

GEAR Stompbox Fever



MORE ONLINE

Watch the Studio Stompbox Strategies: Mixing with the MIDI MuRF video at guitarplayer.com.

guitarplayer.com

MOOGERFOOGER
MF-105M MIDI MURF

KUDOS Packs the best of the MuRF and Bass MuRF into a single pedal and adds MIDI.
CONCERNS None.
CONTACT Moog Music, (828) 251-0090; moogmusic.com.



Moog's free Pattern Editor/Controller software allows you to edit and create presets.

Moogerfooger MF-105M MIDI MuRF

TESTED BY BARRY CLEVELAND

AS A CHRONIC SUFFERER FROM COMPULSIVE MuRF Obsessive Disorder—the original Moogerfooger sees regular use in my live rig and gets used on just about everything in my studio—I was excited to hear about the new MIDI MuRF (\$479 retail/\$459 street). Not only does it combine the original MuRF and the Bass MuRF into a single pedal, it adds enough MIDI control to make even confirmed MIDIots giddy. The MIDI MuRF syncs to any MIDI clock source; all of the knobs, sliders, and switches respond to MIDI commands (e.g., you can “play” the Envelope control using a mod wheel via Continuous Controller commands or filters using Note On messages); and by using Moog’s free software editor you can create your own animation patterns.

But let’s back up. For those not familiar with the original MuRF, the Multi-Resonant Filter pedal features an array of eight resonant filters with individual level sliders, coupled with an “animation” section that modulates the filter levels both rhythmically and timbrally



via 22 pre-programmed animation patterns. An Envelope control determines how quickly the filters engage and disengage, Rate adjusts the animation speed, and Mix adjusts the balance of processed and dry sounds. All of this yields effects ranging from subtle EQ and phase shifts to synth-like stepped-filter sequencing to hyper-distorted reverse-envelope mayhem. And, as with all Moogerfooger pedals, all of the key parameters can be controlled using control voltages or optional expression pedals and footswitches.

The MIDI MuRF has two modes, corresponding to the two previous MuRF pedals: In Bass mode the first filter is a low-pass type fixed at 110Hz, followed by seven resonant filters

covering a range of 160Hz to 1.8kHz. In Mid mode, the eight resonant filters cover a range of 200Hz to 3.4kHz. The two filter arrays sound quite different, and which works best in a particular application is a matter of taste. The “fixed” center frequencies may also be modulated slightly for phaser- and flanger-like effects, and swept using an expression pedal or CV.

The original MuRF pedals had two banks of 11 animation patterns for a total of 22 each, whereas the MIDI MuRF’s Bass and Mid modes have one bank each. While definitely a limitation, this small step back fortunately comes with a *giant* step forward: Moog’s free editing software not only lets you access additional preset animation patterns, it allows you to program your own, and then transfer them to the pedal.

As mentioned, MIDI implementation is extensive, but the manual provides clear and detailed instructions on how to control *all* of the MIDI MuRF’s functions using CC or Note On messages, and how to sync its pattern clock to MIDI Clock messages, including Start, Continue, and Stop. You can even

use Note On messages to trigger and affect individual filter animation steps for modular synth-like sounds. (Speaking of which, Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist John Frusciante uses MuRFs live to emulate the sounds that he gets with modular synths in his studio.)

I tested some obvious MIDI functions, such as using the Mod wheel on a MIDI keyboard to manipulate the Envelope control (very cool!), and the pedals and switches on a MIDI foot controller to alter other settings, all of which worked flawlessly. Getting the MIDI MuRF’s animation patterns to lock to my sequencer (Digital Performer 6) was what really excited me, though, and the results were spectacular. For example, I was able to create cascading patterns with rhythm guitar and percussion while both tracking and mixing, and have them lock so tightly that they sounded great even when used without the source sound. Another cool application is to play guitar into the MIDI MuRF and then record the resulting rhythmic pattern into a digital looper. By syncing the MIDI MuRF to my Looperlative LP1, I could get

multiple rhythmic overdubs and other loops to lock together perfectly.

Finally, the software Pattern Editor/Controller expands the MIDI MuRF’s capabilities exponentially. The Panel interface mirrors the controls on the pedal, and the Pattern Editor interface lets you edit existing patterns or create new ones by clicking on buttons representing the eight filters within a grid of 8, 16, 32, or 64 steps (see screen shot). And, as each filter is independent, you can program varying pattern lengths to create polyrhythmic patterns that crisscross in various ways. You can also “Flip” and “Invert” the patterns, and access advanced controls not found on the pedal.

If all of this depth sounds daunting, fear not. Tweaking the MIDI MuRF’s sliders and knobs produces very noticeable sonic changes, making it actually quite intuitive to use once you get the hang of it—and the step-by-step instructions in the manual make learning easy. Simply put, the MIDI MuRF is one of the most innovative and musical-sounding effects devices ever created, which is why it receives an Editors’ Pick Award. 