

Waldorf Introduces The Wavetable Synthesizer M

Bringing back the classic Microwave and 'modern' Microwave II tone generation



Following in the 440 mm (W) x 305 mm (D) x 85 mm (H) physical footprint and musically fanciful footsteps of the high-quality synthesizer manufacturer's Iridium synthesizer successfully launched last year to widespread critical acclaim, Waldorf Music announces the availability of its roots-returning M - bringing back classic Microwave and 'modern' Microwave II tone generation as a new-generation classic

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hybrid wavetable synthesizer with an analogue lowpass 24dB/Oct VCF (Voltage Controlled Filter) with resonance and analogue saturation feature, true stereo analogue VCA (Voltage Controlled Amplifier) with panning option, and much more to explore in a desktop-friendly form factor featuring a wide range of unique sounds - as of September 14...

The well-known Waldorf Music marque has been synonymous with wavetables - whereby an ability to not only play one waveform per oscillator but also to step through the wavetable, consisting of a table of single waveforms classified by its own special sound character, via different modulations to create wavetable sweeps with much more dramatic results than anything any sample playback-based system could ever produce - as the primary sound synthesis technique used in its high-quality synthesizers for over 30 years. Indeed, its innovative position in the electronic musical instruments marketplace dates back to 1989 with the release of the wavetable synthesis-based Microwave, an amazing 'reincarnation' of the legendary PPG Wave series, which were arguably amongst the most coveted high-end synthesizers of the early Eighties. Duly discontinued in the musical midsts of time, today it is still sought after as a classic.

Cue Waldorf Music's M, seeing the high-quality synthesizer manufacturer musically returning to its roots by bringing back classic Microwave and 'modern' Microwave II tone generation as a new-generation classic hybrid wavetable synthesizer with an analogue lowpass 24 dB/Oct VCF - SSI 2144 Improved Ladder Type - with resonance and analogue saturation feature, true stereo analogue VCA with panning option, and much more to explore in a desktop-friendly form factor featuring a wide range of unique sounds. Plentiful presets - totalling 2,048 sound programs (divided into 16 banks, each with 128 sounds) - professionally programmed by world-renowned sound designers also include all of the classic Microwave sound sets, such as MW1 Factory Sound Set, MW1 Soundpool 1-5, the fat-sounding Analogue and Bassco, as well as PPG Wave 2.3 sounds cleverly converted for the original Microwave. Moreover, it also features freshly-programmed sounds utilising M's myriad new features - from true hard Sync (when working in its Modern Microwave II/XT mode) to the ARP (arpeggiator) and MIDI-syncable global LFO (Low Frequency Oscillator).

But beating at M's musical heart as an eight-voice polyphonic, four-part multitimbral WAVETABLE SYNTHESIZER - as boldly blazoned in red across its full-metal blue-coloured casing, itself hinting at its illustrious Microwave heritage - are two wavetable oscillators with independent wavetable-generating Classic Microwave 1 and Modern Microwave II/XT modes, meaning that the wavetable oscillators behave differently in both of those modes (accessible by pressing the Mode button beside the helpful high-resolution graphic display with four endless encoders for yet more hands-on control). Consequently, there is no hard Sync or ring modulation available in the Classic Microwave I mode, where 16-bit wavetables are bit-reduced to 8-bit and a 240 kHz non-anti-aliased sample rate is offered, whereas the Modern Microwave II/XT mode offers a 40 kHz sample rate with band-limited wavetables, although both oscillators - OSC 1 and OSC 2 - offer the same panel parameters.

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Put it this way: with no fewer than 45 knobs - with Wavetable (outer black ring dial) selecting the 96 factory wavetables and any user's custom wavetables (UWT 1-31) for the corresponding oscillator and Wave (inner red dial) determining the start point of the wavetable that is used when the sound starts clearly combine to stand out from the crowd - and buttons spaciouly spread across that eye-catching full-metal housing, hands-on control certainly speeds up working with Waldorf Music's M.

Meanwhile, two LFOs - LFO 1 and LFO 2, each generating a periodic waveform with adjustable frequency Rate and Shape that can be used for modulation purposes, are also always at hand. However, unlike other Waldorf synthesizers, there is no modulation matrix in M. Making a conscious design decision to set up M's modulation facilities directly on the corresponding display page, its creators are again playing at paying tribute to the 1989-vintage Microwave.

But back in the here and now, M takes performance to a whole new level fresh for 2021, thanks to that advanced ARP with 16 preset patterns, chord mode, and an ability to synchronise to MIDI clock. Furthermore, four programmable ENVELOPES allow adventurous users to manipulate sound parameters via rate or timed modulations.

Musically making a connection to the outside world is important to any synthesizer, so M, unsurprisingly, far from disappoints with six (rear panel-positioned) stereo analogue outputs - arranged as MAIN OUT (L/Mono and R) and AUX OUT (A, B, C, and D), the latter of which can be used to route each of the four Multi (multitimbral) parts to different outputs, if desired; a stereo headphone output (with an associated Volume knob in addition to the topside Master Volume knob); 5-pin MIDI IN, OUT, and THRU DIN connectors, complimented by a USB 2.0 MIDI port (for computer connection to transmit and receive MIDI data); an SD Card slot (for updating M's firmware, importing/saving sound patches, and importing/saving M-specific data, such as user wavetables); and - last but not least - a Kensington compatible security lock slot... for those that treasure their M bringing back classic Microwave and 'modern' Microwave II tone generation as a new-generation classic hybrid wavetable synthesizer. After all, according to Waldorf Music itself.

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The M Wavetable Synthesizer is available through Waldorf Music's growing global network of distributors at a price of €1,879.00 EUR.

While the desktop-friendly M helpfully has VESA mount-ready holes on its back plate - just like its Iridium and Kyra synthesizer siblings, it is also rack-mountable, thanks to a dedicated rack-mount kit available for €75.00 EUR directly from Waldorf Music.

www.waldorfmusic.com