



Polyend Poly 2, Preset & Anywhere from £132

Phil Wise examines this bumper selection of Eurorack modules from Polish firm, Polyend

CONTACT WHO: Polyend **WEB:** polyend.com **KEY FEATURES** **POLY 2:** 20 total outputs, Maximum eight calibrated pitch and gate outputs. Menu system for configuration. No need for a computer hookup. Scale masking, adjustable octave offset to accommodate differing keyboard/sequencer setups. **PRICING:** Anywhere: £132; Poly 2: £325; Preset: £375

THE PROS & CONS



Poly2: A large number of outputs, mostly configurable

Preset: CV automation recording

Anywhere: Power your modules, um, well... anywhere



Poly 2: Menu diving for custom CVs is a bit fiddly

Preset: No clock or reset inputs makes the sequencing options a bit fiddly

Anywhere: It might struggle with more too many power-hungry modules



you've got the Poly 2 set up with your gear you can save its state to a number of slots for instant recall.

I tested the Poly 2 with my Akai MAX49 keyboard, Ableton Live 10 and Elektron Digitakt. Basic pitch and gate setup was simple. I did have issues setting up custom CCs with the Digitakt encoders but Polyend assure me that this is a Digitakt problem not a Poly 2 issue. Still worth knowing if, like me, you planned to use the Digitakt to control your modular.

Its different modes let you set up your osc modules as an eight-voice polysynth (if you have enough) or sync each track individually with external sequencers or drum machines.

Extra features include the possibility to remap incoming MIDI notes to a range of scales and octave offset to accommodate differing voltage ranges; very useful.

Poly 2 is also MPE-enabled meaning that hooked up to your Roli Seaboard or similar you can get per-note modulation.

Preset

Preset, as its name suggests, is a module for creating Eurorack presets. Nine voltage sources are available, which can be set as Gates (5v or

10v), quantised v/oct or 0-10v voltage for CV control. These nine sources can be configured and saved in 32 banks of 32 patches, accessible from a grid of 4x8 soft, glowing buttons.

Preset partners well with all-in-one synth voice modules such as Plaits or the Noise Engineering oscillators. You could use it with more traditional setups, but you'll need a lot of VCAs and switches etc to get full control. For testing, I hooked up Plaits, a separate filter and a Black Hole DSP, with pitch and gate sequencing from a BSP. The fact that the mode selection on both the Plaits and Black Hole is CV-addressable gave me a huge range of possibilities and I soon had a range of patches to play with. Programming is straightforward but accessing the deeper controls is a little fiddly.

Note that you do get a glitch when changing presets, as the voltages adjust, particularly if a gate is involved. Maybe unavoidable given the nature of it. An adjustable slew time is possible, which morphs the voltages and gives some interesting effects, but most people would need to mute the channel while switching.

Presets are easily copied and saved, with 1024 slots available. This

Anounced at Superbooth earlier this year, Polish brand Polyend have unleashed a trio of modules each of which aims to add modern convenience and flexibility to your Eurorack system.

Poly 2

The Poly 2 is the updated version of Polyend's MIDI to CV converter. This new version features a lot of configuration options that were

lacking from the original Poly. With four CV & gate pairs as standard, the remaining 12 outputs are configurable. Nine to 16 are also factory-calibrated so the number of CV and Gate pairs can be increased to eight, leaving you four CV outs that can be linked to CCs, velocity, MIDI clock or start/stop.

A menu system is used for setup rather than a computer interface as used by most of the competition. This freedom from the computer is good but it does come at the expense of a fair bit of encoder twiddling. Once

THE ALTERNATIVES



Expert Sleepers FH-2 £249

Eight high-precision, configurable outputs and four gates outputs, LFO, arp and Euclidean pattern generators

expert-sleepers.co.uk



Endorphin.es shuttle control £399

Expensive but featuring 16 freely configurable CV outputs

endorphin.es



Malekko Voltage Block £249

Sequenced voltage source equipped with saveable presets

malekkoheavyindustry.com



Future Sound Systems Makrow £price

Six attenuvertable outputs from a single bias voltage

futuresoundsystems.co.uk



ANYWHERE As the name suggest, this module lets you use your system anywhere your heart desires, with the use of a USB powerbank for power

POLY 2 This MIDI-CV converter is updated with more output options, enhanced preset capabilities and MPE compatibility

PRESET Save and recall presets for your modular system. In our experience it works best when used alongside self-contained synth voice modules

is where Preset offers a little more than expected, as the patches can be sequenced with an external CV or Gate. This really brings your patch to life. Program a set of presets and morph between them in sequence or at random for a far more interesting shifting timbre than with LFOs or envelopes. Like the Korg Volca range, the Preset also features modulation automation. Hold and twiddle any of the knobs and your parameter changes are recorded; a great feature.

Modulation can also be recorded from an external source through the CV input, but due to the resolution of

the processor, this signal gets heavily bit-crushed with a smooth sine turning into a stepped pyramid. There is a smoothing option which improves things, but don't expect high fidelity.

While Preset would like to present itself as a fully-fledged sequencer when used this way, a few issues crop up. On paper it sounds ideal, with the ability to sequence not just pitch and gate but a whole range of timbre and effects as well. Sadly, the Preset features only one CV input which is used to record CV and control sequence position by CV or gate.

What's missing are separate clock and

reset inputs to seamlessly sync with your system. Presets can't be altered while the sequencer is in motion and it's fiddly to get it restarted again in sync each time you alter something.

Sequence length is adjustable from 1-32 steps, but it's strangely set to one step by default. Another issue is that the DAC used in the Preset is only capable of outputting a positive voltage range so you'll need modules with attenuverters. This also creates an issue for the note sequencer as there are variable voltage ranges produced by different keyboards and sequencers so with some you'll struggle to hit a bass range. Some swing from -3 to +9 others from 0 to -12v. This can be fixed with external modules of course but it'll probably be a deal breaker for many. **FM**

ANYWHERE

Anywhere is a module that lets you take your modular... anywhere! Free from the constraints of wall power, it connects to a USB powerbank so you can wiggle on the coach, plane, or even in the middle of a field. Anywhere comes with a flying bus cable to attach your modules.

At first it struggled to power my small case, so I stripped it down to four modules and it worked fine. I patched up a drone and left it running; to my great surprise it lasted for six and a half hours. I guess with more hands on use it would not last quite so long but it would still be pretty respectable.

FM VERDICT

8.9

Anywhere and Poly 2 are both simple and highly effective. Preset is great for live use but let down by lack of clock/reset inputs