



WHAT IS IT?

A Waldorf soft synth based on the Blofeld/Q sound engine with VA, FM and wavetable synthesis, plus FX, EQ and arpeggiator

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Simple-to-use and easily navigable interface with most parameters MIDI-controllable
- 2 High-quality Blofeld-like atmospheric sound
- 3 Dizzying array of sound-shaping options, with onboard EQ, FX and modulation



Waldorf Largo | £175

Following on from the very well received Blofeld range comes Waldorf's first soft synth utilising Blofeld and Q technology. **Dan 'JD73' Goldman** checks it out...

Recently I was lucky enough to review the Blofeld Desktop and Keyboard version, and I was very impressed by both.

My inkling was that it was only going to be a short time until Waldorf packaged the basic sound and features from the Blofeld into a soft synth. So here it is – Waldorf's latest Bond-themed VST/Audio Unit soft synth, AKA Largo.

Installation can be done in two ways. Largo's soft license code can be installed on a Synchrosoft USB dongle key (which you may already own, or you can purchase separately), or you can download an e-licenser code instead. The beauty of the dongle installation is that Largo can be used on any computer, whereas using the e-licenser means that Largo is tied to one Mac/PC.

First off, it's worth comparing the Blofeld and Largo. The basic architecture of Largo is very close to the Blofeld – three main oscillators per voice, with VA waves from the Waldorf Q and 68 (128-step) wavetables from the Q/microwave range, Blofeld and PPG Wave ring mod, noise generator with variable colour, FM, osc sync, detuning, extensive unison mode, two multi-mode filters per voice, three LFOs, and extensive modulation/modifiers section plus FX and arpeggiator.

What's the difference?

There are some significant differences, though – notably, oscillators 1 and 2 in Largo also have additional sub-oscillators for thickening sounds, and these are a very welcome addition.

Largo is lacking the user sample upload from the Blofeld (though most DAWs have sample ability anyway), and the PPG low-pass filter and brilliance control for brightening sounds are also missing – though Largo does add a very comprehensive and high-quality EQ (see box, right). Hopefully, some or all of these missing features could be added in future software upgrades. There's currently no way to move presets between a Blofeld/Q and Largo, but maybe that's also something Waldorf might consider including in the future.

Structurally, Largo sounds can have up to four independent layers with three oscillators each (plus sub-oscs), and up to 256-note polyphony, facilitating sounds consisting of a total of 12 main oscillators plus eight sub-oscillators – 20 oscs in total! Largo is a sound designer's dream, and I can see it making its way into plenty of film scores in the future. Not only can it do straight-up analogue textures, but it's also capable of very complex evolving sounds and amazing sound effects. Of course, complexity of sounds does depend on CPU power and available RAM, though I'm pleased to report CPU load is low on my MacBook Pro with 2GB RAM and a 2.4GHz processor.

Each of the four layers can be switched in and out easily and controlled via independent MIDI

