

Vermona Mono Lancet '15 / Kick Lancet – Lead- and Groove-Synthesizers
2013 and the following years are dedicated to the “little” ones. The little BIG synthesizers, to be exact. It’s a phenomenon of our time that manufacturers produce analog synthesizers in pocket-size and with high-quality analog sound.

Welcome to the Mono Lancet '15, Mono Lancet and Kick Lancet test report ...



This is the “new” Mono Lancet '15 ...

The little BIG ones:

- Analog Solutions Leipzig
- Doepfer Dark Energy I / II / III
- DSI Mopho (desktop)
- EMW WCS-1
- Eowave Domino
- Korg Monotron
- Korg Monotribe
- MacBeth Micromac
- MFB Dominion Club
- MFB Dominion X / X SED
- Mode Machines SyntLab SL-1
- Moog Minitaur
- Moog Mother-32
- Mutable Instruments Anushri
- Studio Electronics Boomstar
- Tom Oberheim SEM
- Trax RetroWave
- Vermona Mono Lancet
- etc.

... just to name a few.



We don’t want to forget the Technosaurus Microcon, an old guy from the late 90s. In its days, it was novel and rare: compact design and high-quality analog sound. Then there was the Doepfer MS-404. Housed in a 19-inch rack, it was very popular for many, many years.



Its name leads us – nomen est omen – back to the mother of all micro synthesizers, the Roland TB-303 bassline of 1982. Last but not least, there were (are) all those bassline clones ... many dozens of them were designed and produced during the last 3 decades ...

Anyway, next to small (Eurorack) modular systems, handy pocket-sized instruments dominate our current era of analog synthesizers.



As you can see, finding a handy analog synthesizer is not going to be an easy choice. Is the Tom Oberheim SEM better than the MFB Dominion? Is a Moog Minitaur all you need? What about the flexible Doepfer Dark Energy II? Judging synthesizers is always a question of personal taste. First, overall appearances are important. And second, you have to decide what musical value you are looking for. Strengths? Weak points? The individual instruments often differ significantly, so finding the synthesizer you *really* need won’t be that easy.

We have already taken a closer look at the [MFB Dominion X](#), the [Waldorf Rocket](#), the [Trax RetroWave](#) and – just recently – at the [Moog Minitaur](#). Now it is time for our summer guest, the Vermona Mono Lancet.



But, wait a second. Before we go there, please have a look at our [Perfourmer MKII](#) review. And – more important – listen to its sound files! The Mono Lancet's big brother (the Perfourmer ...) is – in our very personal opinion – one of the best modern analog synthesizers that has ever been created. And although concept and sound of an instrument are always a matter of taste (we realize that *not everyone* feels comfortable with the Perfourmer MKII), there's a solid and remarkably strong community of Perfourmer MKII enthusiasts that has grown during the last two years.

So, after having become acquainted with the Perfourmer MKII, expectations for the Mono Lancet are high. Whether the monophonic analog pocket-synth can satisfy these hopes and what its musical applications are is what we are about to try to find out. And yes ... we also take a brief look at the Vermona Kick Lancet. That's another cutie – a percussion synthesizer for classical and experimental kick drum sounds. Most of the attached soundfiles present the Mono Lancet *and* the Kick Lancet side by side.

Hardware

Hardware? There is not much to say here. Well, depending on the point of view, there would be a LOT to say, but you know this already: the Lancet instruments have excellent knobs, strong chassis and so on. Vermona builds – just like Moog or Doepfer – high quality instruments. And the design is tasteful: anthracite (casing), beige (pots) and silver (switches) combine to lend the Mono / Kick Lancet a charm of its own.



There are no wobbly buttons, everything is sturdy and of high quality. This year Vermona introduced wooden side panels (for the Lancet as well as for the Perfourmer MKII, by the way). The light wood looks good and goes well with the dark chassis of the instruments.

Since there are no points of criticism here, we now turn to the ...

Concept Of The Mono Lancet

The Mono Lancet's overall concept is somehow slightly different from other synths. First, it has 2 VCOs. The oscillators sound brilliant, reminding us of the awesome Prophet-5. Cutting, strong analog sounds, very powerful. Excellent for lead lines, tasty filter sweeps and bass lines. The Mono Lancet's "classic" sound is simply excellent. So ... good sounds and yes, of course, there's MIDI.

Nothing unusual (or wrong) up to know. The Mono Lancet is a powerful 2-VCO synth with MIDI. All right. But what about CV/gate? What about those INs and OUTs many of us are looking for? Well, in order to control the Mono Lancet via CV/gate, you'll need an optional device. It's called Mono Lancet Modular Dock.



Basically speaking, the idea of the Modular Dock is not bad. It's a 3-unit-(Eurorack)-module that connects to the synthesizer via a 25-pin computer cable (D-Sub / DB-25). A green contact light flashes as soon as you have properly set up the connection. The Mono Lancet Modular Dock houses a few switches, jacks and knobs that extend the modulation- and control-possibilities of the synthesizer. Thus, interaction with other modular gear is very simple. Hook up a step sequencer to the synth, send a few (external) high frequency LFOs to the VCF, add voltage controlled envelope generators or a ring-modulator ... it's up to you!

But the fact is, this control unit is *optional*. So, buy a Mono Lancet and the Modular Dock and you've come close to the price of a Tom Oberheim SEM with CV/gate. Or a MFB Dominion X (which is a bit more expensive, but on the other hand features 3 VCOs, lots of LFOs, ring modulators, memories and so on).

One of the Mono Lancet's strongest competitors is the Doepfer Dark Energy (formerly Mark I, now Mark II). It has 1 VCO only, but offers – besides MIDI – all CV/gate connections in *one and the same* instrument/unit. Taking this all into consideration, it's not easy to evaluate the Vermona Mono Lancet concept. The Modular dock is just brilliant, but we'd really wish this module to be either an integral part of the instrument or to be sold in a (not too expensive) package together with the synth.



Admittedly, the Mono Lancet does come equipped with 2 VCOs, giving it more musical potential (in this one respect, at least) than the 1-VCO synthesizer from Doepfer. From this perspective it becomes obvious that comparing different instruments depends on your personal requirements. And here we're back where we started. Whether you like the unique Mono Lancet or not has a lot to do with what you do want to do with it ... simple, but true.

The Mono Lancet Features

- 2 VCOs (with noise)
- LFO (with sample / hold)
- VCF
- VCA
- ADSR
- MIDI
- CV/Gate (via the optional Modular Dock)

The features are well chosen and well organized. The double oscillators, combined with the small mixer (well, actually it's a mix knob), are especially useful. It's beautifully simple to fade back and forth between a 32" pulse- and a 4" sawtooth sound. Or to create simple octave movements. That opens musical vistas, whereby that little mix knob can make an especially big difference. The pulsewidth modulation is gorgeous, by the way. Two little criticisms among all this praise. Firstly, the PWM can only be controlled by the (optional) Modular Dock or via MIDI. There are no provisions for "direct control".

Update: Vermona tells us how to install a simple pulse-width knob. It's a DIY job and not really aesthetical, but here you are:

[LINK Mono Lancet Pulse Width Knob Installation](#) (> currently not active, contact Vermona for the mod).



Secondly, oscillator-synchronization is missing. Synth experts will be puzzled by the fact that we have here a 2-VCO synthesizer with wonderful sound potential, but with no possibility for oscillator-synchronization. Ok, it doesn't *have* to do that. The Minimoog – the most famous synthesizer in history – didn't have a sync option either, despite its impressive 3-VCO sound architecture. And despite this "weakness" it became the most famous mono synth of all times. But today we look at this a little more critically. So it remains a pity that a 2-VCO synth should have no sync possibilities.

Above and beyond this, this is what Vermona promises according to the Mono Lancet user manual: living sounds. This is really an understatement. Those "living" sounds are sensational. Such beautiful (fine) beats, delicious pulse sounds, cutting sawtooth creations (and much more) are available on very few other analog synthesizers. The attached sound files should give you an idea of how powerful – how brilliant – the Mono Lancet can sound.



How could it be otherwise? The 24dB filter is also good. Again, we have a suggestion here concerning filter resonance. At high resonance settings, the self-oscillating filter may occasionally produce dirty (non-harmonic) tones. Dirty filter resonance can be a musical plus, but in this case the non-harmonic overtones may be difficult to tame. We've dedicated a soundfile to this topic. 3 filter sweeps with Zero / middle / high resonance settings.

MIDI Potential

Since the Modular Dock has been conceived as an option only, let's look at the MIDI potential of the Mono Lancet.

- MIDI channel
- Note on/off
- Pitch bend (VCO)
- Modulation wheel (PWM)
- Aftertouch (VCF)
- Velocity (VCF and VCA)

And then there's Auto-Glide and Legato (two important performance functions) that can be turned on/off via MIDI.



What Are The Biggest Assets Of The Mono Lancet?

These considerations are enough to classify the Mono Lancet as a superb instrument perfect for rich and delicious analog sounds. The 2 VCOs and the 24dB VCF may not bann the Oberheims and Prophets to the past, but they will certainly evoke admiring nods of respect from their direction. If you're looking for strong lead sounds, powerful synth sounds, velvety filter sweeps and other analog textures, then you'll be completely satisfied with the Mono Lancet. Ideally, together with the Lancet Modular Dock.

Although there may be some questions of concept, the Mono Lancet certainly has strengths that will ensure it a place in the studio. A sophisticated lead / bass / solo synth. Especially attractive, by the way, is the LFO-to-VCO-modulation (vibrato) lead sound. Some would call this a bread-and-butter-sound, one of those all-time "living analog sounds" that are especially difficult to obtain with such conviction and vivacity.



Very few analog desktop synths can hold a candle to the Mono Lancet when it comes to lead sounds. It is a top-league lead synth, despite small weaknesses in the area of crazy / experimental / FX sounds. On the positive side, there's autobend (VCO) which delivers nice effects, and the LFO does range from 0,05 to 60 Hertz (or 240, as the Vermona website tells us) and offers sample & hold, ...but we must also say that the creation of experimental sounds is not where Mono Lancet is at its best. Which it admittedly doesn't *have* to be, if the buyer of the mono is looking for a versatile lead synth.

Update 02/2016: The new [Mono Lancet '15](#) now offers 6 LFO Waveforms.

The strengths of the Mono Lancet should be obvious. And if you have any doubts, listen to the attached sound files. You are hearing a lead / bass / solo synth at its best.



Kick Lancet

The Kick Lancet is simple to describe. Basically, it's a percussion synthesizer comparable to one channel of the Simmons SDS-200/400/800 series. Pitch, Attack, Noise, Decay and a few other parameters are adjustable, allowing for variable electronic percussion sounds.

The Jomox XBase 09 could make for an even better comparison. There, too, you will find the classic pitched bass (and snare) drums.



A special Kick Lancet goody is the wide-range LFO (30 Hertz up to 3 kHz) which enables surprisingly flexible (experimental) tone colours.

Now, the usefulness of such a simple bass drum synth may not be obvious at first. Just a bass drum? Where you need at least three instruments (bass, snare, hi hat) in order to create complete patterns? But there's more flexibility here than seen at first glance. On the one hand, multitrack recording belongs to the basics of modern home studio work (you record your patterns track by track). On the other hand, the Kick Lancet can do much more than simple bass drum sounds. It's a great source of unusual electronic percussion that will enhance your songs in unforeseen ways. That *one* special sound could make the big difference ...!



In a nutshell ...

Vermonas Mono Lancet and Kick Lancet are two analog desktop synthesizers designed with special musical purposes in mind. Great instruments for uncomplicated, fast improvisation, great tools for making electronic music. At your fingertips.

Neither of the modules is a *universal* instrument. But a lot of you out there are not looking for that anyway. And each has its own special strengths, assuring it a place in many a musician's studio where handy desktop-synths are needed.

Mono Lancet delivers classic analog sounds in the best sense of the word. For experimental percussive work, the Kick Lancet is a good supplement.



Wonders never cease ...

PS: A last word about a Lancet we haven't even talked about. The *Filter Lancet* is a well-designed module for external signal processing with a multimode filter at its heart. If we had *one* wish, we would wish *this* multimode filter to one day be part of the Mono Lancet (along with the VCO sync function). That would be perfect.

Mono Lancet '15

2016-03-03: Vermona presents the new Mono Lancet '15. What's new?

- 6 LFO waveforms instead of 3
- USB for factory upgrades
- New power supply



'14 Analogsynthesizer

2016-11-30: Vermona presents the ['14 Analogsynthesizer](#). A Mono Lancet keyboard, with great performance-tools (arpeggiator, programmable wheels, etc.), some extra extras ... and with a wonderful touch-sensitive keyboard, of course.

1. [DEMO 1](#)
2. [DEMO 2](#)
3. [DEMO 3](#)
4. [Sawtooth 1](#)
5. [Sawtooth 2](#)
6. [Sawtooth 3](#)
7. [Sawtooth 4](#)
8. [Pulse 1](#)
9. [Pulse 2](#)
10. [Pulse 3](#)
11. [Lead](#)
12. [Filter Resonance](#)
13. [Envelope to VCO](#)
14. [DEMO 1](#)
15. [DEMO 2](#)
16. [DEMO 3](#)

Vermona Mono Lancet '15

Monophonic Analog Synthesizer

Price: 459 Euros
(01/2023)

Vermona Lancet Modular Dock

Modular extension for the Mono Lancet, 3 HE / 22 TE

Price: 149 Euros
(01/2023)

Vermona Kick Lancet

Analog Percussion / Kick-Drum Synthesizer

Price: 249 Euros
(01/2023)

Wooden Side Panels (for all Lancets)

Preis: 39 Euro
(01/2023)

Website Manufacturer:
www.vermona.com

Links:
[Vermona PERfourMER MKII Synthesizer Review](#)
[Vermona '14 Analogsynthesizer Review](#)
[Vermona Interview](#)