

# SYNTH HACKS #10

## CASE THE MUSIC

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Live performance is back at last, which means it's a great time to grab a case or gig bag for your gear. Thinking outside the [cardboard] box and costly official cases can give you safety and style at an amazing price.



Fig. 2

This zippered headphone case has rigid sides and a plush lining that grips Velcro well. I added foam for extra protection for the Lemondrop screen.

Surplus stores and blowout sales are a great source for pouches with personality [see Figure 1]. I carry my Korg Kaossilator in a dollar-store CD wallet—I knew it would be a perfect match as soon as I saw the yellow color. A Casio electronic sax bag from the freebie bin holds my shakuhachi. A Wii Fit bag [40 cents!] covers my Arturia KeyStep, and a beer koozie protects my



Fig. 3

At 8.5 x 5 x 2.5 inches, this Vaultz pencil box fits Volcas like a glove—a glove with a flaming 3D monster eye. The Vaultz series starts at \$10 online.



Fig. 1

Bargain-bin bags make quick cases. Total cost of these four: \$1.40.

MidiPlus Miniengine, a nasty-sounding little GM module with a built-in battery and USB-MIDI input.

Figure 2 shows a compact rig I built to play on the bus. The soft-shell case from some broken headphones holds my 1010music Lemondrop, Korg Sound on Sound multitrack recorder, and a USB battery pack. Right-angle audio cables, including a colorful MyVolts CandyCord, make it all fit. I can play the Lemondrop from its touchscreen and record infinite overdubs on the SOS.

When I spotted the pencil case in Figure 3 at a back-to-school sale, I knew I needed its 3D lenticular dragon eye in my life. I'd planned to fill the box with DIY electronics, but discovered that adding two slices of foam made it an astonishingly snug fit for my Korg Volca Sample2. It's built like a mini road case to boot.

The Arturia KeyStep 37 [Figure 4] is a wonderful keyboard with a hard-to-cover skinny shape. Pondering what other gear is long and narrow, I hit on padded tripod cases. This one—\$15 on Amazon—is beautifully made with a sturdy zipper and an internal pocket for cables. Again, it fits perfectly. A case designed for the KeyStep would cost at least 3X more.

Sourcing your own cases offers benefits beyond price and personality. I've read that canny photographers pack their expensive camera gear in diaper bags — padded, leakproof, and the last thing a thief would want to steal.



Fig. 4

Armed with the dimensions of my Arturia KeyStep 37, I sought out long, skinny bags. This 24-inch padded tripod sack by Gazechimp [!] was just right.