

Loomer Aspect



Graham Morrison finally finds something productive to do in his lunch hour – twisting audio inputs and outputs into timbre and rhythm.

In brief...

» Commercial analogue sounding synth for music production. Also consider the excellent *ZynAddSubFX* and the *AMS*.

Those of you who enjoy creating music on your computer will be aware that most open source Linux synths are woefully inadequate when compared with some of the best commercial offerings on Windows and OS X. This is why we're very happy to see a growing collection of commercial audio generators being released for Linux. First was piano modelling tool *Pianoteq*, which we reviewed in **LXF122**, and now a small company called Loomer has ported its suite of effects and instruments to our favourite OS.

Each synth and effect is provided both as both a standalone binary and a native Linux VST plugin. The latter is



» *Aspect* is seriously rich and creamy-sounding synth. It's also immensely flexible, thanks largely to its ability to re-route and manipulate audio.

“Explore the sonic territory usually reserved for audio engineers.”

particularly interesting, because it means you can treat the synth or effect like a native audio plugin in applications that support it, such as *QTractor* and the exceptional *EnergyXT*.

Classic sounds

The highlight of this collection is *Aspect*, a synthesizer that's capable of creating some classic analogue sounds. It describes itself as a semi-modular

synth and this means it'll generate sounds without you having to do much, but there's also the potential to rewire all the default connections. You can tweak knobs and press buttons to adjust the various characteristics of the output, just like the majority of other synths. The results are fantastic, and you can get a great deal out of the packages by just scrolling through the considerable list of presets.

Sound generation starts with the oscillators, of which there are two. Each has the classic range of sine, triangle, pulse and sawtooth waveforms, along with plenty of control over pitch and tuning. The output from the oscillators then passes into a mixer, where you can add noise if you need to, and from there to two filters. The filters are responsible for imbuing character on a synth sound, and they can run either in parallel or serial. They add a rich and edgy quality to the audio, but it's a pity there aren't a few more to choose from.

Patch chords

There are three envelopes, the first of which is used to contour the amplitude of the sound while the second is usually assigned to the filter. The third envelope, and the two LFOs, can be used anywhere.

You can patch almost anything to any destination, and this is *Aspect's* great strength. You can rewire the audio input sent to the two filter sections using either the lag generator, two multipliers, two adders or a sample and hold generator in the patch section. It's complicated, but it enables you to explore the sonic territory usually reserved for synth geeks and audio engineers. We only wish there were more inputs scattered across the panel.

Aspect has a wonderful GUI, a beautiful sound and is immensely flexible. If you love synths, this one's well worth the money. **LXF**

String

The other impressive synth in the Loomer collection is *String*. In comparison to *Aspect*, it's a doddle to use. Its configuration is based on string machines of the 1970s and rewards experimentation. There are two layers, each of which has three stops. This gives you six fixed pitch sources to add to the mix. Both layers have their own filters, and an effects section can add chorus, phaser and

delay. It's capable of producing a broad range of sounds with ease, from Wendy Carlos' *Clockwork Orange* pads to Jean Michel Jarre's *Rendez-Vous*.



» Re-create classic 1970s sounds.

LINUX Verdict

Loomer Aspect 1.5

Developer: Loomer Ltd
Web: www.loomer.co.uk
Price: £65 + VAT

Features	7/10
Performance	8/10
Ease of use	8/10
Value for money	7/10

» If you make music with Linux, it might be time for you to spend some money on your hobby.

Rating 8/10