



GForce Software OB-X £59.99 (ex VAT) PC MAC

First they brought you Vintage Synth Trumps, now GForce add this bona fide classic to the fold – and **Roland Schmidt**, for one, has no OB-jections

> Sometimes you just want a really huge-sounding synth, and they don't come much bigger and phatter than an Oberheim Poly. However, the originals will likely require you to secure a second mortgage, should you want to go all-in on vintage, and that's before you suffer from likely component failure. With these points ringing in our ears, any reincarnation in software is going to be worth a look, especially if it has an endorsement from Oberheim.

Help me OB one

GForce Software has form in this field of recreation, with software versions of Mellotrons,

Minimoogs, and now the OB-X, which joins the previously reviewed OB-E. While the OB-E was all about the SEM-based Oberheim 8-voice, this latest addition is far more centred around Poly convention. OB-X aims to provide that huge Oberheim sound with a significant number of enhancements, beginning with a full 16-note voice limit; with two VCOs per voice, that'll give you 32 oscillators. These can be employed in either poly, legato/mono or unison mode. Should you opt for the latter, those 32 VCOs can ring true or in a state of detuned frenzy, thanks to the accompanying detune pot. Adding further to the detuning milieu, the Vintage pot

allows you to dial in how reliable you wish the tuning centre to be. It's analogue, but in a form that you can dial back.

Paths of glory

The layout of OB-X is very familiar; the two VCOs occupy the centre of the virtual panel, including saw, pulse and triangle waves, with pulse width control of the pulse and triangle waves. Cross modulation (X-Mod) and oscillator sync are also on-hand, making it easy to create those wonderful gnarly tones at source. This feeds the filter section which presents the 2-pole format, cited as the Oberheim trademark. Speaking to

A wonderful-sounding thing, it's warm, harsh, gnarly, abrasive, sympathetic, and every shade in between

OB purists, there is chatter about the exacting nature of the filter and whether or not it is as identical as it could be. GForce has made some sensible tweaks to the tracking and level controls, which are now controlled via a scalable pot, but you can visit the settings page and revert to switches, if preferred, although we're not sure why you'd necessarily want to do this. It's also fair to say that any comparison between a vintage machine, and an accurate plugin, is likely to highlight component degradation in the original, and for our money, the OB-X plugin has got that real sound and soul of an Oberheim.

Mods and more

GForce has included some other helpful features, especially in the area of modulation. Apart from the usual ADSR envelopes, fixed toward amplitude and filter, the XLFO and XADSR sections allow quick and easy routing, to multiple modulation destinations. Moreover, the procedure for application is beautifully guided; click a pot, and it immediately invites a modulation routing to that destination. Click another pot, to generate another batch of settings, and your previous settings will recall upon your return. Elegant and functionally sensible, and that's an understatement!

The Obligatory synth

It won't come as a shock to any existing GForce devotees, that the OB-X is a wonderful-sounding thing! It can sound warm, harsh, gnarly, abrasive, sympathetic, and every shade in between. Moreover, thanks to the additional features, OB-X goes beyond its simplistic subtractive roots, which you'll hear from the moment you begin to audition the onboard

preset content, or engage by getting creative with your own patching. There's versatility here, from a synth which rightly adopts a legendary status, and at an utter fraction of the price of an original classic. **cm**

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Moving beyond the basics, the Advanced tabs reveal more control and modulation options



GForce's crack team of programmers have supplied an inspirational set of onboard presets

Advanced control

You have to admire the way GForce has so beautifully reproduced the fascia of the original OB-X. The only problem is, DAWs occupy a space where we continually find ourselves wanting more, so with a sense of ingenuity, GForce has provided a couple of discrete 'Advanced' tabs, allowing access to more generous settings within the Control and Modulation sections. This means that you can now re-trigger the LFO multiple times and delay its modulation introduction, if

desired. LFO-based cross rhythms await, with a number of non-original modulation paths available. Within the Control section, you can also generate step-wise portamento.

Add these advanced features to the existing elaborative content, provided by the XLFO and XADSR, and the OB concept goes considerably further than originally intended. To polish things off, there are three sets of dedicated effects, adding Chorus, Delay and Reverb to the source signal.

Alternatively

UVI OB Legacy
\$149 (or Sonicpass subscription)
In a sampled homage to vintage Oberheims, UVI's stylish collection packs a production-ready punch

Arturia OP-Xa V
€149

This reimagining of the OB-Xa is not dissimilar to the OB-X, with weighty tones in an enticing package

Verdict

For Has character and vintage swagger
Beautifully elegant GUI
Easily accessible advanced features
Onboard arpeggiator and four programmable macros

Against It's based on a vintage classic, and might feel light in features

The OB-X is the next best thing to a 'real' OB, with a GUI to match and a sound which is almighty, dominating and impressive