



WHAT IS IT?

An advanced step-time MIDI sequencer plug-in with real-time performance control capability

CONTACT

Who: Sugar Bytes
Web: sugar-bytes.de

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Performance sequencer window
- 2 Random button is an instant ideas generator
- 3 Live control capabilities



shift and randomise whole sequences. The pitch sequencer has a step-recording mode for playing in sequences from your MIDI keyboard and a scale selector that restricts the notes to one of many possible scales or modes (based on the Root Key value). There is also Lock button per step for freezing the current value.

The fourth step window is home to the Performance sequencer, which is in fact five sequencers in one. Each row offers per step control over Octave, Pitch Bend (with twenty pre-configured shapes), Chord (for polyphonic sequencing), note Roll and sequence randomisation of a vast range of other control parameters.

Performance control

Modulation, the final sequence window, is devoted to all kinds of MIDI CC control. Using the left-hand drop-down menu it is possible to configure the step-by-step control of up to eight modulation tracks. This brings us to another feature of Thesys – the built-in synth. The Modulation tracks can also control a number of pre-configured targets in this simple, but useful sound generator.

As if all this weren't enough, sequences can be altered on the fly using a series of buttons in the Action Section. These include slowing down, re-triggering and looping, and may also be triggered from the Keyboard Control Section. This is the last piece of the live-performance jigsaw, allowing enormous control over pattern selection, pitch and playback parameters all from the different keys of your MIDI controller.

Ultimately, while not cheap, I found Thesys a detailed, well-built and enjoyable plug-in to use, and one that I will definitely turn to again. You'll need to spend some time with this software to get the most out of it, but the results should be well worth the effort. **FM**

Sugar Bytes Thesys | €99

Bruce Aisher takes a peak at Sugar Bytes new advanced step sequencer plug-in, and wonders if it could add sweetness to your DAW...

SPECS

Sequencer Control includes: Pitch, Velocity, Gate Time, Octave, Pitchbend, Chord, Retrigger, Randomisation and Modulation

Action Section features: Gatetime, Velo Gate, Looper, Slowdown, Retrigger, Halftime, Octave Up, Mute

Also: Internal synthesizer, Instant keyboard control for Transpose, Pattern Select, Action Section, Random and Mutate functions for each sequencer, Individual trigger and sync options and Swing function

System Requirements

PC: Windows XP and higher, VST or AU plug-in compatible host software, 1GHz, 128MB RAM

Mac: Mac OS X 10.4.0 or higher, VST or AU plug-in compatible host software, 1GHz, 128MB RAM

NOTE: A workaround is required for sending MIDI with the AU plug-in

Most modern DAWs are well-equipped in the sequencing department, and usually offer a decent range of real and step-time recording features.

While this is usually enough for most applications there are times when some of us reminisce about the creative applications of analogue-style step sequencing. The main difference between this and its DAW-based cousin is in the ability to tweak patterns in real-time and experiment with unusual loop lengths.

The possibilities become even more interesting when you explore multi-track step sequencing, which at its best allows you to generate pitch, velocity and modulation information from a set of simple repeating sequences with different loop lengths. In this case, with only a basic starting point it is possible to produce long, ever-evolving music sequences with only a little effort.

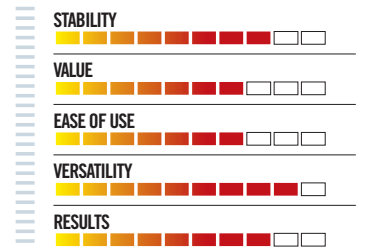
Although some DAWs are better equipped than others in this department, Sugar Bytes clearly think there is room for improvement, and with this in mind have produced Thesys, an advanced step sequencer to use within the comfort of your own DAW environment.

Natural sequence

Thesys is a modern and fully customisable variant of the original analogue step sequence concept, with a single window interface. It has five distinct, variable loop, 32-step sequences at its core. The first three of these have a fixed routing to pitch, velocity and gate time (note length) respectively. Values can be changed by grabbing and moving the numerous value sliders or with your scroll wheel.

The number of steps is easily altered by dragging the vertical slider above each sequence window. It is also possible to specify the direction and interval of travel, reset, copy and paste,

FutureMusic VERDICT



Well worth taking for a test-drive, especially if you're looking for something to spur your creativity.