

Make Noise Ø-CTRL £368

The excellent O-Coast gets a new counterpart in the form of this tabletop controller. Phil Wise patches in

CONTACT WHO: Make Noise **WEB:** makenoisemusic.com **KEY FEATURES** Fully analogue and patch programmable, no menus or modes. Sequence and Control the Pitch, Strength, and Time of your synthesizer voice, per step. Voltage control over Stop and Direction.





If you know Make Noise, the Ø-CTRL will feel familiar, as it's basically two sets of the Pressure Points plus Brains combo, brought up-to-date with a few very handy extra features.

An eight-step analogue sequencer designed to pair with their O-Coast tabletop synth, it can, of course, also be used to control a Eurorack system but it has no MIDI capabilities built in. Each of the eight steps has a touch-sensitive pad and three knobs that output CV, Pitch, Strength and Time. Each step also has an individual gate out and there are sequencer stop, reset and 'change direction' inputs.

As it's an analogue sequencer, the Pitch CV outputs continuous values, so you must either tune each step by ear or use an external quantiser. Once you've twiddled the pitch knobs and got a sequence running, get involved with the strength and time controls. Simply put, these control when, how long and how hard each note sounds. Sadly missing from a lot of the simpler Eurorack sequencers these allow you to breathe so much life and groove into your sequence.

The Time control works very differently depending on how you clock the sequencer. Under the internal clock, Time is an unquantised start point for each step, allowing interesting swing and rhythm to be created. The only problem is trying to

Think of it as a performance interface for your synth voice

sync that crazy rhythm to anything else in your track! If you use an external clock, the Speed knob becomes a gate or envelope length master control with the Time row controlling Gate/Envelope length per step. If you turn the Strength right down, it creates a rest on that step.

Note that the Clock Out may not be what you'd expect, giving a mix of the external and internal timings; better to view it as an extra rhythmic modulator signal.

Strength and Time produce CV at their respective outputs but also work together to control the dynamic gate and envelope. This envelope marries perfectly with the O-Coast's Dynamics input leaving that synth's Contour and Slope outputs free for other purposes.

Of course, the three main CV outputs can be patched to anything in your system if you want to play about. It can be useful for dialling in precise slice timings with the Morphogene. With a multi-voice module like Plaits, you can use a different voice per step.

Without running the sequencer you can also just play the Ø-CTRL like a keyboard; the pads are pretty

responsive though maybe a little close together if you have fat fingers.

As well as the three CV outs, there are 'touch' outputs that produce a CV and a gate. This touch control can also be detached from the main sequence control and used elsewhere.

This is not a sequencer you just press play on; think of it as a performance interface for your synth voice. With no screen, all control choices are made via patching and to this end the unit ships with some stack cables to get you going. **FM**

FM VERDICT

9.0

For performance and play, this is intuitive and fun – and with so many inputs, it practically begs to link to your wider system

THE PROS & CONS



Flexible, experimental and very playable

Fully patchable, no screen or menus

Lots of CV ins/outs



No MIDI control

No pitch quantisation

Needs a third-party power adaptor to work in a Eurorack case