

MOOG SUB PHATTY

REVIEW BY DICK 'MAGIK' JOHNSON

From late 80' Manchester clubs heaving to the sounds of The Happy Mondays, New Order and The Smiths, to the peaceful Auckland suburbs chirping with the sounds of native New Zealand birds, DJ/Producer Dick 'Magik' Johnson's life has been a journey in sound. Since making the move from England to New Zealand in the early 2000s, Magik has made himself at home down under, although his heavy production output means DJs around the world are never short of a piece of Magik to throw in their sets.

I've owned and sold several Moog Synthesizers over the last 10 years: first was a Prodigy then a Voyager, a Little Phatty and the only one that remains is a Minitaur. I've either got bored of them or more likely needed the cash, which was sadly the case with the Voyager. However, I love the Minitaur and its simplicity- it's my trusty bass machine and never fails.

I've wanted to buy a new Moog Keyboard for some time but didn't really want to spend Voyager money to get it. I saw the Sub Phatty was due out and couldn't wait to give it a go. I was never that impressed with the Little Phatty- it just felt like a poor man's Voyager and a bit dull, so I was really hoping the Sub Phatty would have more balls.

I took my friend Jack with me who I've been mentoring and working with. He's 15 and been making 'digital' electronic music on his laptop since he was 12. He's a genius at programming virtual synths and plug-ins but has never heard or played on any analogue hardware before. I really wanted to see how he'd react to the sound and modulation of a Moog.

I had the first go! I really like the 2 octave keyboard, it's compact and perfect for someone with my keyboard skills. The Sub Phatty has a very classic, clean looking interface with a simple layout, it also feels solid and built to last. It has two oscillators with continuous selection between triangle, saw tooth, square and pulse wave forms, with a switch to determine the octave. The second oscillator also allows you to tune separately from the first oscillator plus or minus a fifth, which basically means you can create those awesome detuned techno bass and lead sounds. Yesss!

The one I'm most excited to try out is the sub oscillator which will produce a square wave an octave below the first oscillator and means you can retain the fullness of the sound whilst simultaneously ripping it apart in bass end. There's also a noise generator with a wide

There is however some use of a shift mode to access all the unit's functions, which makes it possible to add more detailed changes including adding a delay, adjusting the pitch bend range or the filter slope and lots of other stuff that would mean reading the manual, which I really should do more often.

After 10 minutes on the Sub Phatty I was sold. It has that unique Moog sound with the ability to create some monstrous bass and lead sounds and without any of the cheap digital noise you get from some synths and virtual synths. It's also really stable when you start messing things up with the LFO and pitch.

Jack was getting impatient so I let him take over, it was gold watching his face light up! He couldn't get over the clarity of the sounds and how they still sound great and don't break

up once you start to manipulate the sounds as digital synths often do. We couldn't wait to get it back to the studio.



SUB PHATTY
THE GRITTIEST MOOG SYNTH EVER.

“
The Sub Phatty is such a well priced synth and a small price to pay to add some Analogue warmth to our digital world.
”

range in frequency, great for those big dirty break downs. There are 4 banks of 4 patch presets which are a good starting point but not much more.

The Sub Phatty straight away sounds crystal clear with the warmth that you'd expect to hear from an analogue synth. With a few turns of the the oscillators and filter I'm quickly into screaming leads and some killer Mr Oizo-esque wobbly bass. It's great how much space there is between knobs so you're less likely to make a mistake if you have sausage fingers like me. It's also great that every knob controls a single practical parameter rather than some space saving synths where you have to worry about shift buttons to get where you want to.

Keep up to date with gig and release announcements by following Dick on Facebook www.facebook.com/DJMagikJohnson and on SoundCloud <https://soundcloud.com/magikj>

