

VERMONA – synth-manufacturer with a long tradition

Being extremely enthusiastic about the '14 Analogsynthesizer (see our [test report](#)), we've decided to take a quick look behind the scenes at VERMONA. Thomas Haller from HDB electronic was our partner in conversation ...



Thomas Haller – HDB electronic (VERMONA)

Hello Thomas! Finally! The VERMONA '14 Analogsynthesizer can now be had. Did this synth with its integrated keyboard lead you into uncharted waters? And did things go as you wanted them to?

Well ... “yes” and “no”. We aren't exactly moving in uncharted territories thanks to our long years of experience in the field of music electronics. However, the implementation of our design still poses a bit of a challenge: the storage of all those parts, the assembly, the verification processes, the final endurance tests ... that means we need a lot of physical space. It's certainly easier to manufacture a couple of Lancets or Eurorack modules.

Our developmental approach was no different from that of our other VERMONA devices. In a nutshell: We start with an idea, develop a concept, try a couple of circuits, design the first circuit board, then throw that all out and start again from scratch. Finally, the first prototype exists. Since we're such a small crew, we don't work constantly on just one project. Delays are prone to extend the developmental time. A good product has to be well thought-out!



Preparing a chassis for the '14 Analogsynthesizer

Look at it this way: The „'14 Analogsynthesizer“ should have come out in 2015. The fact that it was first shipped at end of 2016 is a pretty good example of the fact that not everything goes according to plan. My father, Bernd Haller, died unexpectedly in February 2015. And the electronics for the '14 Analogsynthesizer were completely his baby. Although the project was very near completion at that point,

we had to shelve it for a time.

The '14 Analogsynthesizer has had a tendency to be seen as a collector's instrument from the very beginning. It costs just a little more than was projected, but the crux of the matter is, it is appearing in a limited edition of 222 units. Why this?

The '14 Analogsynthesizer was in fact planned as an anniversary instrument. The idea of limiting production had been in the back of our minds from the very beginning. It's one way we can give our customers even more value for their money. Since we can't produce more than 10, or a maximum 15, units in a month, we have plenty to do anyway to get those 222 units out.



Ready for testing and calibrating

How do you access the instrument? Do you have a '14 Analogsynthesizer at home? VERMONA has already acquired a very respectable reputation with its PERfourMER MKII and the Mono Lancet - how would you evaluate '14 Analogsynthesizer by comparison?

I'm very enthusiastic about the '14 Analogsynthesizer – it would be bad if it was in the other way – but I do not have one at home. On the other hand, I have the privilege of playing every single unit before it goes out. That means I spend plenty of time with the '14 Analogsynthesizer as it is.

PERfourMER MKII and Mono Lancet are obviously related to the '14 Analogsynthesizer. All 3 instruments are based on similar circuiting – so you hear clearly that they're all members of the VERMONA family.

As to the '14 Analogsynthesizer, we have honed down the design here and there. For instance: the oscillators feature extra trimming points (fine tuning possibilities) for the *exact* adjustment of an octave (up or down). That doesn't improve the sound, but it does make working with the instrument more intuitive and dependable.



Calibration and fine-tuning

The namesake for the '14 Analogsynthesizer was the company anniversary (14 VERMONA years!) in 2015. What can you tell us about VERMONA in the good old days? And today? It seems to us the roots go back to East German times ...

Unfortunately, I can't tell you too much about VERMONA in the old days. VERMONA – or rather the *Klingenthaler Harmonikawerke* – was a publicly-owned company and the electronic music instruments (amplifiers, speakers, keyboards ...) played only a small part in the overall production.

Bernd Haller, Lothar Dietrich and Thomas Buchheim got to know each other when they were all working in the development department there. Way back then, they felt the need to implement ideas of their own outside of the official five-year plan. Which wasn't possible at that time, of course.



The so-called Musikwinkel, located between the borders of Germany and Czechia

The reunification in 1990 gave the 3 of them the opportunity to found their own company HDB electronic. By the middle of the 90s, after a few dead-end streets, they were back in the field of musical electronics. It was just good luck that we were able to acquire the brand name VERMONA again. The first product to be released under the (new) name VERMONA was the DRM1 MKII.

So, the old and the new names VERMONA don't have much to do with each other. Although a couple of the

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old developments were initiated by the producers working on our devices today.



Haller – Dietrich – Buchheim: HDB electronic

Do you have a problem with the fact that some of those old VERMONA devices from the 80s are still in circulation? Basically, that's a good sign, of course, but then again, they are not YOUR instruments in the true sense of the word ...

This is in no way problematical, and in a certain sense we feel a certain responsibility for those old devices. We frequently get repair requests. Unfortunately, we can not offer service on them: We don't have any spare parts and in most cases repairs supersede by far the value of the devices themselves. There's a special "Heritage" section on our homepage where owners can download user manuals and technical instructions for some of the old products. Lutz Würmer was kind enough to put these at our disposal.



Vermona '14 Analogsynthesizer – foot pedal chassis

In comparison to the global players on the market, VERMONA's role is small scale. The company is – rather than self-effacing – noble, to say the least. Its small product range is concentrated on a few models. Is that to your advantage? Where do you see the strengths in your firm?

We're quite comfortable with the array of products that we have developed and produced up to now. Our complete line of products includes not only stand-alone devices, but also Eurorack modules and accessories. That's a good variety and, above all, it's doable. We set great store in questions involving musical integrity and hardware quality.

You say all VERMONA products are „Made in Germany“?

Yes. The complete VERMONA production stems from our „Elektroakustischen Manufaktur“ in Markneukirchen/Erlbach. Whenever possible, we employ regional suppliers and others from greater Germany.



Inside the '14 Analogsynthesizer

From the initial printed circuit boards to assembly, testing, packing and shipping – it's all done here.

A question that keeps popping up: Will there be a PERfourMER MKIII one day? (We might have a few suggestions if that were the case ...)

At the moment, the PERfourMER MKII is excellent as it is. Plans for a successor are not in the works, but we strive to go with the spirit of the times. We appreciate suggestions from our customers! Many of them have led to developments in the products themselves. So, a PERfourMER MKIII is not completely out of the realm of possibility.



The analog boom of the last 20 years appears to be reaching its zenith. How can you be better than the best? What are your feelings about this? It's a real surprise that the market for analog synths still isn't saturated ...

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Is there such a thing as better than the best? The momentary variety of synthesizers, effect units and, above all, Eurorack modules, can only be to the customer's advantage. Everyone can find the instrument best suited to hi – the module with the most potential, and this in a variety of price categories.

I can't see into the future, of course, we don't know how long this trend will continue. But: in these times of music streaming, there are turntables out there again – and people who swear by them! I think there'll always be analog synths. Our long-range plan is to weather the times whether they be strong or weak.

Do you have any ideas or predictions for the future?

We're always full of ideas, but at the moment we're chiefly involved in the production-end of the '14 Analogsynthesizer :o).



Links:

- [Vermona](#)
- [VEB Klingenthaler Harmonikawerke \(Wikipedia\)](#)

- ['14 Analogsynthesizer Review](#)
- [PERfourMER MKII Review](#)
- [Mono Lancet / Kick Lancet Review](#)