Pocket Scion is a synth you play with plants



A few years ago, artist Modern Biology became a viral sensation when he posted videos of himself controlling a modular synth with mushrooms on TikTok. Pocket Scion gives anyone similar capabilities, but without having to spend thousands of dollars on a Eurorack rig — and in a much more portable package.

A core part of Modern Biology's setup is a module called Scion from Glasgow-based Instruo. Scion turns biofeedback, whether that's from houseplants or your own skin, into CV (control voltage) for controlling other synth modules in a larger setup. Touching two sensors to your hand or a mushroom completes a circuit, and then electrical fluctuations in that circuit can be used to trigger different notes, or change the cutoff on a filter, for instance.

A little over a year ago, he approached Instruo about building something new. The fruit of that collaboration is the Pocket Scion, an affordable self-contained instrument that can turn

small electrical changes from living organisms into MIDI data and create soundscapes using one of the four built-in sound engines.

The Pocket Scion has a number of advanced capabilities too, including MIDI out for controlling external instruments. There’s also a companion app for Windows, macOS, and Linux that exposes sound design tools for creating your own synth patches, and can send data over Open Sound Control (OSC), which gives it control over a ton of audio and video programs like Max/MSP, Pure Data, and Unreal Engine for creating visualization or complex reactive art installations. It’s more powerful than you’d expect given its $149 price.

The initial run of Pocket Scions sold out almost immediately. But you can place a preorder for when the next batch ships “early next week,” according to retailer Control Voltage.

https://www.theverge.com/news/773352/pocket-scion-synth-mushroom-music