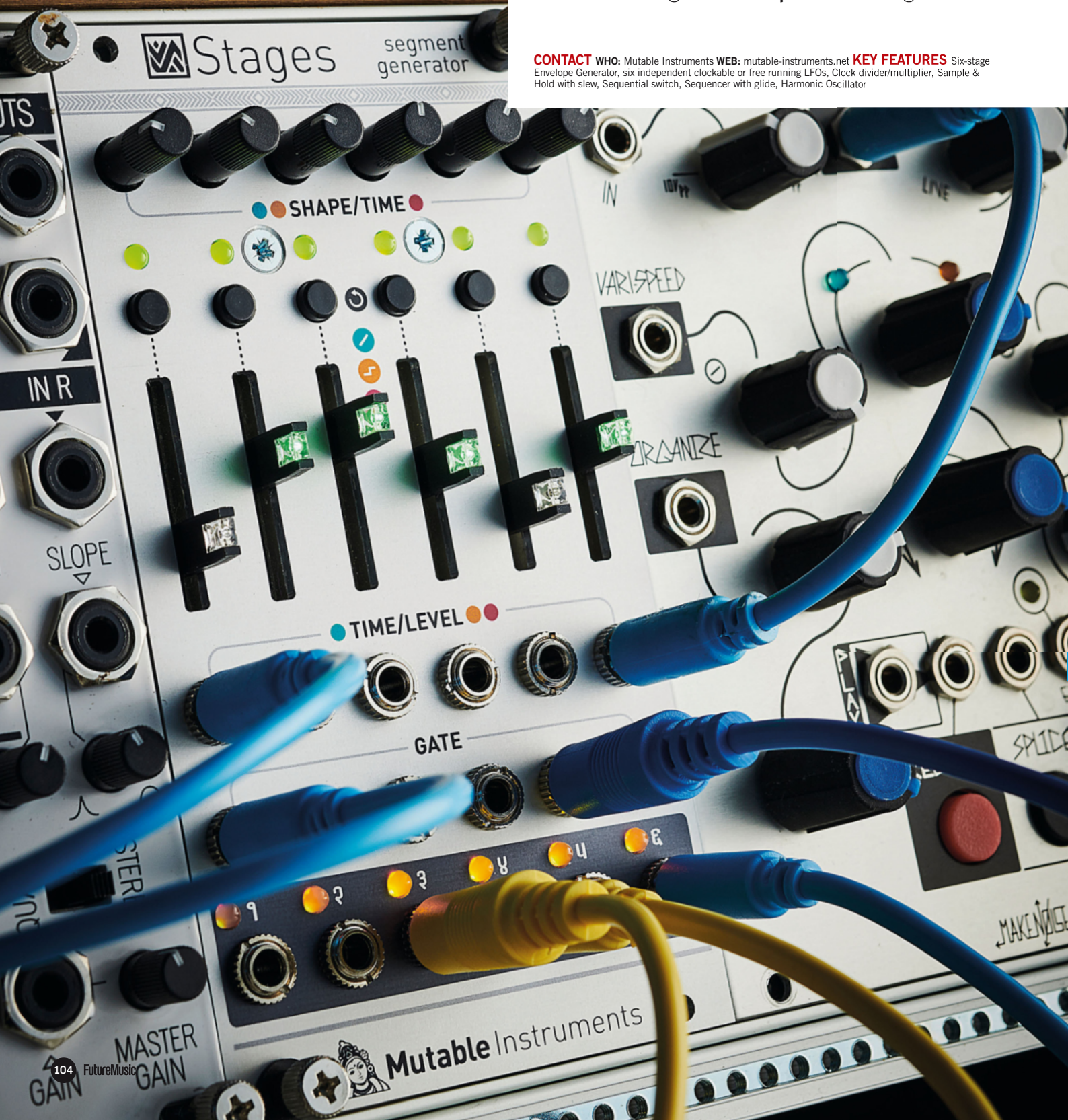


# Mutable Stages

£255

Billed as a Swiss Army Knife-style 'modulation construction set', Mutable's latest offering has **Philip Wise** intrigued...

**CONTACT WHO:** Mutable Instruments **WEB:** mutable-instruments.net **KEY FEATURES** Six-stage Envelope Generator, six independent clockable or free running LFOs, Clock divider/multiplier, Sample & Hold with slew, Sequential switch, Sequencer with glide, Harmonic Oscillator





The latest in Mutable Instruments' new line-up, Stages is a less flashy module than the preceding Plaits and Marbles. At first glance, it's simply an envelope generator; a replacement for the discontinued Peaks offering far greater flexibility. Pretty much any type of envelope is achievable and the six inputs let you alter the Time/Level of each step via CV. The attack/decay curves can also be shaped from logarithmic through linear to exponential, giving great control over the expressiveness of your sound.

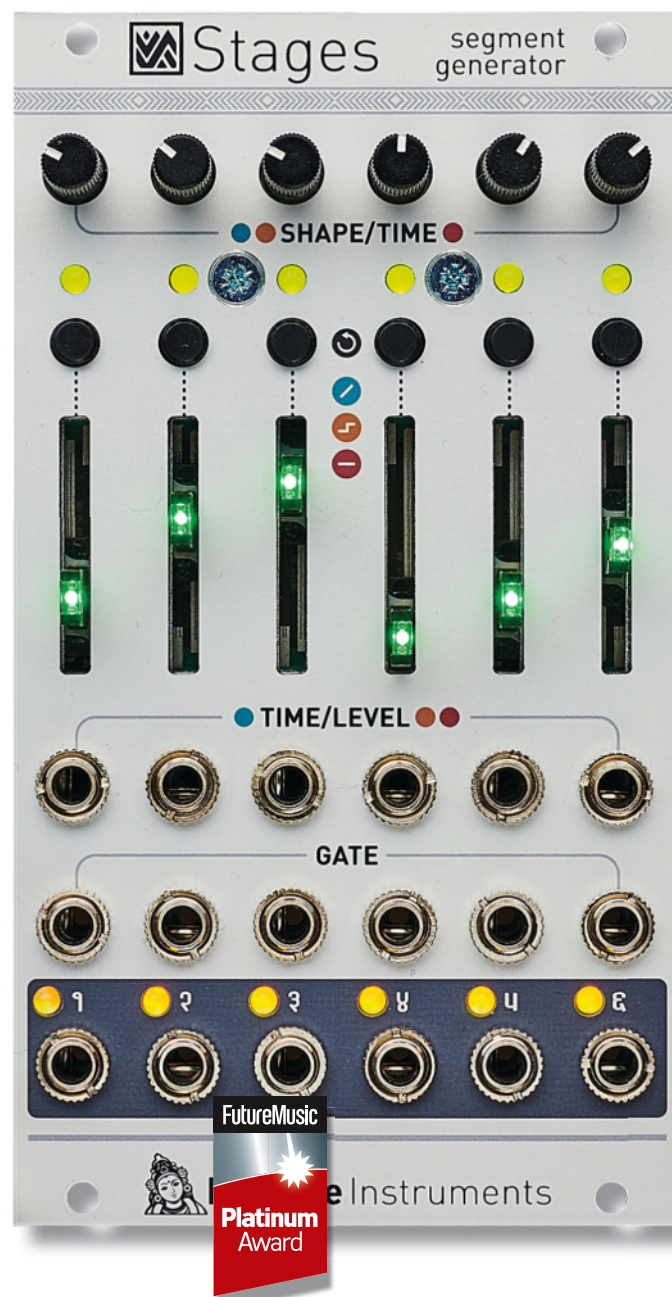
However there is much more on offer here than just an envelope. Like Maths or the Serge DUSG that inspired it, this is a Swiss Army knife module offering a host of different utilities depending on how you patch it. Stages breaks processes down into segments and lets you assemble those segments to achieve a huge variety of utility operations.

Each step can be set as either a Ramp, a Step that glides to a target voltage or a Hold that stays at the same voltage for an adjustable duration of time.

In its most basic mode, Stages offers six separate decay envelopes, but switch to looping mode and you now have six independent LFOs with a morph-able wave shape, that can be free running or synced to a clock pulse. If you patch in your master clock and use a Pulse wave output you have a clock divider/multiplier. Patch in an oscillator instead of a clock and you can add sub or extra harmonics to your vanilla synth sound. Loop a number of steps together and you have a sequencer, patch in some CV and the sequencer becomes a sequential switch. Patch CV and a gate to a single Hold section and you have a Sample & Hold. The list of possible functions is too broad to cover here but suffice to say, you will find a use for Stages in every patch.

The beauty of the design is that you don't have to choose just envelope mode or LFO mode; you can run several different functions at once. A gate connection marks the beginning of each new group so that the six segments can be divided into smaller groups as needed.

If six segments are not enough for your needs, up to six Stages can



be chained together. The chain connections on the back also give you access to the Easter Egg mode. Connecting a single Stages to itself turns the module into a Harmonic Oscillator! It offers six different wave-forms, a single mixed output and five individual outputs for the five harmonics which can then be set to sub or overtones of the main frequency. This, effectively, gives you two modules for the price of one.

My one criticism of Stages would be that there's no CV over Shape/Time. While I do appreciate that the design as it currently stands works very well – and that it'd be tricky to fit the required extra sockets into the layout – it would have been really

great to be able to morph between LFO shapes or change envelope curve under CV. **FM**

## FM VERDICT

# 9.0

An intuitive, truly 'modular' module offering a variety of functions. The option to turn it into a Harmonic Oscillator takes it to another level!

## THE PROS & CONS



Several different functions can be used at once

Once you grasp the underlying concept operation is intuitive

Harmonic Oscillator mode may tempt you to buy two!



No CV control over Shape/Time

Grasping the function concept can be tricky