

From year to year it gets harder to decide whether or not to go the "Musikmesse" in Frankfurt. There's just too much stress there. Everything's much too loud, there's not really enough time for anything ... and it's expensive: parking fees, eating out, and so on and so on. So it's amazing that every year I'm again glad to have been there. It's not so much the instruments, it's the musicians, it's the people round about, it's the special atmosphere of being one freak among many freaks, all afflicted with the same incurable illness. A great feeling ...

We'll begin our 2014 stroll at [Synthesizer Magazin](#) (a German magazine). A nice collection of (surprise, surprise!) synths to be seen there ... most of them vintage instruments.



Special attention must be given to Marienberg Modular (infos to be had on the homepage of [Marienberg Devices](#)). It's really easy to create your own personal system online with their modular planner (drag & drop) ...



After that refreshing Vintage corner, we stroll over to [ROLAND](#), that global player active on so many fronts. Besides their Jupiter-80, Jupiter-50, Integra-7 and diverse other synths, there are the new workstations [FA-08](#) and [FA-06](#). And also real (!) organs to be admired. Ok, ok ... there are no pipes, no pneumatic action ... but the new Roland classic organs signal the onset of the Renaissance of the church organ (this time with MIDI).

Which wouldn't be that crazy an idea, since there's a lot to be said for *one* special sound (for example the *clarinet* or the *flute*) at your fingertips, allowing you to concentrate on making music instead of running the risk of getting lost in some studio MIDI jungle. Back to the roots, as they say, and not only when we're talking about synthesizers.





But of course we *are* here to talk about synths. Nice little instruments with sawtooth, pulsewidth modulation and at least a handful of sliders and silver knobs (to say nothing of a little boom-crash in the background). So up we go to the second floor where, in hall 5.1, Roland presents its newest developments in synthesizers / drumcomputers / vocoders, etc.

This much to be said right away: after several years as “Sleeping Beauty”, Roland is back again ... even if that does mean “digital” analog instruments, aimed at reviving the old tradition of a TR and TB.



The System-1 is compared with famous vintage classics. In our opinion the following Roland PR text probably is a slight exaggeration:

*“Back in the 1970s, Roland launched the SYSTEM 100, SYSTEM 100M, and the now almost mythical SYSTEM 700. These modular and semi-modular synthesizers are heralded to this day for their flexibility and character of sound. In the spirit of its predecessors, the SYSTEM-1 breaks new ground with remarkable flexibility and access to a vast palette of tones with the bold, unmistakable character associated with Roland synthesizers for nearly four decades.”*



The electronic-dj-duo on duty really has everything under control. Their beautiful setup: an original Roland TB-303, the new Roland Sync-Box (yes, you can trust your eyes, MIDI-to-Sync/CV/gate is back), the Doepfer Dark Energy II and all that new stuff: [System-1](#), [VT-3](#), [TB-3](#) and [TR-8](#). Everything nice and groovy. And ... things are definitely moving in the right direction, even if the purely digital sound of the TB-3 sweeps brings back memories of the ReBirth 338 soft-synth. As I said – things are going in the right direction. Rumour has it that Roland is planning to build analog instruments again. Time will tell ...



Since Dieter Doepfer obviously has been keeping tabs on the guys from Roland, we’ll do a quick spin and take a look at the SuperBooth corner surrounding [Schneiders Büro](#). That includes (almost) everything that has any connection to ANALOG in Germany. As usual, a gigantic Doepfer Modular System is in the eye of the storm ... but there are other modules to be found as well. The 3HE-modular-market is booming like crazy. A good sign ...



Allow us to make a quick jump across the Atlantic (and this will not be the last of those jumps). [Buchla](#) is

on everyone's lips. Buchla is simply unique, in a lot of ways, not only concerning design, but also when we're talking about prices ...



[Part 2 of the report](#) continues from this point. It lets us discover new aspects of SuperBooth and other delights in the expansive synthesizer hall at the Musikmesse ...

---

Link: [Musikmesse Frankfurt 2014 Report - Part 2](#)