

MOOG Slim Phatty



Words: D.P. Wilson

If you possess even the remotest interest in synthesizers the name Moog will be very familiar. The late Robert Moog (pronounced to rhyme with 'Vogue') quite simply is the father of the synthesizer and his analogue creations like the Mini-Moog have now gone into music folklore. The Slim Phatty seeks to bring some of that classic analogue Moog magic in a more affordable package; a kind of Moog for the masses if you will?

Phat's the way we like it!

The obvious question is how in this day and age a monophonic analogue hardware synthesizer can compete with the plethora of modelled digital plug-ins that offer seemingly unlimited possibilities along with the promise of that all elusive analogue sound. Many digital plug-ins actually seek to directly emulate classic Moog sounds, and I must admit that in

recent years my studio has relied solely on these digital plug-ins, although funnily enough, my ageing Moog Prodigy synth was the last to go before the digital revolution completely took over!

The Slim Phatty is a monophonic analogue expander based around the classic Moog style oscillators and filters. Rather than opting for the usual one knob/switch per role, Moog have settled on the presumably less expensive method of providing one knob per section (Oscillator, Filter, Modulation and Envelope Generator). Switches select the function that each particular knob will be doing at any given time. At this point I must add that the general level of construction feels largely bullet proof; the knobs themselves feel of very high quality and the rubberised, illuminated buttons are worthy of special mention as they give the Slim Phatty a suitable old school science fiction vibe as well as feeling nicely tactile.

Phat Tuner

As an expander with no keys the Slim Phatty needs to be controlled from an external source so in a welcome nod to the modern world this Moog comes equipped with a full compliment of MIDI sockets as well as a USB socket to allow unimpeded communication with the outside world.

Exploring the ample selection of presets, the first thing I noticed was how easily the Slim Phatty's evocative sounds recall fond memories of the

old Moogs I'd previously owned and loved. Compared to my current collection of digital 'soft' synths the Slim Phatty's sounds are just that little bit more involving.

Due to the nature of analogue electronics, there will always be variables that simply do not exist in the digital world; this normally manifests itself as tuning instabilities! Old analogue Synths could drift quite considerably and whilst the Slim Phatty generally performed well it still wavered a bit. Luckily, the Automatic Fine Tune setting helped greatly but a call to Moog led them to advise me that the electronics in the Slim Phatty do need time to warm up! They were right, and after about 40 minutes the Slim Phatty was completely in tune and remained stable for the duration of the session.

With the tuning now stabilized, it was now time to put the Moog through its programming paces. I was initially a little worried that the lack of knobs may deter me from experimenting, (remember old Synths and even digital plug-ins have loads of separate controls) but if anything I actually preferred it. Compared to dragging a mouse around a computer screen, programming the Slim Phatty feels like an absolute joy!

Yes, there are a few extra control parameters buried away in a digital menu but they are sensibly chosen and often just need going into once, for example; selecting triggering options or to switch on the classic Sample & Hold generator.

Synth legends Moog give you the chance to inject some meaty old school analogue sounds into your music via the Slim Phatty expander synth.

Despite its apparent dearth of features compared to the wealth of soft Synths, the Slim Phatty actually feels more flexible by virtue of its ease of use and the way it encourages you to experiment. In addition to this, the sounds on offer just seem that much more involving and fun. As an experiment I set the Slim Phatty up next to some soft Synths that claim to emulate directly the sound of Moogs. Now, it must be said that I have always been happy with these digital recreations, so I was more than a little surprised when the Slim Phatty always just seemed to sound better. Somehow, everything just sounded more real or dare I say 'organic'. **PM**

SHOULD I BUY ONE?

If you use classic synthesis of any kind, I really can't recommend the Moog Slim Phatty highly enough. Quite simply, it's a ton of fun and for roughly the equivalent of three or four high quality plug-ins you can now have a genuine hardware Moog! When I first took delivery of the Slim Phatty I was expecting a nostalgic and fun trip down memory lane but believe me there is a difference. When it comes to giving the Slim Phatty back Moog may just have to prize it from my cold dead hands!

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SRP £709.00

All prices include VAT

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