

MUSE - the 4th polyphonic synthesizer by MOOG

The name MOOG stands first and foremost for **outstanding studio synthesizers** of the 60s and 70s. **Modular systems** such as the Moog 3C, Moog 3P, Model 55, Model 15 and others are timeless legends of music history. Furthermore, the name is synonymous with the **Minimoog, the forefather of all monophonic stage synthesizers**, released in 1970. Finally, MOOG also stands for **unique polyphonic synthesizers**, whereby “unique” - a long, long, long time ago - could well be associated with unique unreliability.



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This of course refers to the **POLYMOOG** (1975 to 1980), whose 71-voice polyphony caused quite a stir on the one hand, but whose unreliability on the other must have driven many a musician and technician to despair (and still does today, we speak from recent experience).

Polyphonic Moog synthesizer number two was the six-voice **MEMORYMOOG** (1980 to 1985, a late competitor to the Sequential Prophet-5), whose instability index was at least “slightly better” and whose sounds - 3 VCOs per voice - are now among the great sounds of the vintage era.



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Number three of the polyphonic Moog synthesizers is the **MOOG ONE**, released at the end of 2018, an instrument in the LAS (“Long Awaited Synthesizer”) category, as designer Axel Hartmann calls it. An 8- or 16-voice bolidé whose look is based on the Memorymoog and whose slightly more modern sound architecture also ensures a slightly more modern analog sound.

And here comes **MOOG MUSE**. This 8-voice synthesizer with purely analogue sound generation is an interesting visual mix of different instruments. The ribbed plastic wheels are striking, reminiscent of the Minimoog. The sliders with bright top and inlay are also striking – Polymoog, The Rogue, Liberation and Opus 3 (which is apparently not considered a poly synthesizer) send their regards.



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The white or yellow/orange inching buttons are reminiscent of the Roland Juno-60, a completely different construction site. And all the rotary pots follow the line of Little Phatty, Sub37, Moog ONE and Co, the modern Moog product range. The small, light or dark gray jog switches, which evoke memories of the Memorymoog, appear to be new in the portfolio.

Conclusion of the brief considerations: The MUSE appearance is a remarkable amalgam of different styles. There is no trace of the noble harmony of an Arturia PolyBrute 12 - just as an example. However, if you are generous and don't mind, the MOOG MUSE should be a very flexible analog synthesizer in terms of sound and performance.

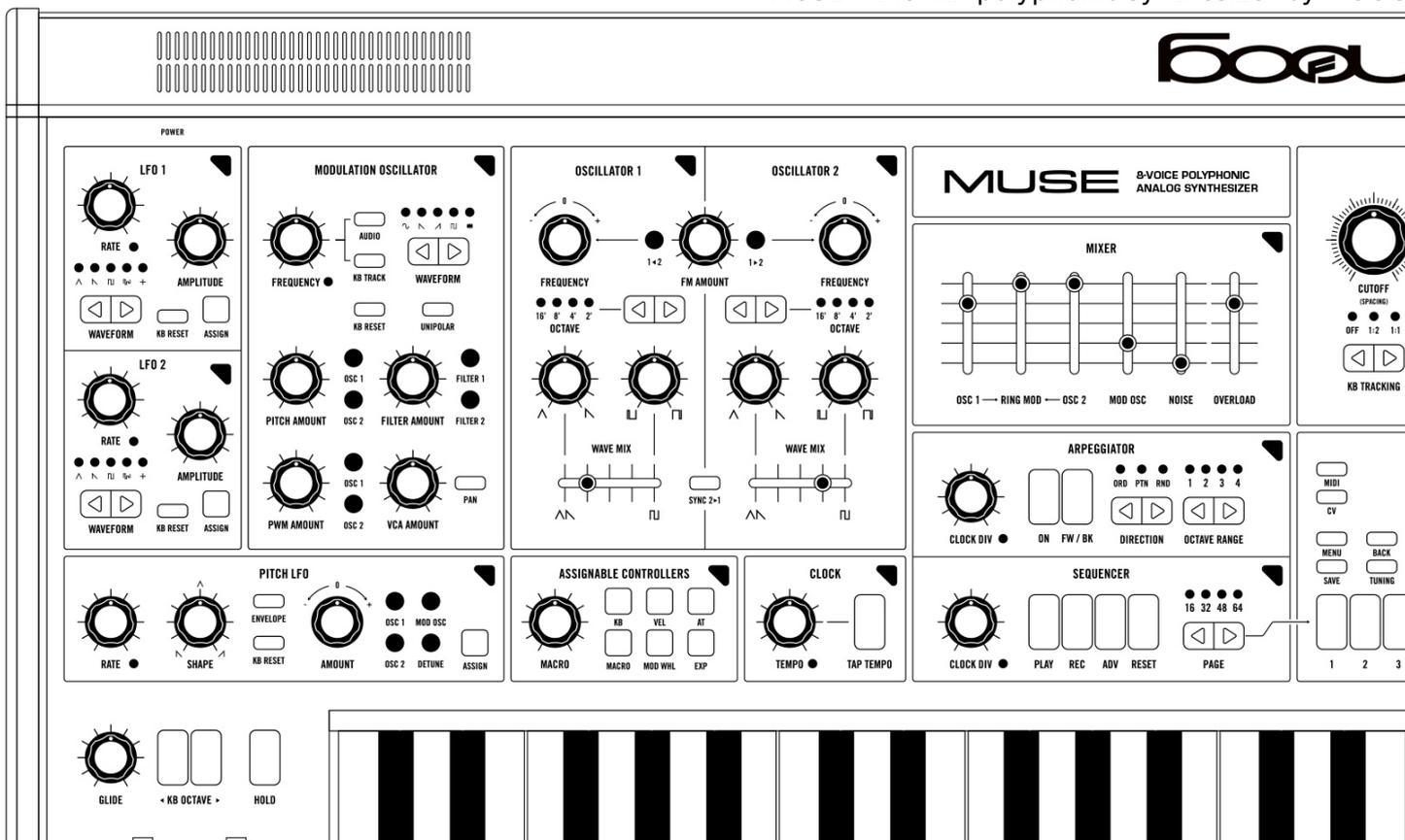


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MOOG MUSE offers:

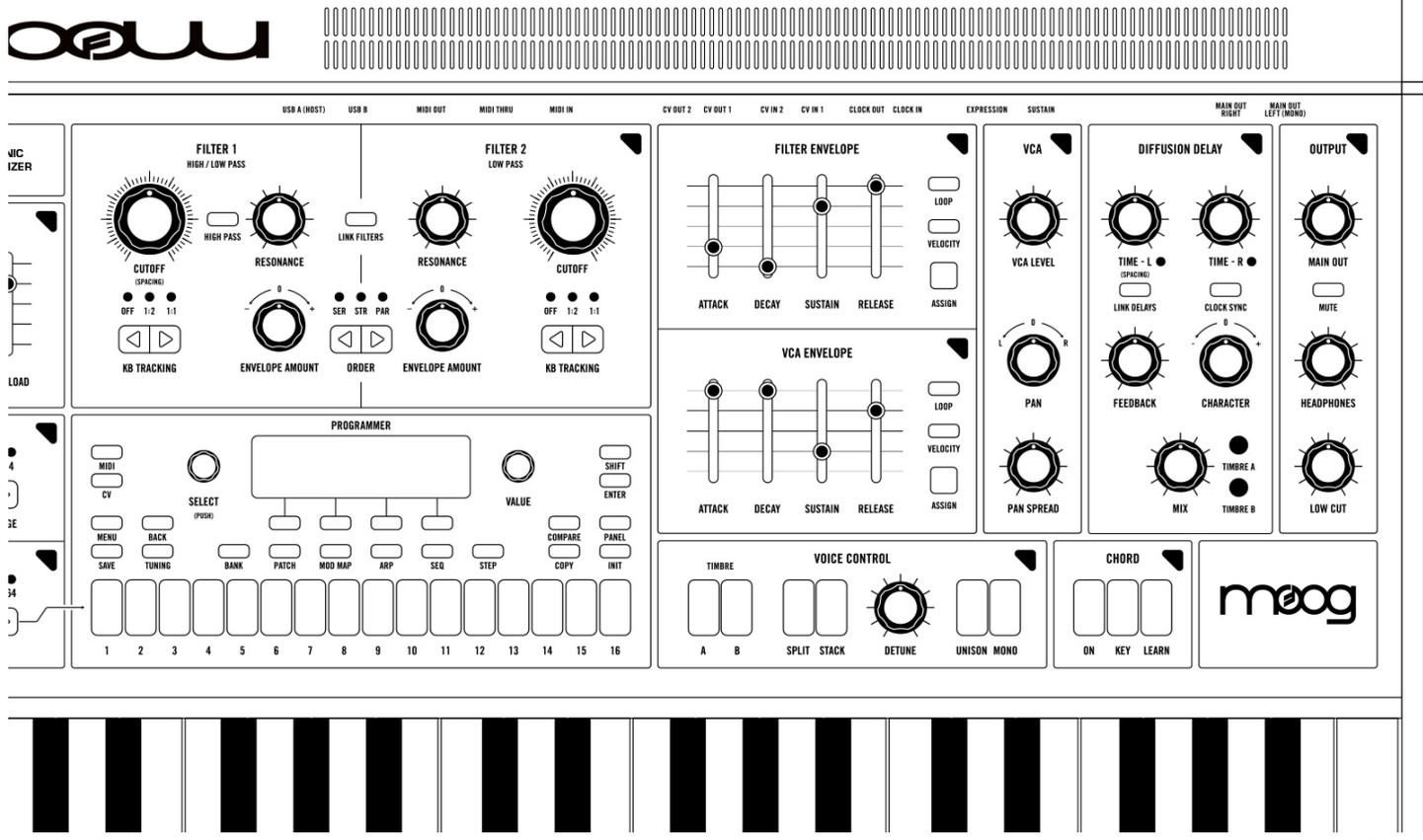
- 8 analog voices with 3 VCOs
- Osc-FM, Osc-Sync, ring-modulation and noise
- Mixer section with overload option (saturated audio)
- Two filters in the style of the legendary 904 modular series
- Two amplifiers in the style of the legendary 902 modular series
- 2 ADSR envelopes per voice
- 3 global LFOs



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- 2 Wheels
- Assignable controllers
- Clock module
- Arpeggiator, sequencer
- Glide, HOLD, Chord Memory
- Split/Stack mode, Unison/Mono mode
- KB octave shift, pan spread, diffusion delay and more

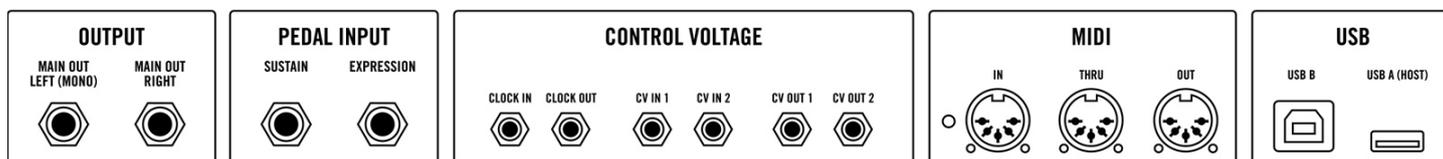


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Connections:

- MAIN Output (Left / Right)
- PHONES Output (front)
- Pedal Input (Sustain / Expression)
- Control Voltages (Clock In/Out, CV IN 1/2, CV OUT 1/2)
- MIDI (In / Out / Thru)
- USB A / USB B



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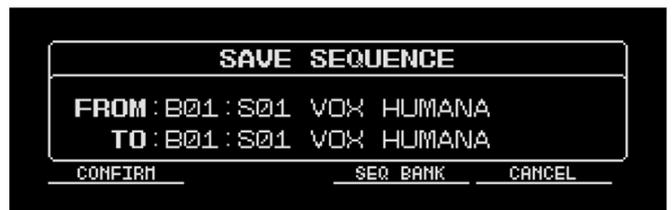
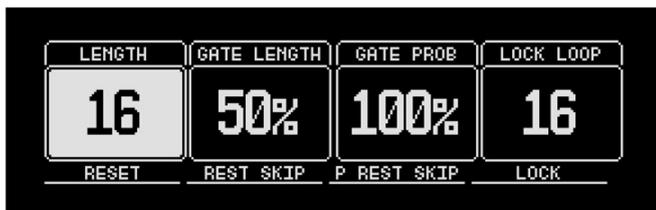
So it's quite impressive! The arrangement of the individual modules and faders/knobs/switches seems very well thought out and performance seems to be at the forefront. As with the Arturia PolyBrute 12, we find it a bit of a shame that you have to make do with a (single) stereo out. Once again, it is surprising how many details have been taken into account in the sound architecture, but the final signal is then reduced to a single stereo pair.



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Nevertheless, everything about the MOOG MUSE looks like “Hands On” and “Play Me”. A synthesizer that sound tinkerers and performance musicians could only wish for. There are also a number of bonuses, such as the sequencer’s grid mode or the option to record a running arpeggio-performance and save it as a completed sequence.



Various ARP settings

Various SEQU settings

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And the sound? The following video gives an insight into the presets of the MOOG MUSE. We are most impressed by the arp/sequ lines and lead lines in the treble, but you can hear for yourself:

Youtube Video - MOOG MUSE Factory Preset Tour

(by Lisa Bella Donna, Max Ravitz)