

Erica Synths Black VCO 2 £250

I'm going to write this review the wrong way round by starting with my conclusion – which is that the Black VCO2 is, if you want a blend of modern and vintage voicing, one of the very best sound sources on the market. It doesn't just sound fantastic but is a joy to use, it's versatile and looks cool too. OK, so what makes it so good? Well, now I'll return to the traditional start of a review to talk about the build.

Erica says that only the very best components are chosen for their Black series modules and, without stripping it down to investigate, I can absolutely believe in their claim. The Module feels solid, the soldering appears both neat and substantial and the parts you can see lend confidence in the module's ability to withstand life in the studio, or on the road.

User-friendly

The black fascia is adorned with a subtle but striking engraving of some deep sea creature. Normally I'm less fond of quirky design elements but in this case it doesn't distract nor does it prevent you from reading the more important graphics which define the controls.

Which leads me nicely onto the actual user experience. As is often the way with Erica modules the important sound shaping knobs are

of a generous size and this makes it easier to navigate but also easier to dial in the exact value you want, as the extended radius means larger hand movements lead to slighter control changes.

The Black VCO 2 has volts per octave in, a large tuning knob and a rotary octave selector, with

+/- three octaves, all of which track very nicely.

Intuitive experience

I'm a fan of VCOs that allow simultaneous output of different waveshapes and this doesn't disappoint, as it can send Sine, Triangle, PWM and -1 octave sub.

It can sound beautifully vintage, clinically modern or anywhere in between

Inputs include CV for Saw shape and pulse width, each of which also have a knob for manual control and there's a global CV knob, for precise dialling of your tone. This last acts on the FM setting as well, making it a global CV attenuator control. There is also a sync jack for those multi voiced rigs. Finally there are two toggle switches, one defining whether modulation effects saw, PWM or both, the other lets you set the FM to linear or exponential. This collection of controls makes the module a versatile one but, where these can get finicky, it's an intuitive experience which reinforces the sound quality.

Great sounds

Both sine and triangle sound lovely. Soft as you'd expect but clear and precise and in the upper ranges both provide a delicacy which is very pretty. The Saw and PWM both sound as you'd want, with movement easily added in controllable amounts. This thing can sound beautifully vintage with a touch of FM, clinically modern or anywhere in between.

Coming full circle I have to say this is one of the nicest VCOs I've heard and it should definitely make the shortlist of anybody looking for a new sound source. **Rob Redman**
ericasynths.lv

VERDICT 8.0

