
Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by SuperCollider - 2013/08/28 01:57

Hi, just a quick thing I wanted peoples opinions on, I'm getting a Machinedrum soon and I'm also looking at getting a desktop synth to either be sequenced by the machinedrum or in the case of something like a monomachine or analog 4 sequence itself synced to the MD.

What are some key things that each of the previously mentioned synths bring to the table that the others wont. Is the difference in price between the blofeld and the MD/A4 worth it?

Any help is appreciated,

Conor

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by MK7 - 2013/08/28 02:17

You know how different those 3 are?

All 3 work well with the MD, MnM/A4 obviously, B can also be easily sequenced by the MD. In fact, the MD's limited/special MIDI sequencer offers some nice unconventional possibilities. I prefer MD+A4 though, because the A4's strong sound is more robust to bad sonic environments, crowded rooms, not so good sound systems. The B has a very brilliant sound, I like very much, but doesn't cut through properly when sound conditions are not so good. MnM offers nice raw mids plus a lot more, e.g. all those delays! Decide by sound. Btw, I had a lot of fun using the B as external input for the Minitaur. As a side note, I can recommend the MT a lot, layered with any of the 3 synths (in my case, A4)! The MT sounds great on iPod, small PA, large PA, full rooms, empty rooms, and transports a huge amount of energy (makes people move).

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by SuperCollider - 2013/08/28 02:36

Thanks for the reply, what are you referring to when you say MT?

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by steevyhead - 2013/08/28 02:38

Hes talking about the Moog minitaur

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by SuperCollider - 2013/08/28 02:54

Ah yes, thanks. Anyone else got any input? I'm looking for whatever has the biggest, nicest range of sounds. Am I right in saying that I could only have one sound coming from the blofeld?

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by Goseba - 2013/08/28 03:39

Blofeld is multitimbral, so in theory (depending on number of voices used) you could have 16 sounds.

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by biologik - 2013/08/28 03:46

I just went through this exact problem myself. I played with all 3 a lot. The first to drop was the Blofeld (I already owned a virus and I found the virus to be superior than the blofeld). After that it was between the A4 and the Monomachine. In the end I went with the Monomachine.

I'm REALLY happy I did. It's NOT an easy synth to learn, but it is highly rewarding. I love to program synths and this thing is just great! My advice: play with them all as much as you can.

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by steevyhead - 2013/08/28 03:49

i have a monomachine, and an analog four. If I had to pick one i would pick the monomachine, but the analog four is amazing. They compliment each other PERFECTLY. the monomachine can sound soft and warm, but also really cold and clinical sounding. The analog four can sound brutal, or very clean. The choice is yours. I have no blofeld experience, but the mono can probably do similar things.

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by jimmyscalp - 2013/08/28 03:58

Hi, I use all three together, A4 sync with the MD and the MD piloting my Blofeld, Prophet 12 or other hardware synths I have here. I am also looking to complete my Elektron collection with the Mono machine. All this to say, that they all have their own typical sound ;-)

The Blofeld is quite nice, and cheap in regard with sonic possibilities. It has also a very rich arpeggiator. But if you sequence it from the MD in multimode you will probably be limited to 5-7 sounds not more (because the more complex the sounds, the more you will be limited by to the amount of patches you can play together, so 16 multitimbrality is limited to very simple patches only), and BTW you need your other tracks for beats and drums. Note also that some of the BL encoders may be buggy from time to time (they probably fixed this in the recent production, but I doubt). Surely a nice addition to the MD. I used it mainly for FX and Pads chords, less nowadays because I have other gears.

The A4 has a particular sound I love, and could not live without it. Everywhere I travel, I take it with me. One hour in a hotel room with this machine is just a perfect moment to create new sounds, patterns and ideas.

My advice : start with MD-UW & A4. Then expend as you like, maybe with the Blofeld desktop because it is not expensive at all. Or why not the upcoming Pulse 2 (if it goes gold one day).

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by rhizome - 2013/08/28 04:03

yes 16 simultaneous patches on the blofeld certainly only exists in the theoretical domain... in reality you'll probably start having trouble with any more than a few if you use wavetables, comb filters, etc. and the implementation is obviously nowhere near as seamless as the elektrons.

in general you should also think about the interface. blofeld's is not bad for a small, very cheap synth, but there's still quite a bit of menu diving to do, with limited visual feedback. e.g., you can't figure out where that annoying sound is coming from and then 20 mins later you find out you accidentally set mod destination 15 to pitch or something like that (ok maybe that's just my problem...). also keep in mind that blofeld is a MIDI dead end -- only has an input port, no out or thru. same goes for audio, whereas you could process the MD thru the MM/A4 filters+fx.

all that said, the blo is a very deep synth, and an absolute steal at the going ebay/forum prices. so it's a good option if money is an issue, but the interface on the elektrons is in another league.

Re:Walford Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by SuperCollider - 2013/08/28 05:17

Thanks for all the replies guys. Think it'll just come down to my budget and what I can afford. Any other aspects I should consider?

Re:Walford Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by poonti - 2013/08/28 05:42

The other aspect is regarding the box that is doing the midi sequencing: if you go with MD + Blofeld, you will need to deal with the MD's kind of sequencing, which is quite awkward for melodic/note based synth control.

For this reason, I would go with MD + MnM or MD + A4; nothing wrong with the Blofeld per se, but trying to sequence it from the MD would eventually become a P.I.T.A.

some old ramblings on this: http://elektron-users.com/index.php?option=com_fireboard&Itemid=28&func=view&id=116614&catid=9

Re:Walford Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by guga - 2013/08/28 09:35

the blofeld is a good synth but unfortunately (unless things have changed with the black/newest models...) i've been having problems since i first got it.

the firmware freaks out once in a while, meaning you have to restart it in the middle of whatever you are doing. often you get sounds which contain artifacts generated by the effects used...sometimes it's good, others not so much...you may want to have a clean delay without pops and crackles now and then :) it has some sampling capabilities (you need to get a license to activate it though) but no MIDI OUT

overall...the blo is a nice little synth with a lot of power, but if i had to choose, i would probably get myself an XT or a Q or definitively go for an 'all elektron' setup

Re:Walford Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by duplex - 2013/08/28 10:47

Starting from the MD, I'd recommend your next purchase be either the MNM or A4 over the Waldorf. Here's why:

1. For every part you use on the Blo, you'll lose a track on the MD.
2. As Poonti said, sequencing melodies on the MD is quite a pain since notes are displayed as numbers rather than notes. (There are some other limitations too, but I think they apply to sequencing from the MNM too.)
3. I don't have a Blo, but I do have a Waldorf microQ, which is almost the same unit. It has some great features and you can make some cool sounds with it, but the matrix-style interface really sucks for programming sounds from scratch. You'll probably want to use a computer-based software editor for it. For this reason, my microQ almost never gets switched on.

As for MNM or A4 . . . it's a tough choice. The MNM is probably more versatile in the range of sounds you can get out of it. If I were just using the MD plus one of these two, I'd probably go for the MNM.

On the other hand, the A4 is perhaps more immediately fun (and even satisfying) than the MNM, which really takes a lot of time to master. The A4 has much better effects and filters, and it has performance macros, which are really great (especially if you're performing live).

Your choice might also depend a bit on what you want to buy after that â€” the MNM does external MIDI sequencing, while the A4 can do external CV/gate sequencing.

Re:Walford Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by RyanA4 - 2013/08/28 13:02

My advice: get an OT before an MnM or an A4 (depending on the type of music you make/want to make I guess).

I came to the OT last and it's the one Elektron box I couldn't ever see myself parting with. It really becomes the epicenter of your music life- Sure it isn't analog nor is it a mega midi sequencer for melodies, but it finds the middle ground between the digital bright or coldness of the MnM and the Bouncy or Dark edges of the A4. Have a total blast with sampling and resampling the MD on the OT and watching the glitchiness of the MD reach new heights with scenes on the OT. Then go download every drum machine, synth and random crap you've ever heard make a sound, throw it on a 64 GB 600x CF card and you're pretty much set for life...

Until you, like all gear heads eventually do, decide you need something else to make your set-up complete....

Next, grab a cheap Blofeld and sequence it with the OT- Pretty much have all the sonic territory you can cover with an MnM, (very well implemented) midi sequencing (with 3 note chords now), and, eventually, the ability to take a little idea and turn it into the beginnings of an actual song in less than an hour. Then I'd get an A4 to fill in the sonic territory blanks left by a 24 bit sampler, a 12 bit drum machine, and a digital polysynth- at that point you'll find you'll only really use 1-2 tracks on the A4 per song, but they'll be the glue that holds it together.

Then, you probably won't need an MnM until you have too many other vintage synths and not enough time or ability to sit and write melodies the traditional way (like me!). The MnM sounds very nice and specific and it's an incredible synth- but it's true value lies in it being like a MIDI sketchpad for other instruments. Truly nothing else quite like it in that respect, but you can sequence a blofeld or similarly priced synth on the OT and get a lot of what you'd want from the MnM (again, depending on the music you make- if you like big ambient chords and pads and evolving buildups, then go with the MnM. If you want to get off the computer for good, get an OT and build around it. It's the first thing I grab when I have an idea, and the last power switch to go off at night.

Re:Walford Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by Goseba - 2013/08/28 16:21

I have picked up an A4, MnM and MD in the last couple of months. I got the MnM first and it just clicked. I then sold a lot of other gear to pick up the other two.

I wish I had an OT too but that would mean selling off my last couple of keyboards and bits which I would rather not do,

I have been thinking of a Blofeld again (sold mine 8 or 9 months ago) but recently I have been getting the hardware bug back. Also considering an older Virus.

I think the Blofeld would fit nicely with the others but I fancy something different.

Or I may just go for it and save for an OT. (Anyone selling one? I could go to Â£600).

The most frustrating part of this - since I have had my Elektrons, I have only had an hour or so to play with them!! I know this will change but the frustration is incredible.

Re:Walford Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by SuperCollider - 2013/08/28 21:36

Thanks for the responses guys, super insightful, got lots to think about now.

:D

Conor

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by Laughing Animal - 2013/08/28 21:38

Blofeld sounds nice, but the fiddly encoders doesn't make the menu diving any better (though the interface is very good for what it is), and i did not like programming melodies with the MD via a pitch knob. Monomachine is more limited (kind of- the effects chains you can make with neighbor tracks have a lot of potential) but I enjoy programming it much more. I have four analog synths but hardly use them anymore because I feel they distract me from the Mono, which the more I use the more I love. Most gear I have acquired has a honeymoon period within the first month. I've had the Mono for about a year now and it's just really starting to open up to me. I get excited about using it in the same way I get excited about using a new piece of equipment. The midi tracks would most likely be useful in the future if you add more gear, and you can also do some funky stuff using the midi tracks on the MD. Aside from Autechre and Animal Collective, forum member Phading/Cutoph's music is what really sold me on the Mono, I'd recommend cheking it out if you cant try a Mono in person.

Never used an A4, I'm sure it's awesome though.

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by SuperCollider - 2013/08/28 22:59

Thanks, I'll definitely check that out!

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by Octacrak - 2013/08/29 00:06

I'm currently using a OT + Blo combo.

I can say in no uncertain terms that this is a limitless and money efficient combo that shouldn't be overlooked.

Yes, the matrix interface is kinda annoying, but you can learn to work with it and even sequence different things from the blofeld knobs itself. It works super well and super easy and I have personally not have a problem with the blofeld. I got mine new in April if that makes a difference.

OT + Blofeld is a super sick combo OP, don't discount it simply because the Blofeld doesn't have it's own sequencer. The OT sequencer is sick.

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by SuperCollider - 2013/08/29 00:50

Cool thanks. My only worry with the octatrack is that its only a sampler and im looking with more synthesis and sound creation.

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by RyanA4 - 2013/08/29 04:54

"Only" a sampler? First of all, samplers are synths with unlimited sound palates, especially the OT. But watch this for traditional synthesis:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zW1laQnOx0M>

Type into youtube "Octatrack only" and see what pops up:

Made on an Octatrack ONLY: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8S81iDxUio>

Type "Monomachine Only" or "Analog 4 only" and see what comes up- except for one Mr. Dataline (guy's a master) video with the A4, not much.

Second, watch this guy (he's somewhere around here on these forums) who's mastered the art of the the OT+Blofeld midi control.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jh1q0R4zI0>

I don't except to change your mind, but the term "just a sampler" is kinda a noobie thing to say when it comes to music, sorry to say. The EMU SP-1200 and Emulator I, II and III were "just a samplers". Same with the Ensoniq ASR-10 and the Mirage. The AKAI S- series etc, etc, etc. Half the sounds of 808s and 909s are samples run through filters. As are MOST of the sounds of all the TR-X series drum machines before them. The Linndrum was all samples. Ask people how they feel about the "super drum synth" the Tempest and then ask them if they'd rather have an Linndrum or an SP-1200.....

Like I said, I waited to get the OT because people around here made it seem like some untamable beast- it isn't at all- it's easy to jump in and start- just takes a long time time master. But if you're really between the A4 or the MnM get an A4. The A4 probably is headed for a few significant firmware updates within the next few years (like all other Elektron gear before it), and the MnM is best if used within a larger live setup or studio- because of it's midi sequencer.

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by SuperCollider - 2013/08/29 05:25

Sorry, when I said "just a sampler" I didn't mean it in a bad way, I understand its an incredibly powerful tool, I just meant that in order for it to reach its full potential you have to put samples on there and I dont really want to deal with that. Plus, I'm set on getting a MD UW so any minor sampling I see myself doing could be handled by that.

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by Octacrak - 2013/08/29 05:34

If money is no object A4 is pretty sick. The blofeld is a nice synth but you're gonna want the OT to sequence it because the MD sequencer is confusing and a tad limited. A4 with its own sequencer might give you what you want, for \$600 more dollars of course

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by SuperCollider - 2013/08/29 05:53

Whats the 600 dollars for? Cant the A4 sequence itself?

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Re:Walforf Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by RyanA4 - 2013/08/29 06:50

I say spending \$1,500 on a OT and a Blofeld is money better spent than 1,200 an A4 alone if all you have otherwise is

an MD. I don't own a Blofeld (I have 4 other synths besides the A4, though I'd take a Blofeld to play with and try out if it was cheap enough-seen them sell for \$300 on eBay and Craigs List).

A4 is a great 4 track monosynth with an Elektron sequencer. But it's good at very specific things and like all analog monos- you know one when you hear one.

But a polysynth/sampler with 8 voices and a built in sequencer with the ability to get about 10 more voices out of another polysynth gives you way more "sound shaping" capabilities than either 4 tracks of simultaneous mono out of an A4 or 6 tracks of mono that can become a poly by subtracting tracks. It's pretty simple math.

I guess the real question is- do you just want to jump in and start making music or do you want to sit down and program patches all day for a few months, then feel like you're making music? Because you say you "don't want to deal with" samples, but programming synth patches is MUCH more time consuming (albiet, rewarding- sometimes) unless you plan on using presets.

I don't think you really understand sampling or the capabilities of the OT. It isn't just sitting there with a mic or a vinyl playing and recording stuff, nor is it just downloading loops, nor is it remixing songs, nor is it having 24-bit recordings of the sounds made by every synth and drum machine ever created at your finger tips- it's all of that x 8 plus midi sequencing plus scenes (what you can do with that crossfader is probably the thing I understood the least for the longest time and it's simply incredible).

To me, the OT is an essential piece of gear if your goal is to get off the computer. It's really the first true "Hardware DAW".

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Re:Walford Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by marcel videla - 2013/08/29 07:29

RyanA4 wrote:

To me, the OT is an essential piece of gear if your goal is to get off the computer. It's really the first true "Hardware DAW".

I thought the KORG M1 was supposed to be the first digital workstation, but I agree with you...
It has become my sampling, mutitrack, synthesizing, drummachine midi sequencing workstation... yeah, tell me what it can't do?

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Re:Walford Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by SuperCollider - 2013/08/29 07:55

Wow, I love your enthusiasm for the OT, I gotta rethink my hypothetical setup! :D

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Re:Walford Blofeld, Monomachine or Analog 4?

Posted by Octacrak - 2013/08/29 09:30

The a4 is \$600 more than a used Blofeld.

Either way the poster above me has it right. OT is the first hardware DAW in the style of Ableton Live which is itself a pretty awesome concept.

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