerunner.

At the time, albeit with an absence of much competition, it was generally well received, although in the intervening years one could argue that musicians have grown more picky about 'vintage authenticity', and what it

means. Since version 2.V Waldorf have emerged from the ashes of insolvency, and released the well-regarded Largo VSTi, based on their Blofeld hardware and owing more than a little to PPG synthesizers of yore. So, flash forward ten years, and I was very interested to hear of Waldorf's announcement regarding the PPG Wave 3.V.

The PPG Wave 3.V installation is quick and easy on both Windows and Mac platforms. Copy protection is via Soft eLicenser Copy although this may be transferred to an eLicenser USB Key (not supplied). First impressions of the plug-in were those of familiarity and overwhelming amounts of blue! On the face of it the 3.V plug-in looks similar to both the original hardware and the old 2.V plug-in. Sonically, it was definitely

PPG-like, with a suitable grittiness, but further exploration was clearly required to see what had been tweaked on the DSP-side in the intervening years.

Under the hood

The PPG Wave 3.V is eight-part multi-timbral and features two ADSR envelopes (as well as a simpler AD type), a clock-syncable LFO, two oscillators and a single filter per voice. On the face of it this may look rather frugal, especially in comparison to many of the software über-synths of recent years. However, this really doesn't tell the whole picture. The reason people were so interested in the original PPG Wave synths was that the oscillators were digital. Not only this, but they used 'wavetables', a series of 64 single-cycle waveforms that can be moved between dynamically under control of the available modulation sources – a big deal at the time. The 3.V also tips its hat to the PPG Wavetern sampling system, by allowing users to import their own samples (called 'transients'). The Wave 3.V software also offers an arpeggiator (including the original 'cascade mode') as well as the up-to-date addition of a multi-effects section.

Unlike the knob-laden front panel, supported by a somewhat cryptic menu-based LCD editing system, the 3.V has an upper panel that provides

