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Test: Moonwalker

While many a module comes across as quite self-explanatory, the Moonwalker is a bigger deal. According to Schneidersladen, it is „an Attack/Decay generator that can act as a VCO, LFO or AD envelope“, which gets to the heart of the matter from a purely technical point of view. But what does that mean musically? Who needs it and what is it best used for? **by Marco Scherer**

Features

Multifunctional Eurorack module

Envelope with attack & decay

LFO or VCO with uncommon waveforms

Phase offset modulatable

Two waveform outputs

„Not Decay“ Output

First of all: The Moonwalker is not a no-brainer that you can understand in a few minutes; therefore, we have structured this test in two parts. The first section explains the module and its technology and is, therefore, intended for die-hard nerds. If you'd rather skip that and, instead, want to know what's in or coming out musically, jump straight to the „From Reese Riffs to Soundtrack Textures“ section.

The technique of Moonwalker

The basis of the Moonwalker is the Attack and Decay controls, because these determine the waveform with which all function modes are ultimately operated. Attack controls the slope and Decay the fall; so far it's pretty logical. Since both parameters are linear, no soft sine waveforms are possible, only triangle and sawtooth. However, the Attack and the Decay can both be modulated, as well as the Phase Offset (starting point of the waveform), which can then also create unusual and wacky waveforms.

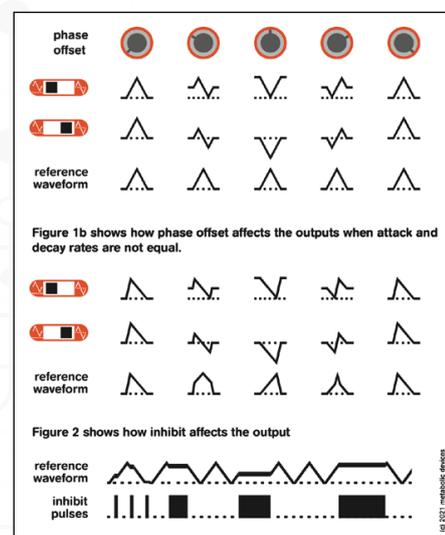
In addition to the output of this main waveform, the module also provides a reference waveform that „unipolar mirrors“ the main waveform and, therefore, generates additional waveforms outside what's typical. In addition, a „Not Decay“ output provides a pulse signal for the period in which neither attack nor decay are active. Whew! You have to digest this information first, but the manual offers a practical graphic to help you understand it.

Three operating modes

As mentioned in the introduction, this module can function as an envelope. For this purpose, the waveform is simply played back via one-shot. If you activate the loop, the waveform is repeated permanently and can work as an LFO or VCO by means of a three-step tempo. In principle, this is the same as for other modules. But the biggest feature is added here: the Phase Offset. With this, the



The Moonwalker looks simple, but under the hood are several practical features that must be earned.



Was soll denn eine Referenz-Waveform sein? Und ein „Not Decay“-Out? Die Anleitung gibt bildhaft Aufschluss.

sophisticated technology if the output is not right? We have summarized the most important features and their effects further down the page, as simply and understandably as possible.

From reese riffs to soundtrack textures

The Moonwalker gets really exciting when you not only use the main waveform to control parameters, but combine it with the reference waveform or the „Not Decay“ out. In VCO Mode, for example, incredibly wide lead sounds can be created by controlling the main and reference waveforms to the left and right. Optionally, turn the Phase Offset or change the basic waveform by modulating Attack and Decay and deep, wobbling Reese Riffs come out of the box, which, in places, remind us of nasty Neuro Basses and are more aggressive than Hulk in puberty. Alternatively, you can use the same configuration in slow LFO

Facts

Manufacturer: Metabolic Devices

Web: www.metabolicdevices.com

Ref: Specialty

Price: 318 Euro

- ▲ Flexibility
- ▲ Unusual LFOs
- ▲ Stubborn envelopes
- ▲ Complicated
- ▼ VCO rather limited
- ▼ Few labels

Sound ■■■■■□□

Flexibility: ■■■■■□□

Price/Perf: ■■■■■□□

Total: ■■■■■□□

Alternatives

None



VERDICT

The module is clearly laid out, but there are no labels for the inputs and outputs, so the manual should always be available in the beginning. It's also useful for following the often complicated processes. It is almost impossible to name a specific field of application for the Moonwalker; the possibilities are as endless as they are complex. The fact is: the Moonwalker is there for experimentation. If you want a quick and targeted result, you'll reach your goal faster with more specialized modules. However, those who like to explore new territory and want to be surprised by more than just one function will have loads of fun with the Moonwalker.

However, there is one downside: while the envelope and LFO offer many options and deliver unusual results, the VCO feels rather limited. On the other hand, the price turns out to be rather low for the overall variety offered. ❖❖

mode to create endlessly long and ever-changing textures and spherical sounds that can soundtrack a Chillout floor on autopilot all night long.

But Moonwalker also offers a good basis for rhythmic experiments, especially with combinations of „Not Decay“ out and retrigger options of the gate input. In this configuration, for example, the module can briefly open the filter of the bass sound as an envelope and then trigger another sound via „Not Decay“; such as a second bass, a pad or a hi-hat.

More LFO than VCO

On the downside of the VCO mode (that is, looped waveform on high speed) is the fact that the pitch is affected by each of the knobs and, otherwise, there are no options for changing the sound. Although there are a lot of different sounds, if you want to play melodies, you have to correct the pitch every time you change the sound.

As an LFO, on the other hand, super fast happy accidents can be created like one could only wish for. If, for example, the Phase Offset is

modulated by an external LFO and, at the same time, the „Not Decay“ output is sent to the CV input of attack, very entertaining patterns are created when the Moonwalker controls the pitch of another VCO.

And depending on the LFO tempo and modulation intensity, this pattern changes at the same time. To get the best out of the module, you have to tinker, and it offers plenty of options and connections for that.



More info

From phase offset to „Not Decay“: This makes Moonwalker different



You can: Independently control the rise and fall times of the LFO waveform. By hand or CV.

What is it good for? Design unique waveforms away from the standard „up and down“ of ordinary LFOs. Modulate the rise and fall of the waveform in real time with any CV source for unpredictable results.

You can: Change the start and end points of the waveform in real-time with Phase Offset.

What is it good for? Seamlessly invert an envelope, without changing its effect on Filter-Cutoff, Gain or any other Parameter. Shift the timing of LFO waveforms rhythmically for added groove.

You can: Use Moonwalker as an oscillator, LFO or envelope.

What's the point? You only need one module for multiple tasks and you can combine these modes or switch between them at any time, which opens up a wealth of sound design possibilities.

You can: Tap a regular waveform, a phase-shifted copy and a mirrored / negative pulse signal simultaneously.

What is it good for? Duck a sound source with the negative pulse signal while modulating the main sound. Use the regular and phase-shifted waveforms for complex modulations that go far beyond general LFOs and envelopes. Increase the filter resonance while decreasing the cutoff frequency. And so on...

TIP

The Moonwalker also offers a „Not Decay“ output. This sends a voltage while the module is in the attack phase or inactive. The output is, therefore, perfectly suited for further exciting modulations, for example, when you use it to modulate the delay time or the wet parameter of the delay. Depending on the settings, this can result in a kind of FX ducking. Definitely try it out, this parameter is unique!

