Synthesizer enthusiasts everywhere look forward to SUPERBOOTH (SB) every May. In its relatively short history, this trade show for sound generators and sound effects has grown into one of the world's largest events of its kind. SUPERBOOTH 2026 took place from May 7 to 9 – marking its 10th edition.



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10 YEARS OF SUPERBOOTH

SB was launched by Andreas Schneider, the founder of Schneidersladen, the legendary Berlin music store. From the very beginning, it has been a specialty store focused on modular equipment. Initially just a booth of the same name at the Frankfurt Musikmesse, SB has been an independent exhibition for synthesizers, synthesizer modules, and accessories for the past ten years, ever since the crisis that struck the major music trade show on the Main River. Music software and, increasingly, outboard gear are also gaining prominence in Berlin. However, the driving force behind the entire event remains the ever-growing number of synthesizer and effects modules.



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BIG NAMES

More than 300 exhibitors showcased their products on the expansive grounds of the leisure and recreation center in southeast Berlin. In addition to the many small and medium-sized manufacturers, the industry’s big players were also represented, including YAMAHA, ROLAND, KORG, NORD, and NATIVE INSTRUMENTS. IN MUSIC was represented by NOVATION, SEQUENTIAL, and OBERHEIM, but MOOG and AKAI were absent – apparently due to a lack of anything worth showcasing. BEHRINGER has been giving Berlin a wide berth for quite some time now.



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Up to now, the SB has been lucky with the weather: mild temperatures and little rain. Although there wasn’t much rain this time either, the first few days were really chilly, which is why many people decided to skip the tent cities and bungalow village and start with the cozy main building of the Leisure and Recreation Center (FEZ) in the vast Wuhlheide Park.



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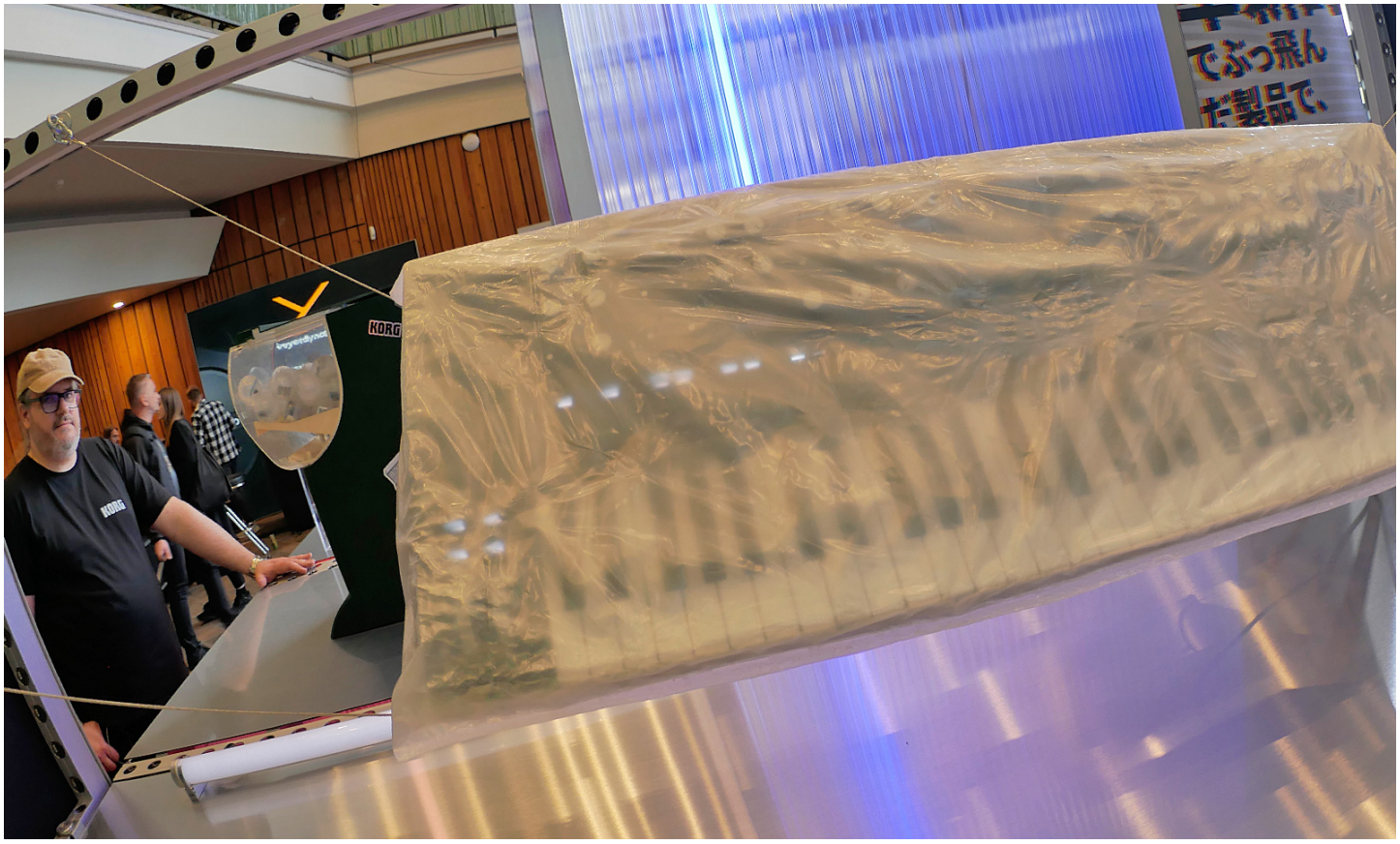
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ENTERING SUPERBOOTH

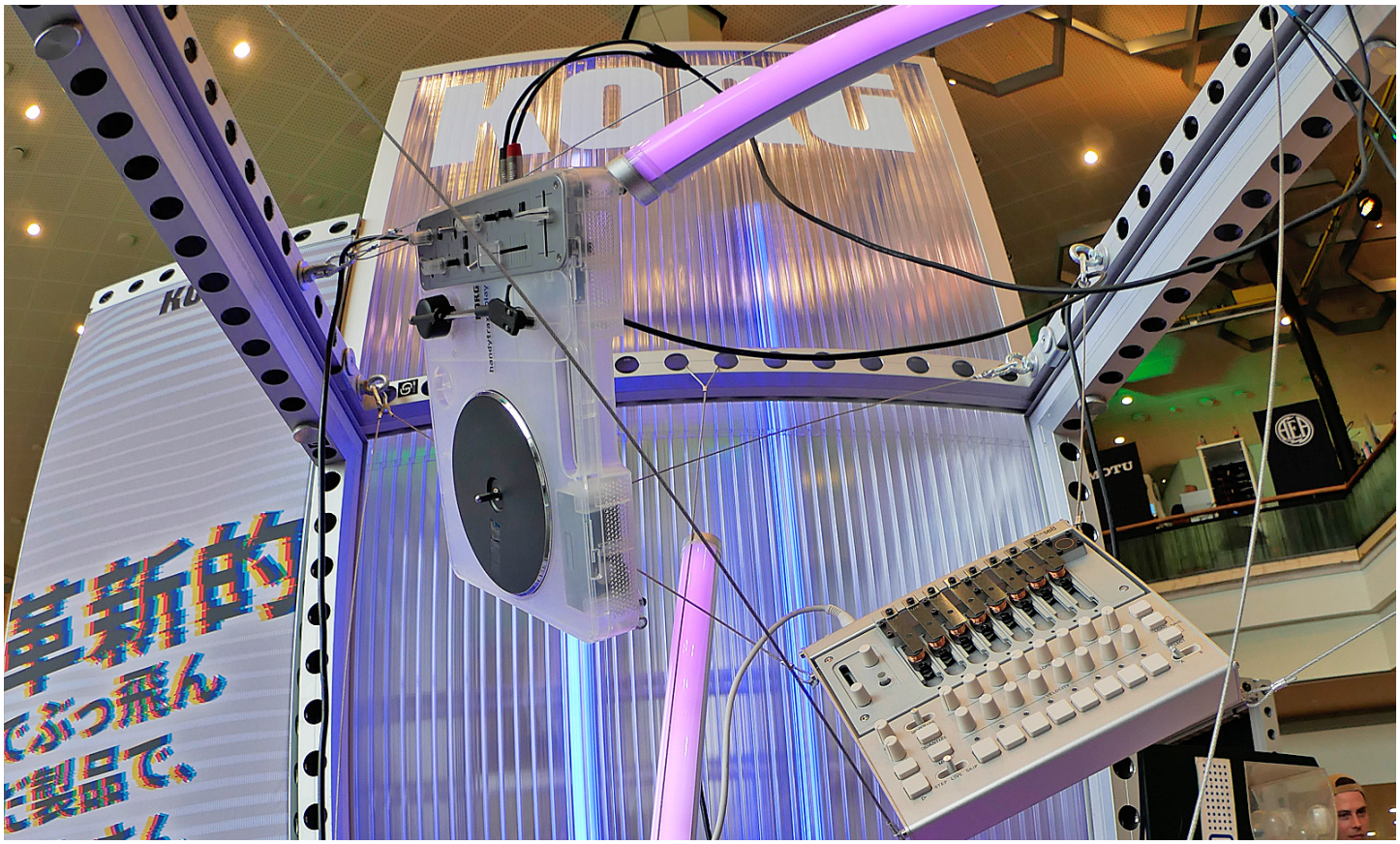
In the lobby, as usual, you walk right into the KORG booth: Aside from the vaporware wrapped in semi-transparent plastic – a keyboard synthesizer that, by all appearances, exists only as a rough concept

(otherwise we surely would have seen more of it) – there were a few analog mixers to discover. The Korg MW-12XR and, from the Nu:Tekt DIY series, the compact NTS-4 in handy individual parts for self-assembly.



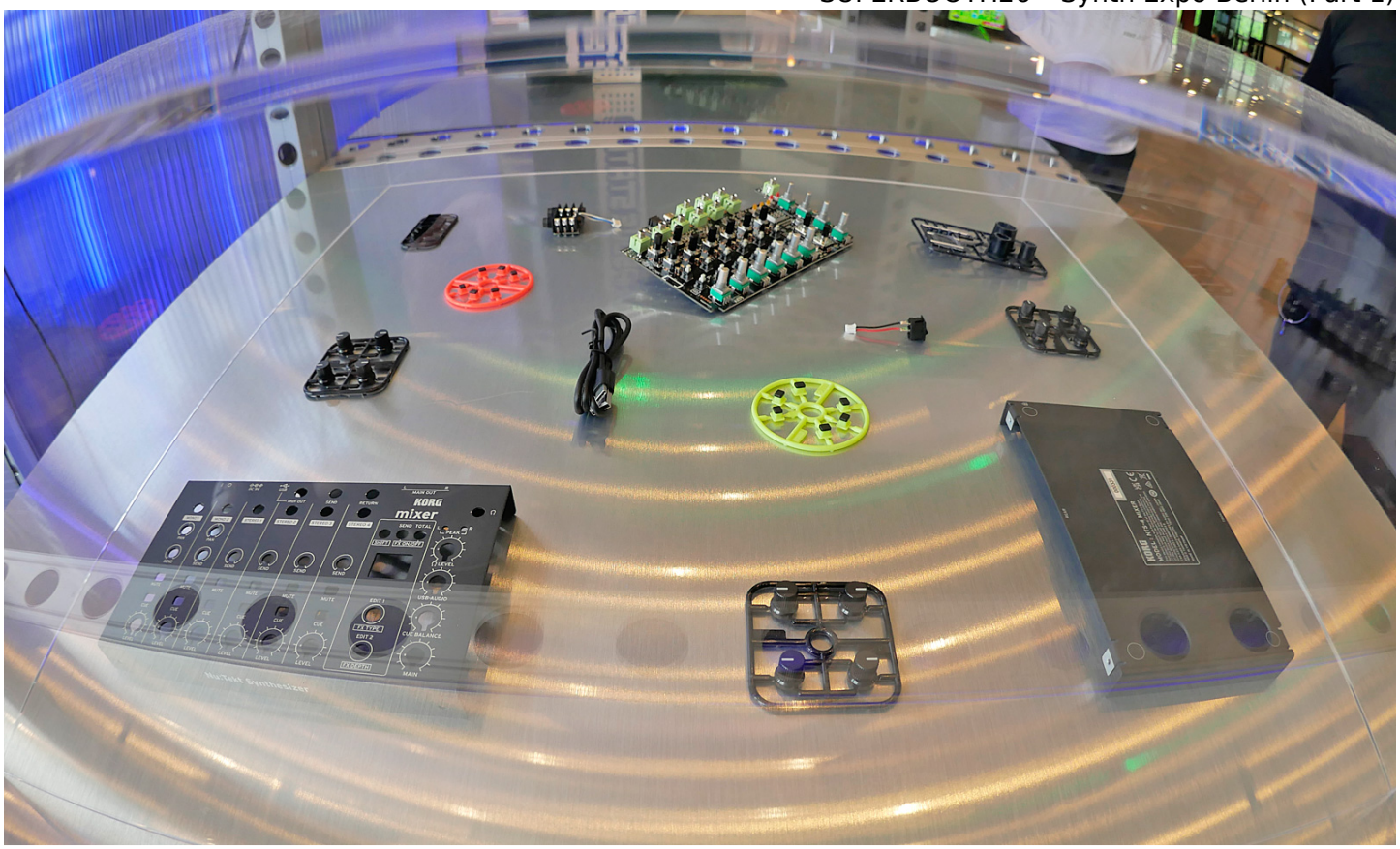
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One highlight was a light-and-sound installation by GINKOSYNTHESE, placed beneath the large circular staircase. It was all done in a lovely analog style using three overlapping projectors. Unfortunately, the sound was a bit too subdued for the loud, bustling activity in the self-service lobby.



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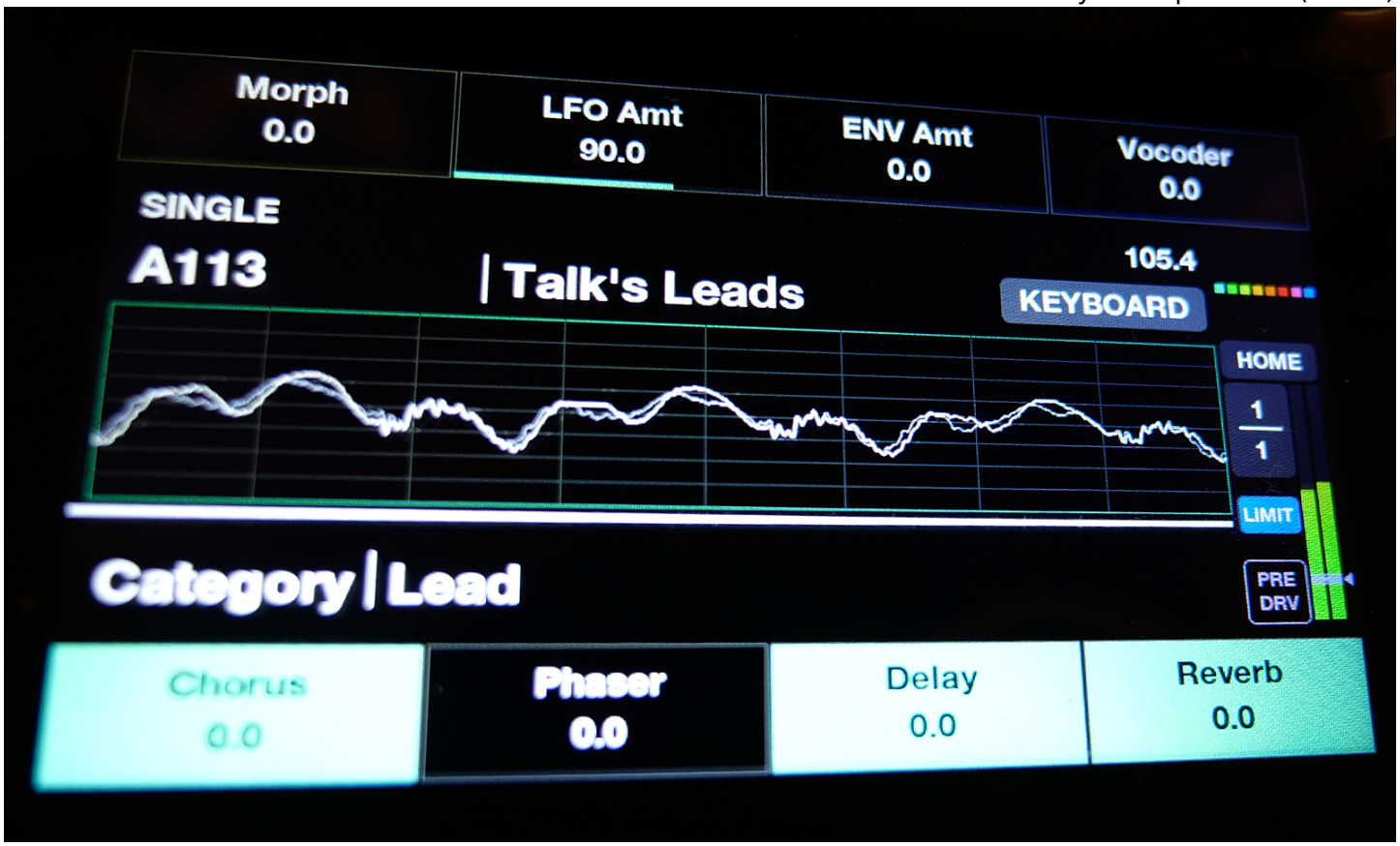
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ASM war mit dem Leviasynth angereist, einem aufgebohrten Nachfolger des erfolgreichen, virtuell-analogen Hydrasynths. Daneben gab es auch den Blasmusik-Ableger Diosynth zu bestaunen. Und daneben ...



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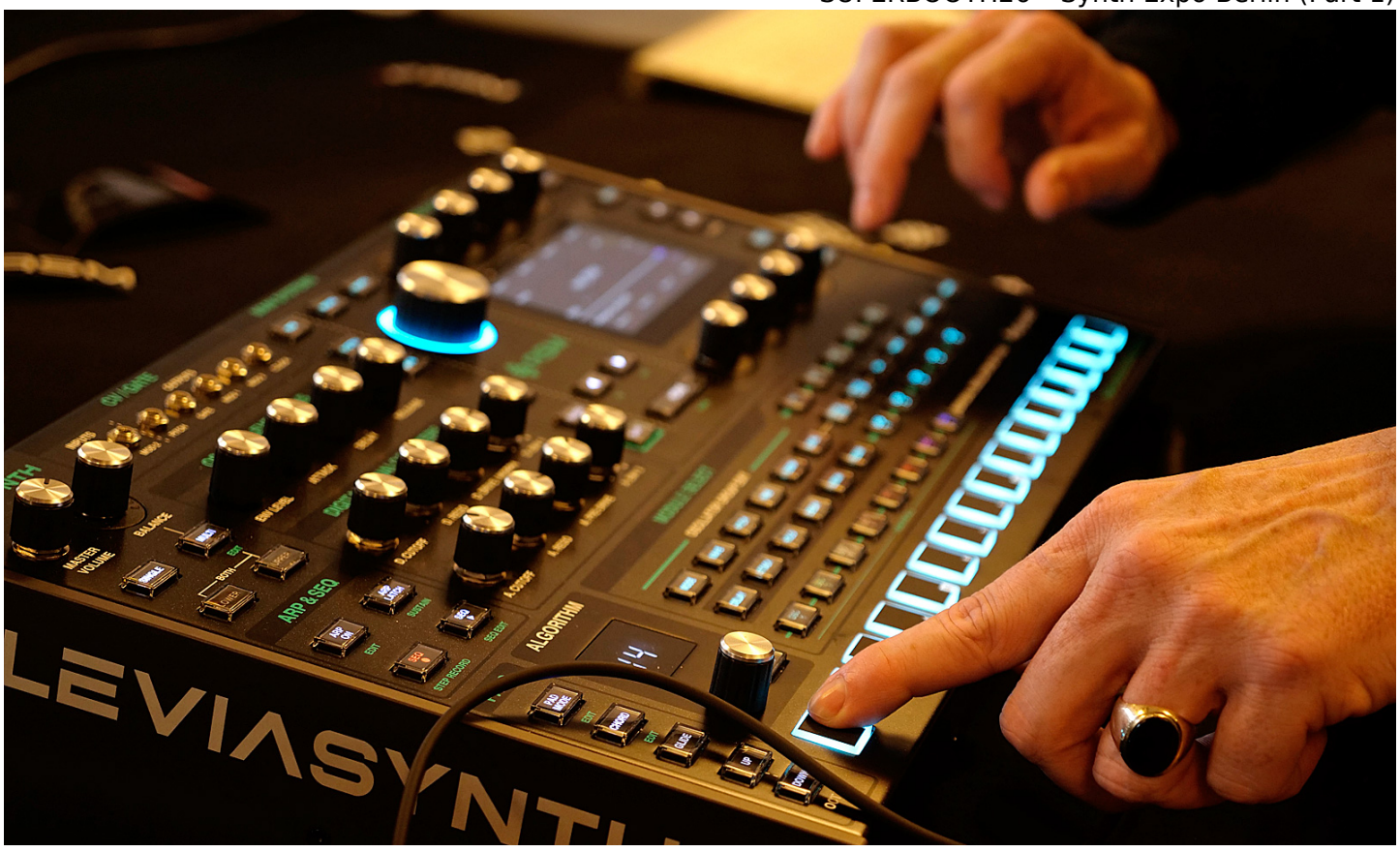
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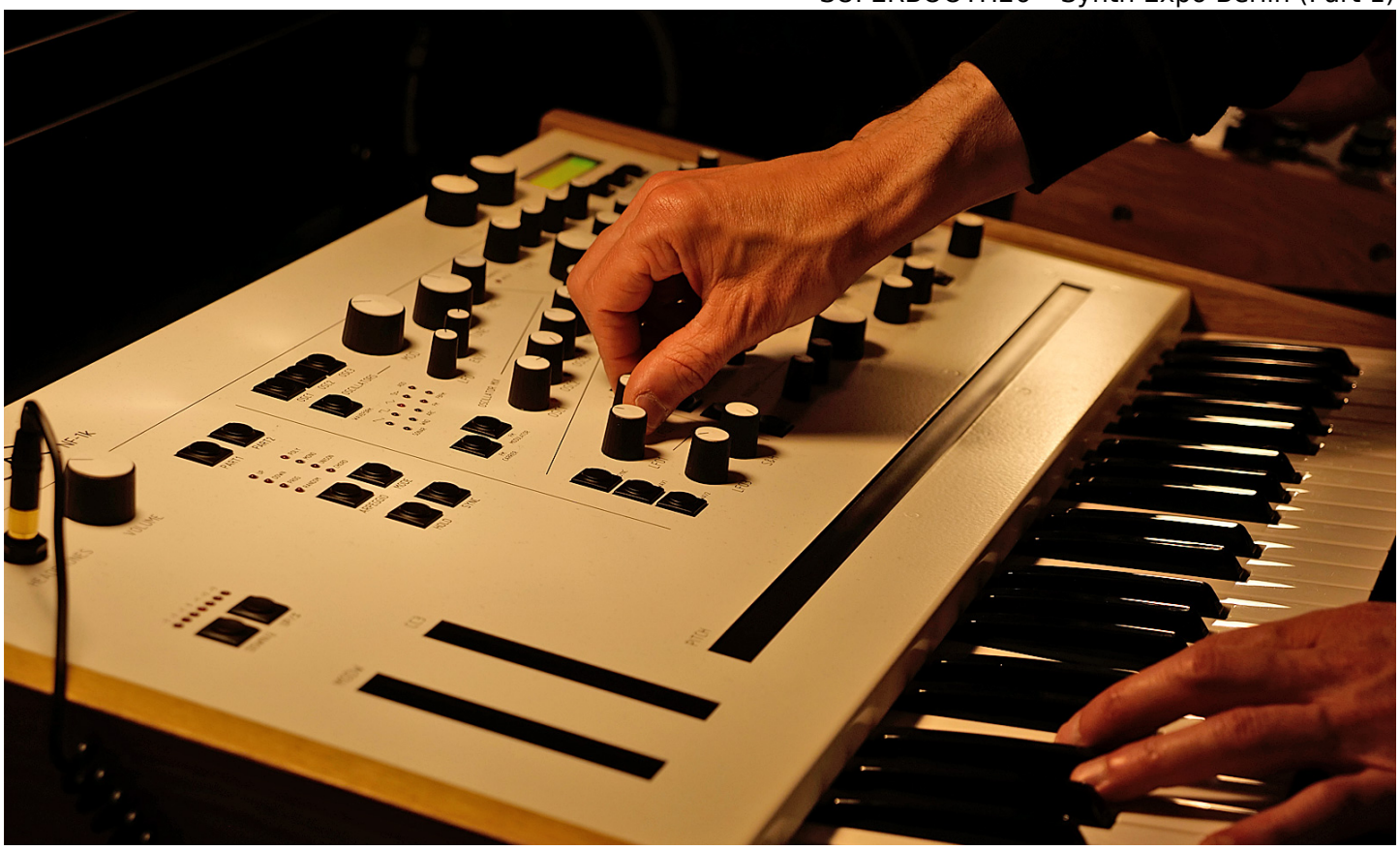


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... the MODOR NF-1K, which is also a digital instrument and the keyboard version of the NF-1 with voice doubling.



PLEASANT DESIGN

TELEPATHIC Orchid is a handy chord player of a special kind, with a ’70s-style design (it immediately reminded me of an alarm clock from that era with dials that clattered loudly). MUSICAL BEINGS: Tembo, a digital drum machine hidden inside an undersized, five-by-eight-square wooden checkers board; its operation is ingenious, as the rhythm is programmed using the round, wooden checkers fitted with magnets: single tap = eighth note, double tap = sixteenth note, upside-down = the next sixteenth note… (if not exactly like that, then at least something like it).



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But enough with the “organic” stuff—over at SOMA INSTRUMENTS next door: The Pulsar, which is already showing its age a bit, now comes in a rust-colored case, and at the booth right next door, players slide metal objects (coins, keys, and the like) across the panel of the Enigma desktop synthesizer to coax sounds and rhythms—ranging from slow and chill to annoyingly squeaky and atonal—out of the new machine. In contrast, using completely contactless air gestures, the musician prompts the QURAY

controller to generate MIDI events, which in turn activate sounds of his choosing. The device looks like a small meteorite crafted from *papier-mâché* by a school theater group, painted cosmic gray.



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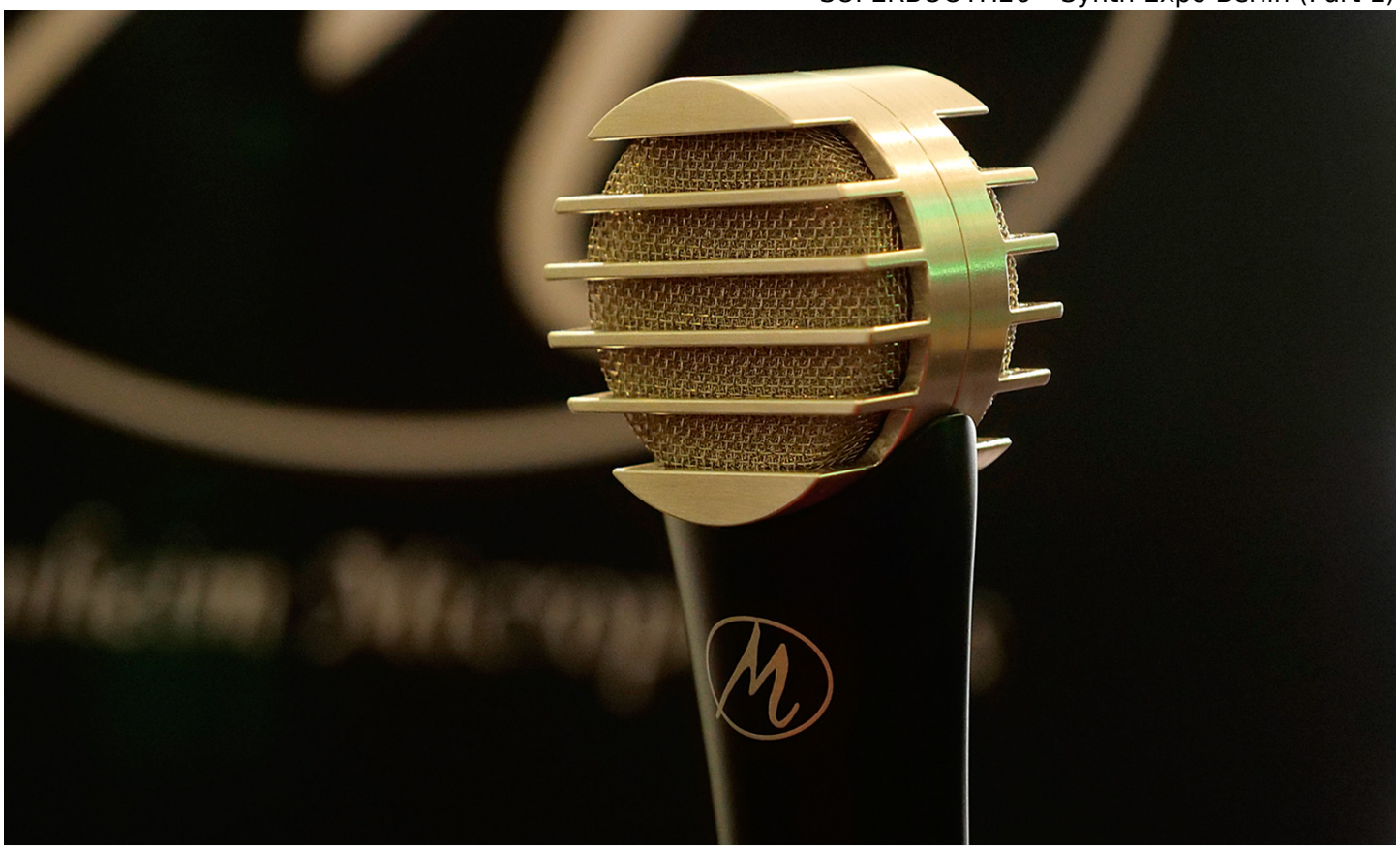
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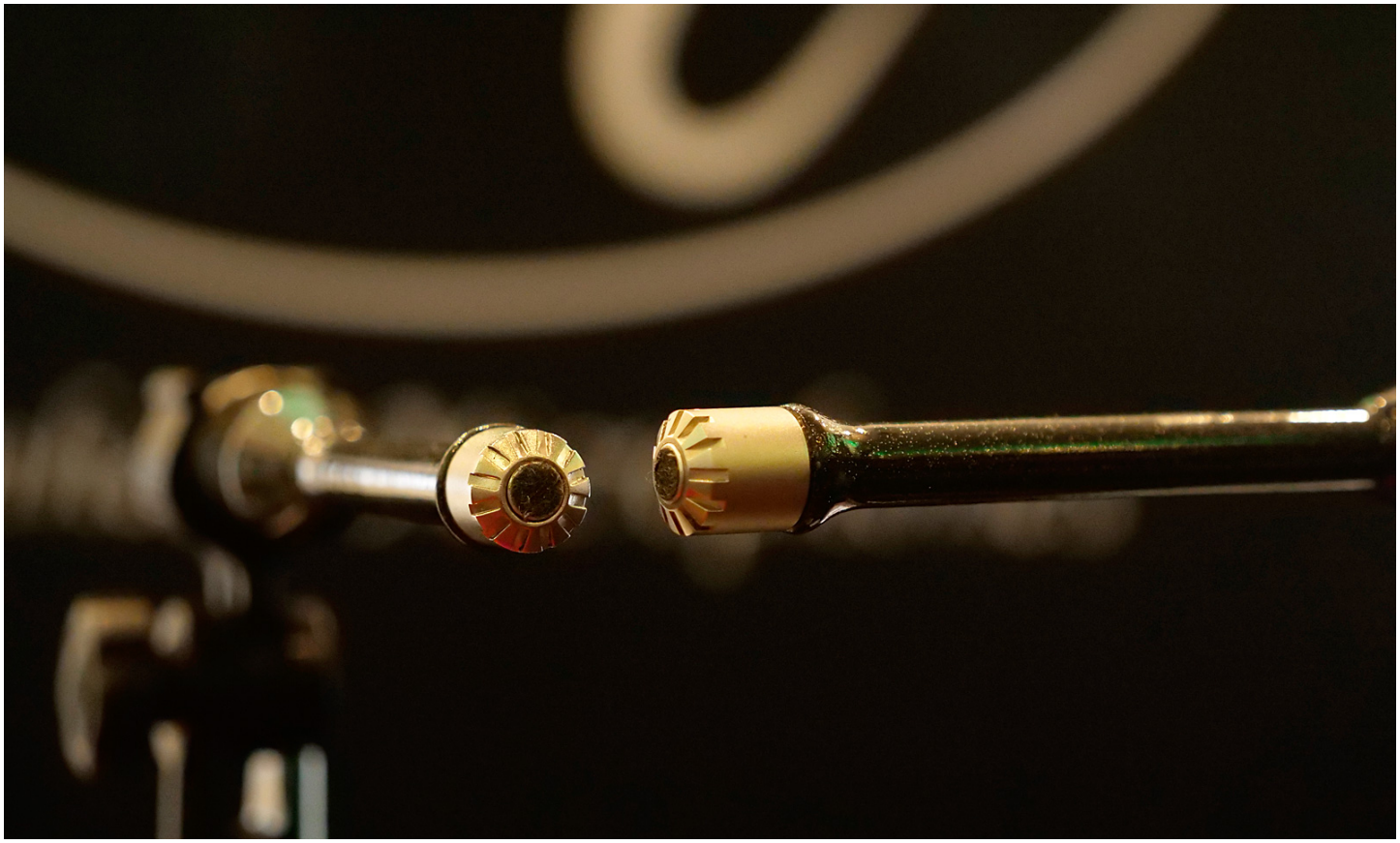
A CONVENIENT PLUGIN

The outboard section is getting bigger and bigger. Discrete and/or tube-based analog gear, replicas of vintage microphones (AEA), and the legendary compressors and EQs (AUDIOSCAPE) that shaped the sound of artists ranging from the Beatles to Michael Jackson. In a side room, booths from renowned manufacturers of studio consoles, outboard gear, converters, and interfaces (SSL, API, RME, SPL). It’s interesting to note that even here, fully analog devices can be digitally controlled (and, of course, saved) across all their parameters. This applies to the Brick Lane MC4, a four-channel analog compressor/limiter from CRANBORNE AUDIO, as well as to ELYSIA’s new model, the Channex Studio stereo channel strip, whose four-band EQ can even operate dynamically—a feature previously reserved only for digital competitors.



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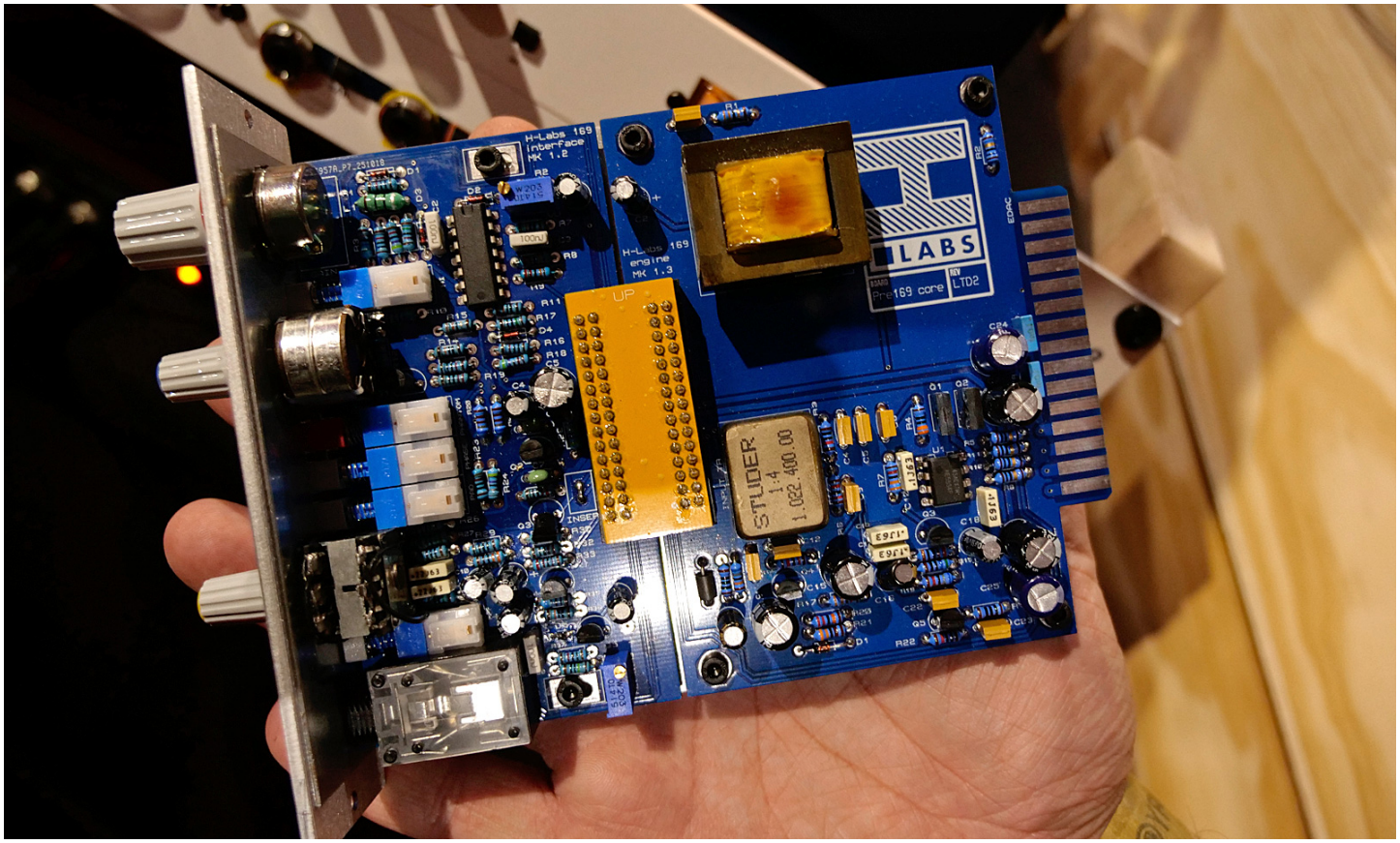
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The Spanish retro equipment manufacturer HERITAGE AUDIO is introducing a new, affordable, compact 8-channel stereo mixer aptly named Mix Buddy, while HLABS, based in neighboring France, is dedicated to preserving the legacy of the legendary STUDER circuits. The high-end manufacturer ZÄHL is unveiling two Class A headphone amplifiers. And by popular demand, the 12-channel PM-12 performance mixer will now also be available.



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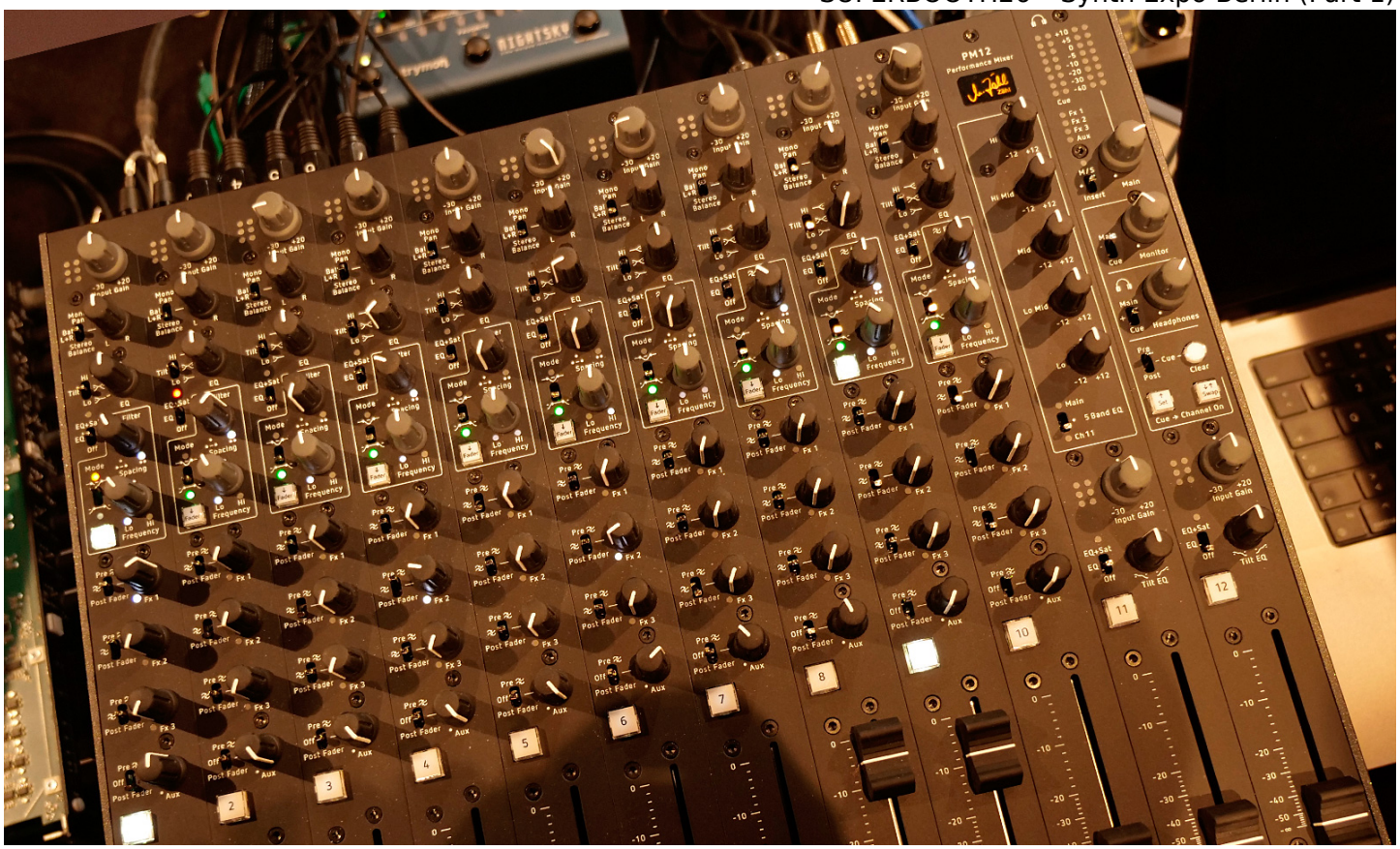
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THE KRAFTWERK AND GEORGE LUCAS *HARMONIZER*

The Audios II from KF INSTRUMENTS is a real treat: A faithful recreation by Klaus Fischer, the developer of the extremely rare harmonizer from the Stuttgart music store BARTH, dating back to 1978. Only 50 units were produced at the time, but they can be heard in all the more renowned productions, including those by Stockhausen, Ultravox, Kraftwerk, Modern Talking, and George Lucas.



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RELAXED ATMOSPHERE

Aside from the boisterous presentations in the exhibition halls, there are, of course, the numerous lecture concerts – a guided, concert-style form of product presentation – as well as many open-air concerts on the

three stages. And, of course, there's the catering, enjoyed on the many beer benches and steps by the lake or on-site at the various festival locations. This time there were more food stands, which led to a generally more relaxed atmosphere when it came to getting food and drinks.



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THIS IS WHERE THE DINO ROARS

For a change, ERICA SYNTHS is expanding not its black lineup but its bright and colorful Bullfrog series with an analog mixer and the Drums drum machine. Also new to the lineup is the programmable and

storable resonant equalizer in desktop format. But it can also be kept simple: HAPPY DINOSAUR from Sweden places a large guitar pickup inside a milled-out block of wood, adds a jack—and voilà, the tabletop humbucker is ready! Naturally, it reacts to all kinds of metal objects with a primal (dino) rumble.



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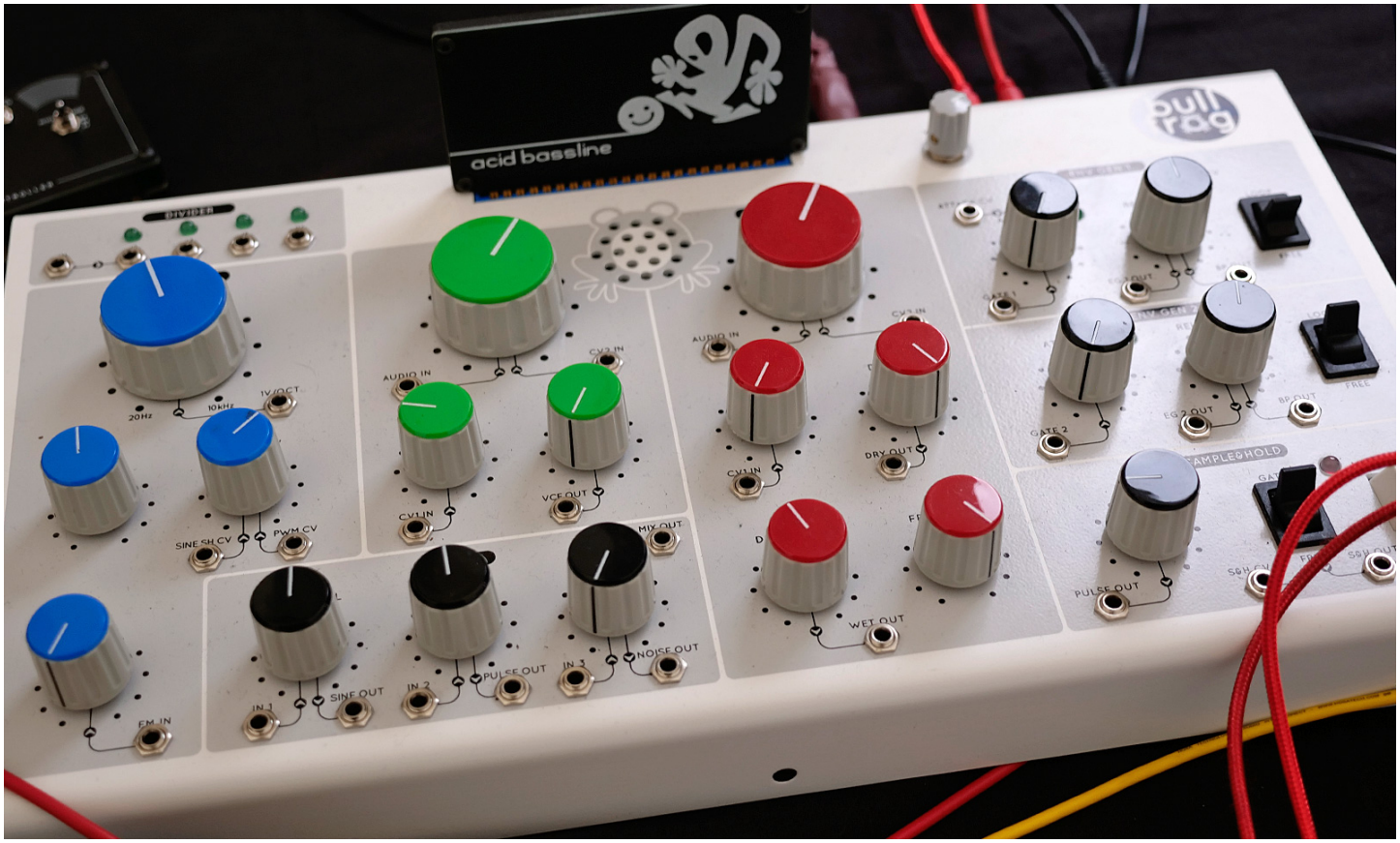
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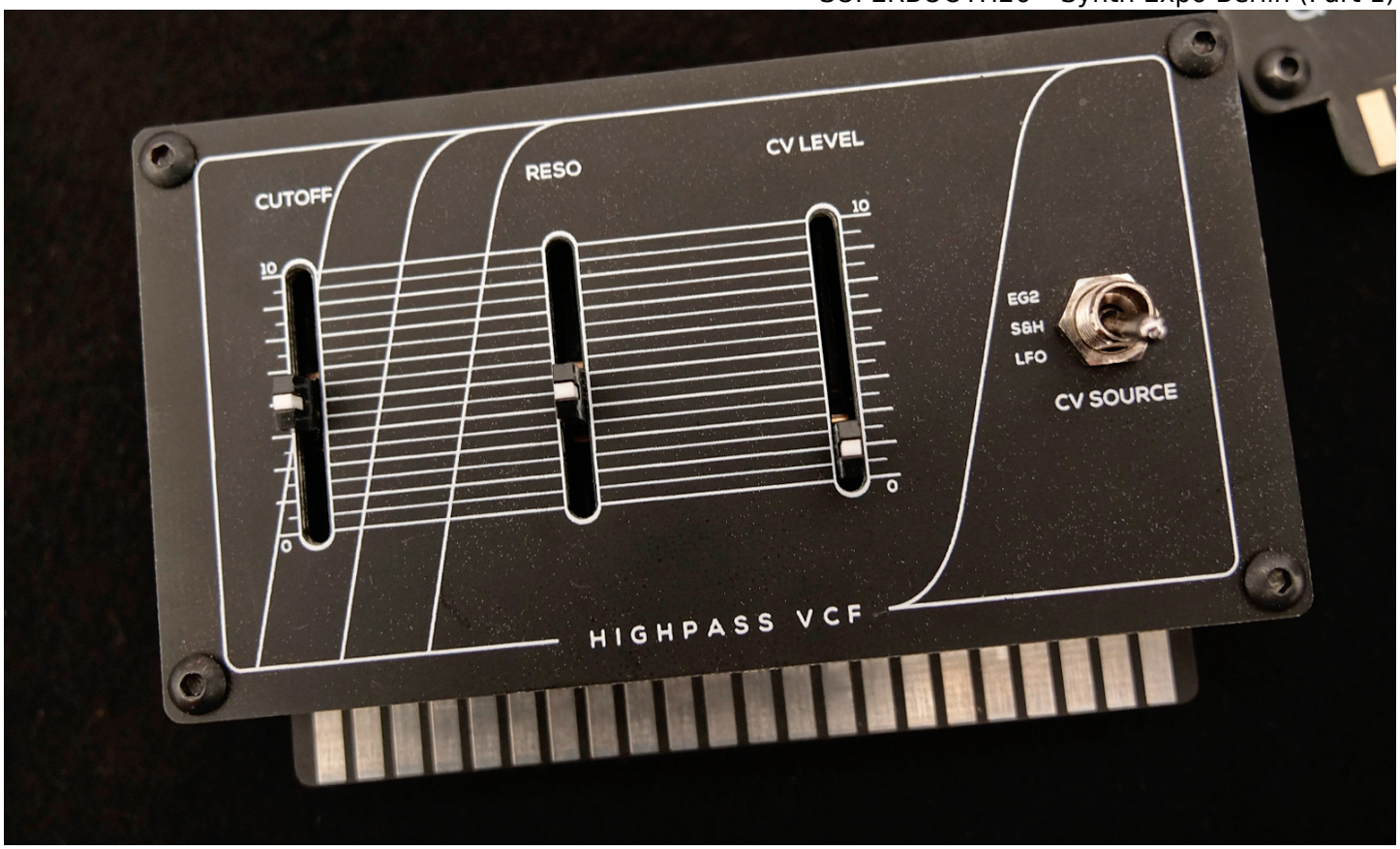
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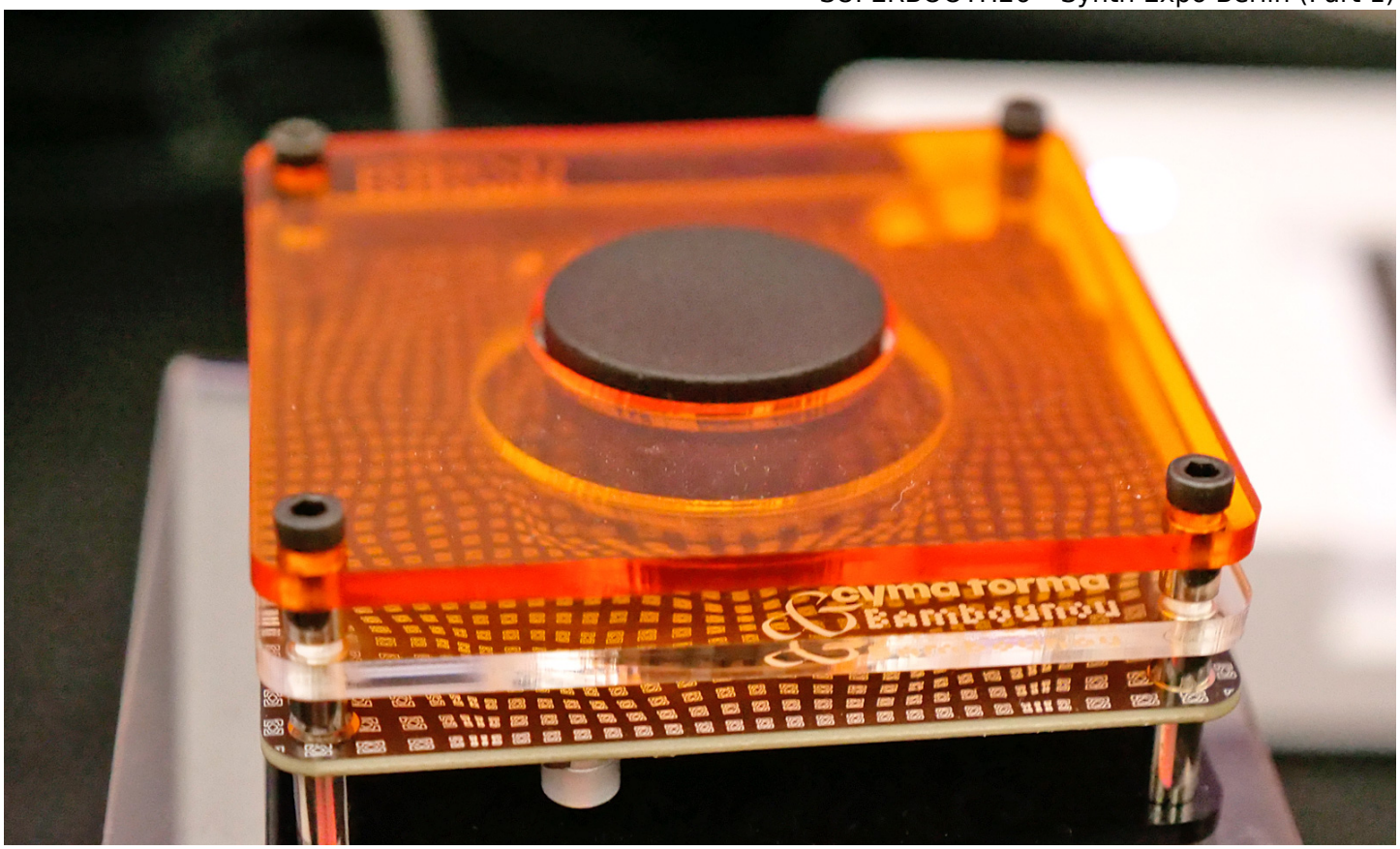


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ROULETTE OF SOUNDS

Drone and ambient synthesizers were, of course, well represented. Following their debut album *Alt*, CYMA FORMA surprised attendees this time with the RND Synth, measuring approximately 10 x 10 cm. This device allows you to make music without any prior knowledge or training. To play the instrument, simply press the large button located on the top of the compact device, and you’re ready to go. Pressing the button immediately prompts the processor to generate a “musically meaningful” random composition, which is played back instantly on four internal instruments. If you don’t like the miniature composition output as a stereo mix via a mini-jack, no problem – just press it again and see what the sound roulette comes up with next.



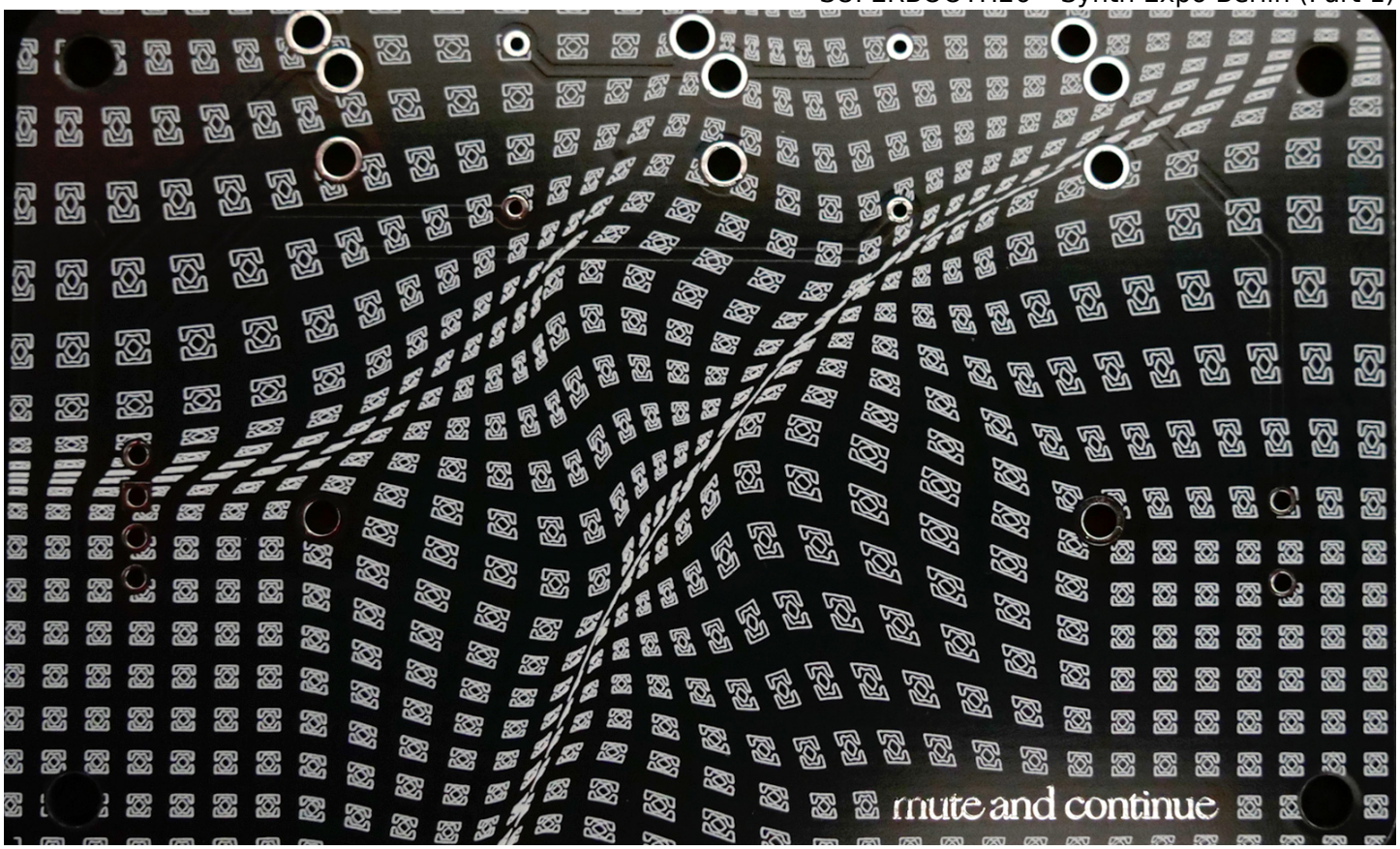
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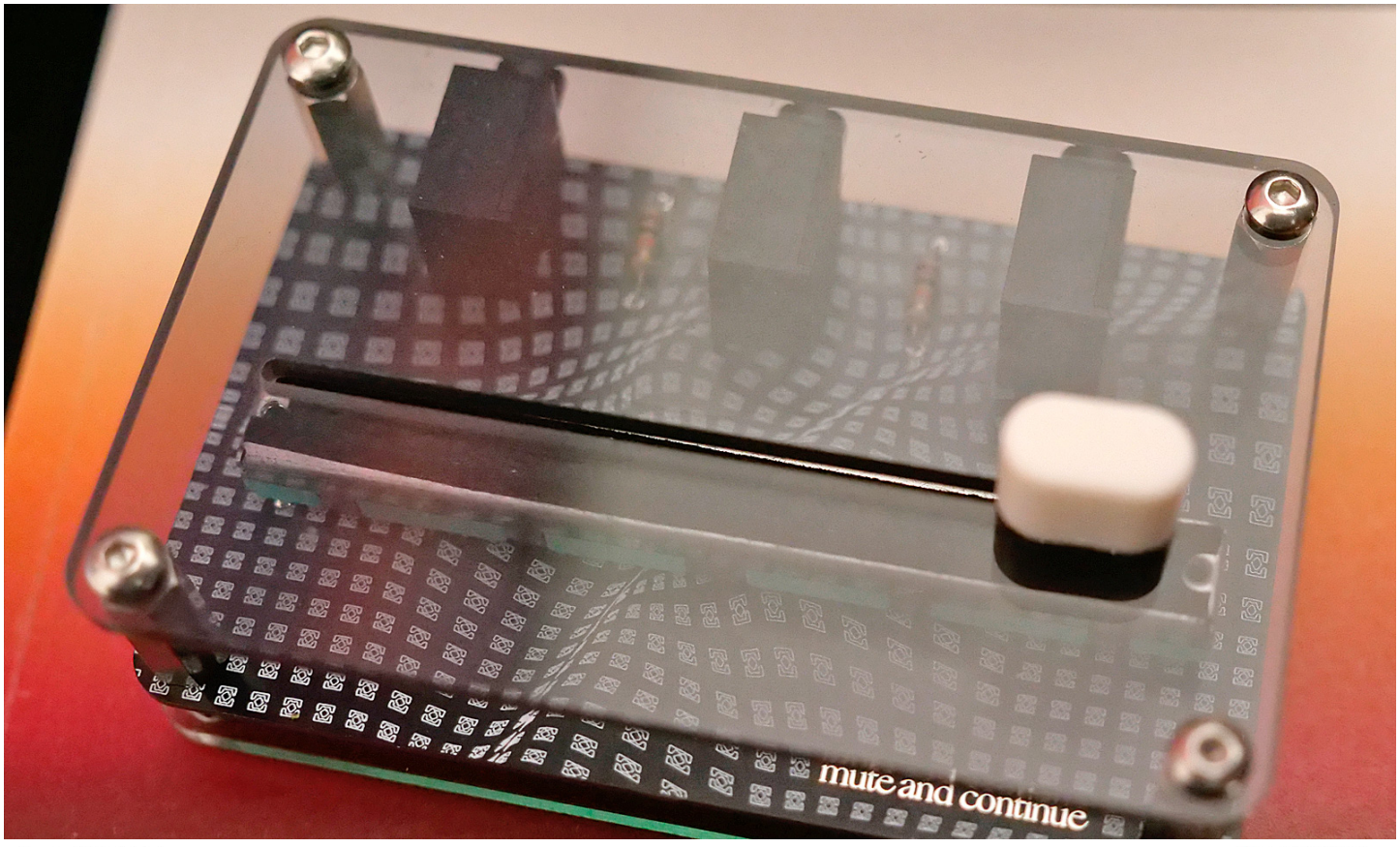


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BLUE NOTES FROM THE NETHERLANDS

Also quite unique is the Melancholytron by FRAKNOISE, which was introduced last year – an instrument on which you're guaranteed not to be able to play anything cheerful, a dedicated "tragedy toy," so to speak.



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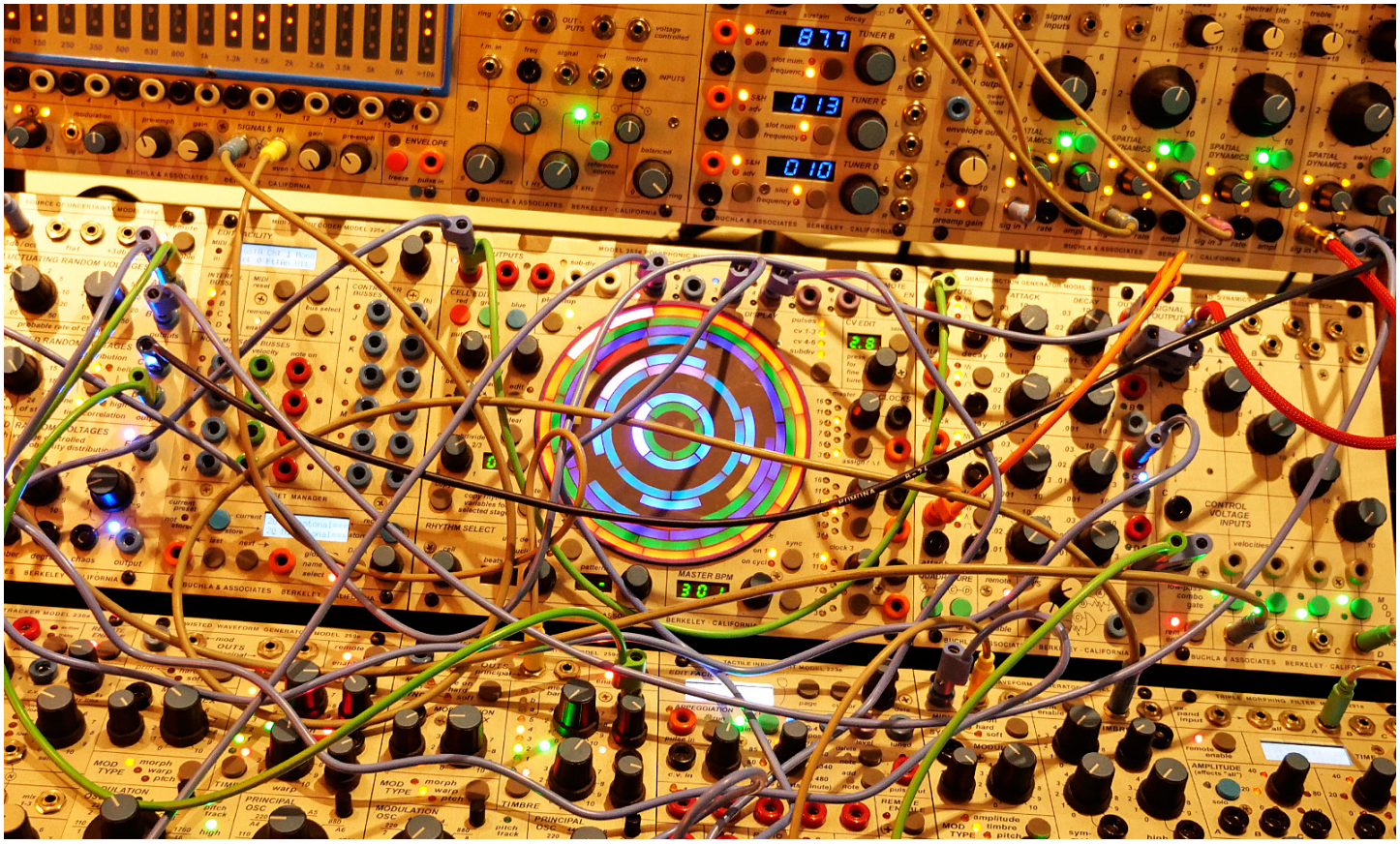
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Ziggy, the latest addition to the luxury brand BUCHLA, is a monophonic desktop synth with a unique yet downright conventional design. This affordable “people’s BUCHLA” is intended to make it easier to get started in the world of the West Coast synthesis pioneer. The sound-generating components of this compact desktop synth are fully analog; it features two VCOs, a low-pass gate, the usual digitally generated modulators, and a digital multi-effect. The Ziggy is fully programmable and features a small display.



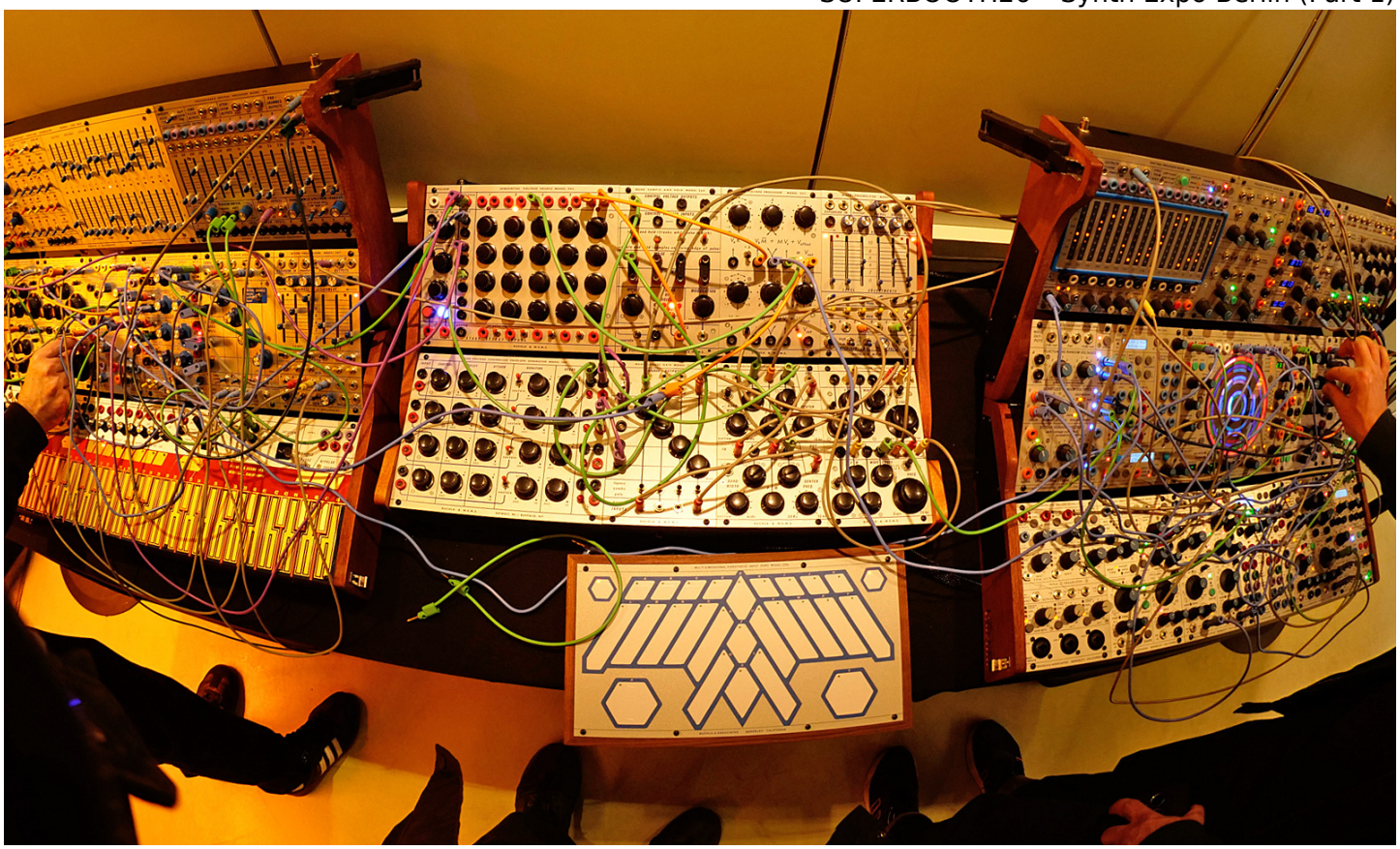
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