

Rescuing the Dewtron Gipsy: Samples from an Almost-Forgotten Synthesizer

Overview

This repository documents and preserves the sound of a rare **Dewtron Gipsy** synthesizer through a curated multi-sample library and detailed photographs of the instrument's construction. The original hardware is in poor but playable condition, and much of its circuitry is potted in resin, making traditional restoration and calibration effectively impossible. These samples are intended to keep its voice alive for future musicians, researchers, and synth nerds.



Provenance and Restoration

In 2025, synth owner **Andrew McGirr** posted photos of an unknown wooden-cased monosynth to the r/synthesizers subreddit, asking if anyone could identify it:

- "Does anyone know what this is?" – https://www.reddit.com/r/synthesizers/comments/1kung51/does_anyone_know_what_this_is/
- Follow-up: "Dewtron Gipsy part 2" – https://www.reddit.com/r/synthesizers/comments/1ovoshp/dewtron_gipsy_part_2/

The community recognized the instrument as a **Dewtron Gipsy**, a British synth from the early 1970s built around Dewtron plug-in modules. Andrew was encouraged to contact **Paul Stillwell**, founder and organizer

of the **Frequency Freaks** monthly synthesizer workshops in Toronto (<https://www.freqfreaks.com>), to help assess and document the instrument.

To bring the Gipsy back to life, Andrew entrusted it to **Jay Lemac and the team at Synths When** (<https://www.synthswhen.com/>), a synth repair shop in Toronto. After careful work, the Gipsy was once again capable of producing sound—albeit with significant tuning drift, a partially working filter, scratchy controls, and a spring reverb tank missing one of its springs.

This sample library was created while the instrument is still functioning, acknowledging that further hardware repair is limited by the potted Dewtron modules.



The Instrument

The Dewtron Gipsy in this project is a compact wooden-cased monosynth with:

- Two oscillators (each with sine, square, and triangle waveforms)
- A shared **slow oscillator** (LFO) with speed and depth controls
- Ring modulation (switchable on/off)
- A simple **envelope shaper** with slew, attack, and decay
- A basic **filter** section
- A built-in **spring reverb** tank
- 3-octave keyboard with on/off keying (no velocity sensitivity)
- Front-panel pitch controls using Vernier dials

Internally, the instrument is assembled using Dewtron modules that are **fully potted in resin**, preventing access to calibration trimmers and component-level repair. Wiring between modules and the keyboard is done on tag strips, with clearly hand-built construction. A metal badge on the cabinet credits:

Cabinet work & assembly by Electronic Sound Treatments (Bournemouth)



The combination of potted modules, age, and wear means:

- The oscillators **do not track together** across the keyboard and exhibit significant tuning drift.
- The filter only "kind of" works and is not suitable for precise, repeatable timbral shaping.
- The spring reverb is missing one spring and may not behave as originally intended.
- Many pots are noisy or scratchy in use.

Rather than attempting an invasive restoration, this project focuses on **capturing the raw tone** of each oscillator as reliably as possible.

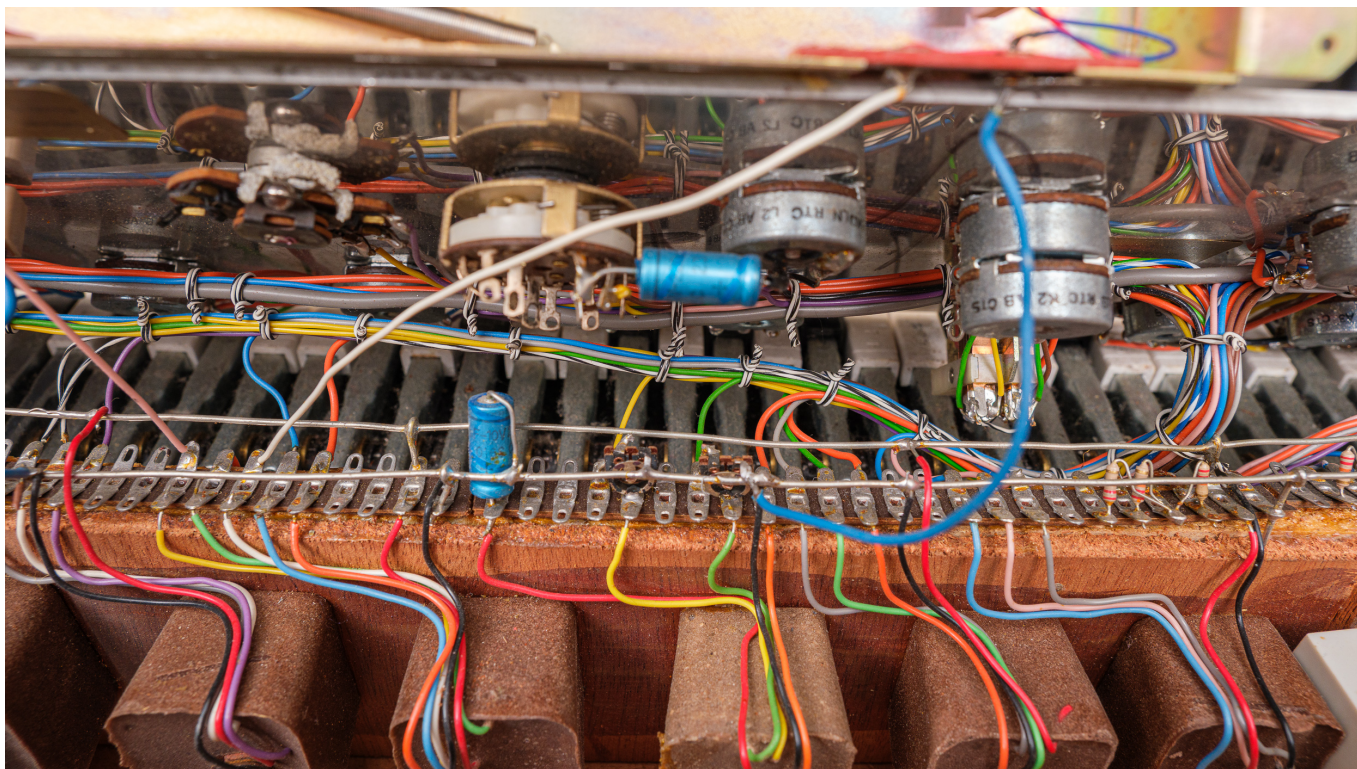


Sampling Approach

Because the oscillators track poorly and drift relative to each other, this library takes a **per-oscillator, per-waveform** approach designed for maximum usability.

What Was Sampled

- Each oscillator was sampled **individually**, not layered, so users can recreate detuning and layering in a controlled way inside their sampler or synth.
- For each oscillator, all available **waveshapes** (sine, square, triangle) were recorded.
- Notes were captured at positions across the keyboard as close to octave spacing as practical, given the instrument's tuning instability.
- The instrument was played via its own keyboard; there is no velocity information, as the original design is strictly on/off.

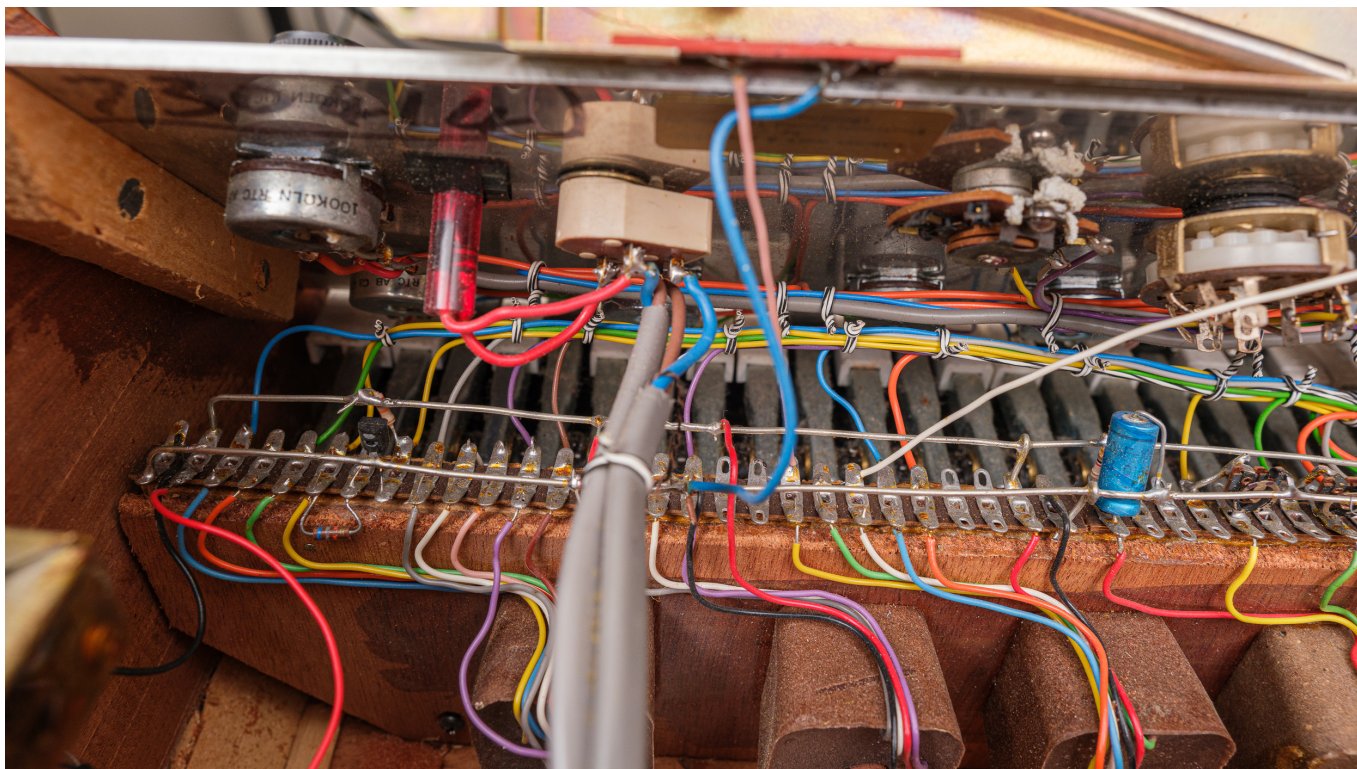


Folder Structure

Within the main **Dewtron Gipsy** folder, the samples are organized as:

- **Original Sample Files 96k 32b** – Complete, unedited original recordings at 96 kHz, 32-bit float, grouped by oscillator and waveshape.
- **Osc1 44.1k 16b** – Osc1 48k 24b – Osc1 96k 24b – Tuned, single-note samples from oscillator 1 at different sample rates and bit depths.
- **Osc2 44.1k 16b** – Osc2 48k 24b – Osc2 96k 24b – Tuned, single-note samples from oscillator 2, matching the formats above.
- **Ring Mod 44.1k 16b** – Ring Mod 48k 24b – Ring Mod 96k 24b – Tuned samples with the ring modulator engaged.
- **Ring Mod Filter 44.1k 16b** – Ring Mod Filter 48k 24b – Ring Mod Filter 96k 24b – Tuned samples with both ring mod and filter engaged.

Within each of these folders, filenames indicate the oscillator (where applicable), waveshape, and the note each file is tuned to. For example: **Osc1SquareC3.wav**



Raw vs. Tuned Material

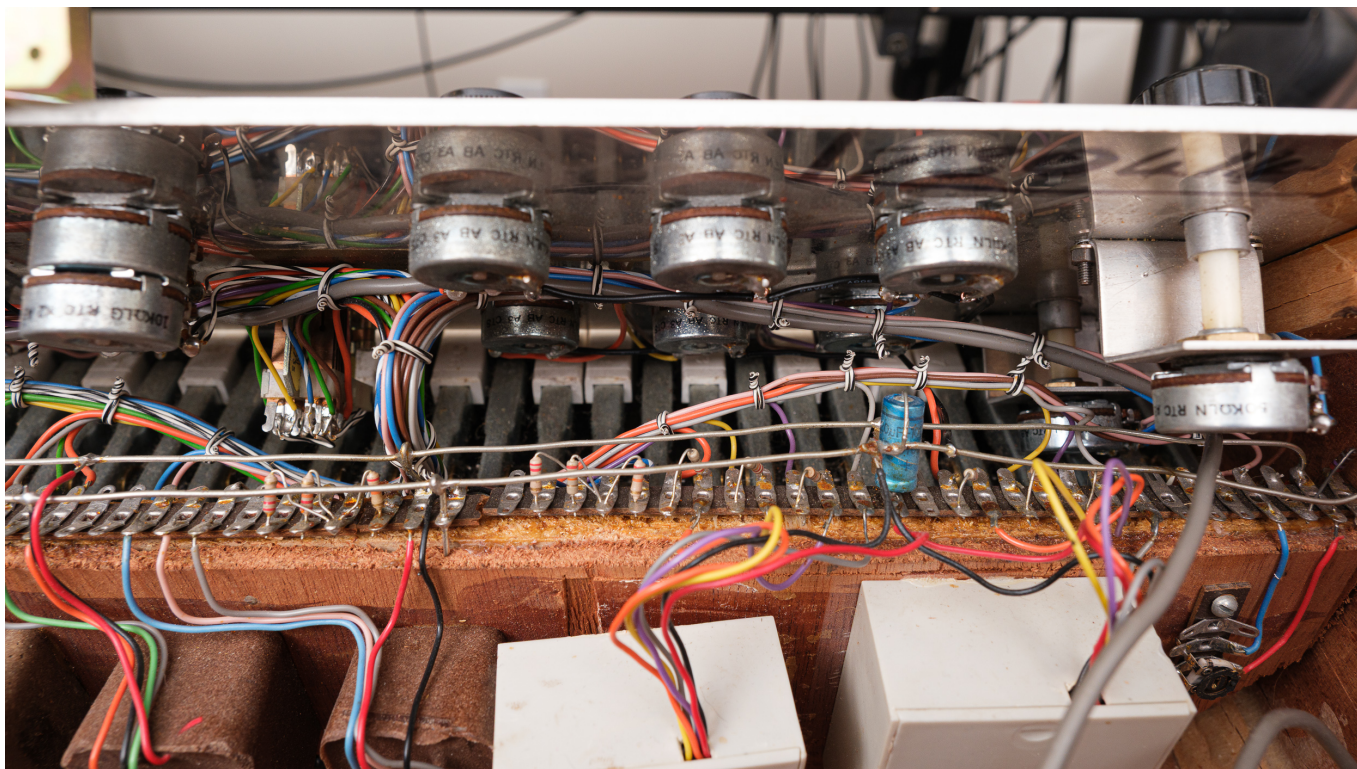
Two kinds of material are provided:

Original Sample Files 96k 32b

- Long, continuous recordings organized by oscillator and waveform.
- Ideal for anyone who wants to study tuning drift, noise, and other idiosyncrasies of this specific Gipsy, or to cut their own sample sets.

Tuned Folders (Osc1, Osc2, Ring Mod, Ring Mod Filter)

- Each file has been tuned as closely as possible to the nearest Western pitch.
- Intended for building practical virtual instruments in SFZ, Kontakt, DecentSampler, etc., without having to fight the original tracking issues.
- No additional processing (EQ, compression, etc.) has been applied beyond level management and tuning for the tuned sets.



Using the Samples

These samples are designed to be open and flexible:

- **Use the Osc1/Osc2 tuned folders** to quickly map basic waveforms to your sampler of choice, assigning each file to the corresponding key.
- **Layer tuned samples** from oscillator 1 and 2 to recreate the almost in-tune but drifting character of the hardware—this time with control over detune amount, envelopes, and effects.
- **Use the Ring Mod and Ring Mod Filter folders** when you want more aggressive or complex tones that reflect how the Gipsy behaves with those sections engaged.
- **Use the Original Sample Files 96k 32b** if you want to:
 - Analyze tuning drift and scaling.
 - Create custom round-robin or multisample instruments.
 - Study noise, hum, and other real-world artifacts of this specific Gipsy.

If you create instrument definition files (e.g., SFZ, Kontakt, DecentSampler, Ableton racks), please contact the author via the contact form on the web site where you downloaded it (<https://www.freqfreaks.com> or <https://www.intrepita.com>) to share your work.



Credits

- **Andrew McGirr** – Synth owner who discovered, preserved, and shared this Dewtron Gipsy, and documented it in the Reddit threads linked above.
- **Paul Stillwell** – Founder and organizer of Frequency Freaks, Toronto's monthly synthesizer workshops. Responsible for recording, editing, and preparing this sample library and documentation.

- **Jay Lemac and the team at Synths When** (<https://www.synthswwhen.com/>) – Repair work and technical support that returned the Gipsy to a playable state, making this project possible.

If you use these samples in a project or create derived instruments, please include a credit line such as:

Dewtron Gipsy samples by Paul Stillwell and Andrew McGirr.

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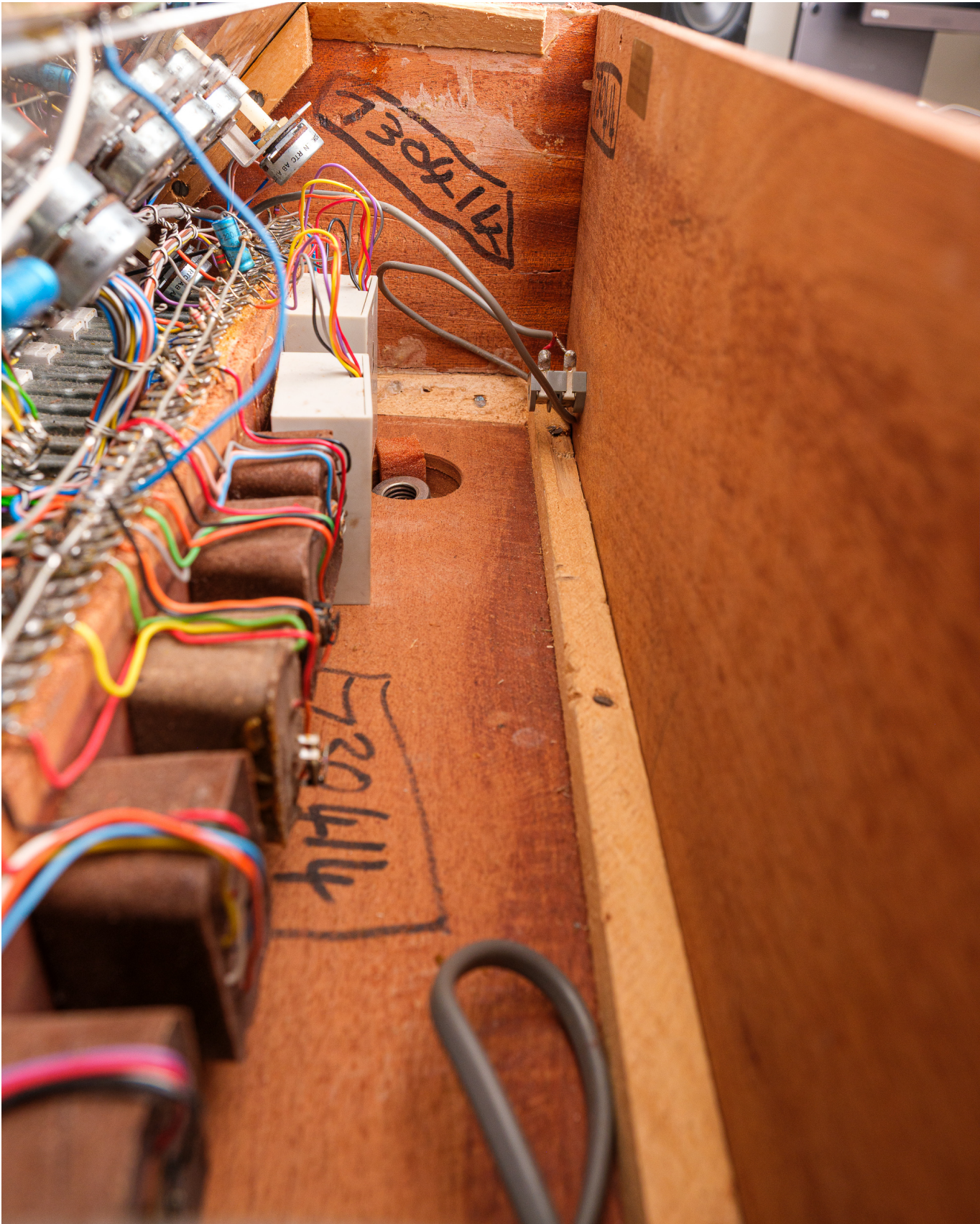
Recommended attribution: Dewtron Gipsy samples by Paul Stillwell and Andrew McGirr.

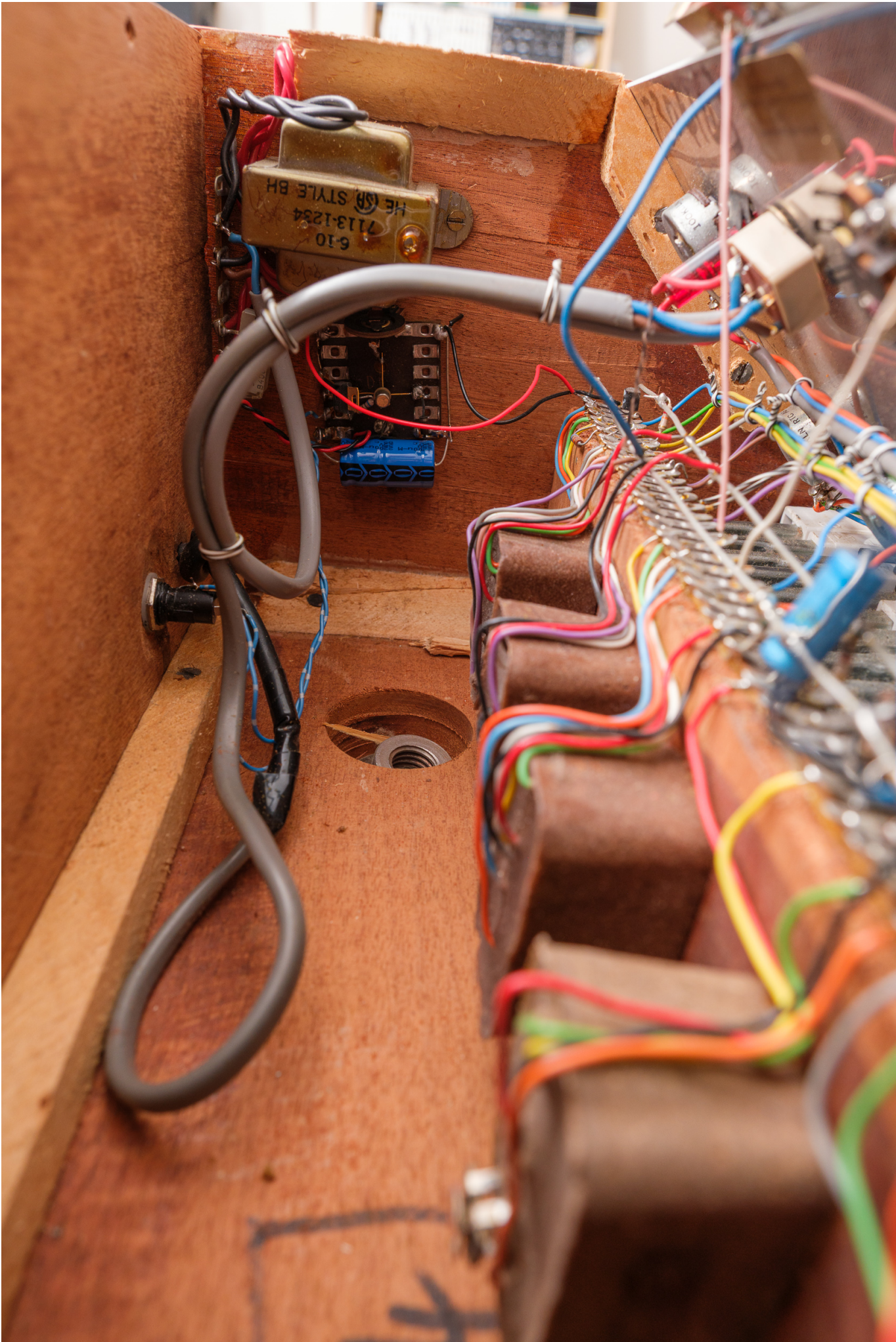
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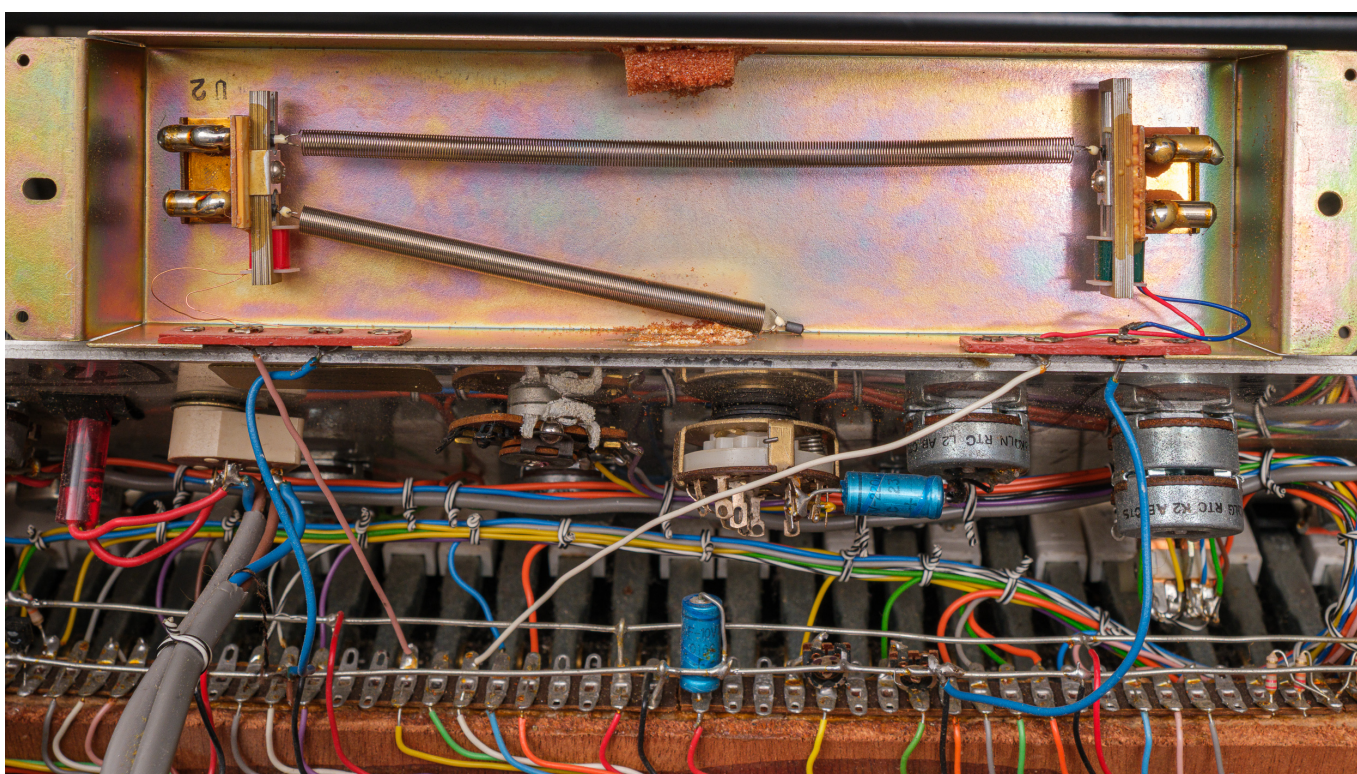
References and Further Reading

- **ModWiggler** – Dewtron and Gipsy discussion – <https://www.modwiggler.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t158553>
- **Electronic Music Wiki** – Dewtron – <https://electronicmusic.fandom.com/wiki/Dewtron>
- **Sequencer.de** – Exotic synthesizers: Dewtron synthesiser – <https://www.sequencer.de/blog/exotic-synthesizers-dewtron-synthesiser765>
- **MATRIXSYNTH** – Dewtron tag – <https://www.matrixsynth.com/search/label/Dewtron>
- **Frequency Freaks** – Monthly synthesizer workshops in Toronto – <https://www.freqfreaks.com>

Additional Photos







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Dewtron Gipsy sample library: Version 1.0

Project by: Paul Stillwell and Andrew McGirr