

Befaco Pony VCO £205

Rob Redman finds this useful, compact VCO is more than just a one-trick-pony

CONTACT WHO: Befaco **WEB:** befaco.org **KEY FEATURES** I/O: Through Zero Frequency Modulation, Wavefolding (Timbre), Pulsewidth Modulation (PWM), SYNC, VCA, LFO

VCOs are the one category of module that everybody has, which begs the question: do we need more on the market? Well, Befaco seems to think so, with their Pony VCO joining their fairly extensive lineup. It's easy to see why too, as this unassuming little module has quite a lot on offer, especially for the diminutive 4hp size.

Pony is a solid module, as is to be expected from such a well established developer. The patch points, knobs and switches all feel responsive and have a satisfying engagement. Physically the only let down is the aesthetic – it's crisp and clean, which is a good thing, but lacks in excitement. That is a matter of taste

and the traditional red and black will please Befaco fans.

Pony is, at first glance, a standard-looking VCO. It features a seven octave range, with a manual frequency control. But spot the little switch beneath it? That allows Pony to run at audio or LFO rates, making this a sweet little modulation source too, not something you may expect at just 4hp. That alone makes this a contender for those shopping for a VCO but add to that the decent selection of waveshapes and things starting hotting up. There are sine, triangle, saw and square (with pulse width modulation) here, making this good for a comprehensive range of tonal escapades.

For the price, that appears to be a good deal in and of itself but Pony has one more trick and that is the wavefolding. This tiny analogue VCO has what it calls a timbre control. In square wave shape mode this acts as a control for the pulse width but in the other modes it is a true wavefolder, making this one of the most versatile voices out there, especially for this size and price point. Complex oscillators can be big devices, with equally hefty price tags but Befaco has managed to coax a lot of versatility out of a little space. The range of interesting and varied timbres that can be generated here really does cover a lot of harmonic territory and much fun can be had with a finger tip on that red slider.

That said, many modularists still prefer to use CV for this type of thing and Befaco has catered to those users too, with plenty of CV patching capability, from timbre control, FM, volts per octave and CV control over the onboard VCA, another feature rarely seen on modules this small. There is even a sync jack, so that you can get the Pony to play nicely with its stablemates.

All in all Pony is an impressive module that covers a lot of ground, can be controlled manually in an intuitive way (or via CV) and the fact that it can be run as an LFO, with the same waveshaping possibilities, adds to the flexibility. **FM**



THE PROS & CONS



Many options for the size

Onboard wavefolding

Runs at audio and LFO rates



Uninspiring front panel

FM VERDICT

8.5

A quite special module, packing flavours of complex oscillators and frequency modulation into even the most limited rack space