

LOOPING VCADSR

Build Guide

Dannysound

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1 Introduction

This module is based on a design from the fabulous Electric Druid! If you're interested in designing circuits they produce some incredibly useful PIC microcontrollers for use in synths and guitar effects, plus they have some really great articles and projects. For more information please visit <https://electricdruid.net>

The LOOPING VCADSR uses a Microcontroller to generate a Voltage Controllable, Loop-able Envelope. The individual parts of the Envelope (Attack, Decay, Sustain, Release and Level) can all be individually controlled via CV.

It has 3 MODES of operation:

Normal Envelope – Gate signal fires ADSR

Gated Looping Envelope – ADSR loops whilst gate signal is high.

Looping Envelope – ADSR loops regardless of gate signal.

When the envelope is looping, all 5 controls affect the output.

Attack and Decay operate, as one would expect.

The Sustain control sets the minimum voltage the decay part of the envelope will decay to.

The Release sets a release time from the end of the Sustain period to the beginning of the next cycle.

When the Sustain is set to 0 you can use the Release control to add a delay between Attack and Decay cycles.

In Normal Envelope mode the Sustain CV input can be used with an LFO source to add amplitude modulation that gradually increases as the Envelope transitions from the Attack/Decay part of the envelope into the Sustain part.

The Level CV is also a useful point for amplitude modulation or can be used for Velocity Sensitivity CV.

Features:

3 Modes of operation:

Normal

Gated Loop

Constant Loop

CV control over:

Attack

Decay

Sustain

Release

Level

Works with GATE signals from +5V to +12V
Output CV range 0V to +10V

Connections:

Inputs

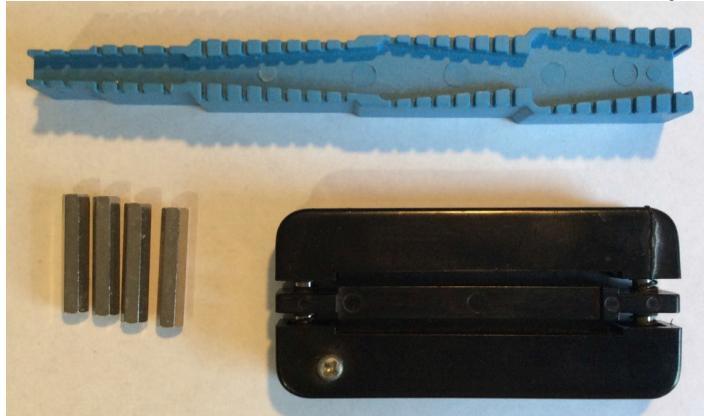
ATTACK CV
DECAY CV
SUSTAIN CV
RELEASE CV
LEVEL CV
GATE

Output

ENVELOPE OUT

2 Construction Tips

These tools come in very handy, especially if you do a lot of DIY projects. They should be available from most electronics hobbyist stores.

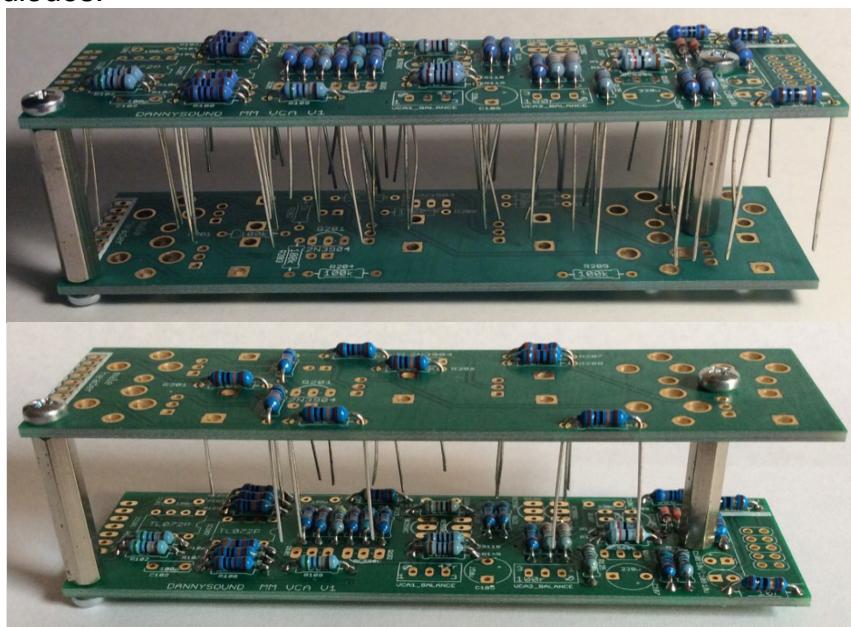


The blue bending guage is for bending the resistor and diode legs to the right size.

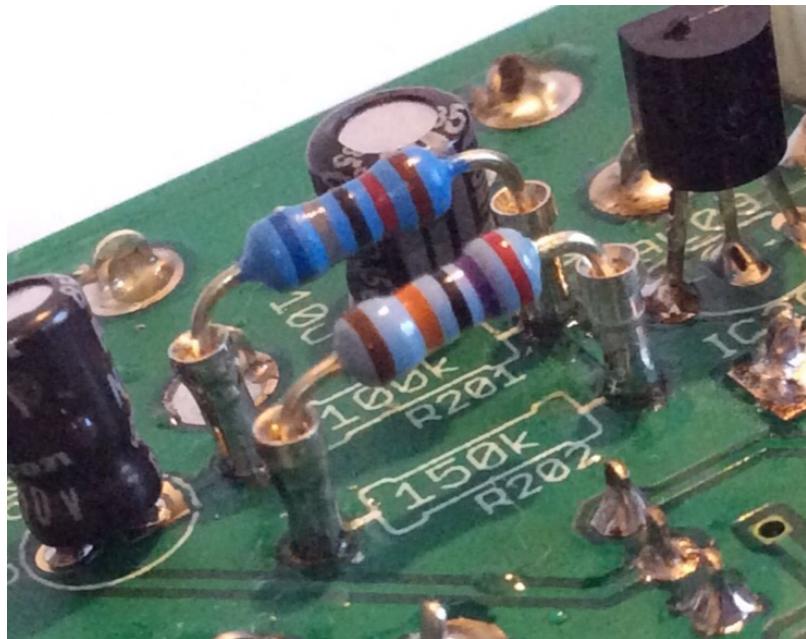
The black IC straightener is for straightening pins of op-amps etc.

The silver standoffs are 25mm Female to Female.

You can use this setup with the 25mm standoffs for inserting the resistors and diodes.



The top picture is for stuffing the Outer Board. It has the advantage of being much quicker to place all the resistors etc and it's easy to fix any mistakes. You can then solder everything from the top in one go (make sure you have decent temp. solder iron with not too fat tip!). Then unscrew the standoffs and clip all the legs. Reverse both boards as in the lower picture for the Pots Board.



Cutting the pins from a SIL connector and soldering as shown above is useful for experimenting with different component values if you want to try out any of the modifications.

3 Parts Lists

VCADSR OUTER PARTS LIST		
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RESISTORS		
1k	3	R105 R103 R120
		R110 R116 R117 R118
4k7	5	R119
8k2	1	R113
		R107 R121 R122 R123
10k	6	R124 R125
12k	1	R106
27k	1	R101
91k	2	R102 R108
		R104 R111 R112 R114
100k	5	R115
220k	1	R109

CAPS		
100n 2,5mm pitch leads ceramic	8	C104 C105 C108 C109 C110 C111 C112 C113
6n8 polyester box - 5mm pitch leads	1	C107
68n polyester box - 5mm pitch leads	1	C106
10u electrolytic	4	C101 C102 C103 C114

DIODES		
1N4148	1	D101

OPAMPS		
PIC from Electric		
Druid	1	IC103
TL074	1	IC102
TL072	1	IC103

BEAD INDUCTORS		
	2	L101 L102

TRANSISTORS		
2N3904	2	Q101 Q102

REGULATORS		
79L05	1	VR101
78L05	1	VR102

SOCKETS		
8 pin DIL socket	1	
14 pin DIL socket	2	

HEADERS	
1 X 6 FEMALE	1
1 X 5 FEMALE	1
1 X 4 FEMALE	1
Shrouded 2 x 5 power socket	1

VCADSR POTS PARTS LIST

RESISTORS		
100k	5	R201 R204 R205 R208 R209
200k	4	R203 R206 R207 R210
270k	1	R202

ALPHA POTS		
10K	5	

LED		
AMBER 3MM	1	

SOCKETS		
PJ301	7	

TOGGLE SWITCH	1	DPDT CENTRE OFF
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HEADERS	
1 X 6 MALE	1
1 X 5 MALE	1
1 X 4 MALE	1

VCADSR HARDWARE

STANDOFFS	
M3 FEMALE 11MM	2

SCREWS	
M3	4

KNOBS	
ROGAN SMALL	5

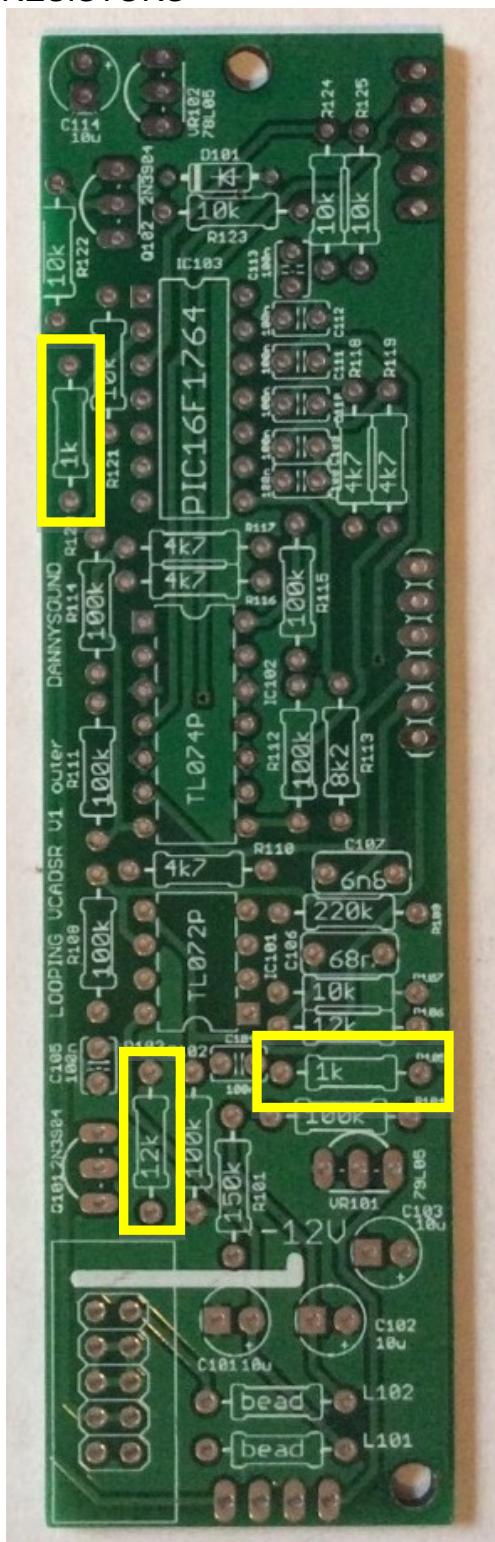
LIGHTPIPES	
5mm	1

VCC mouser 593-
LFC025CTP

TOGGLE SWITCH CAP	
RED	1

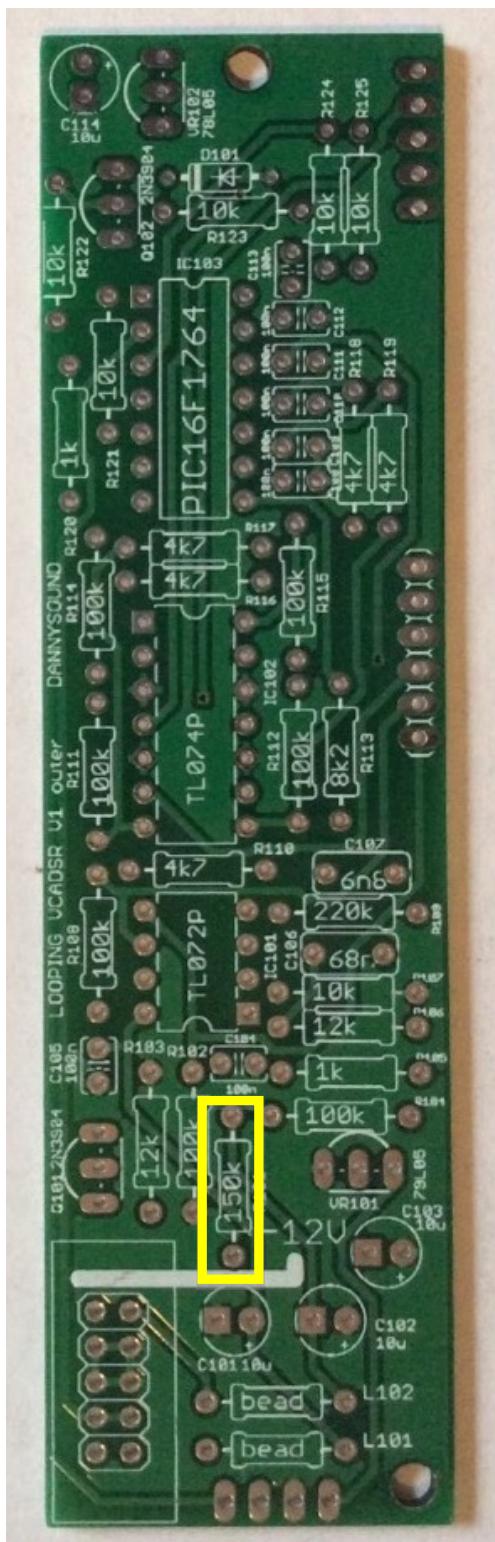
4 Outer Board

RESISTORS



1) – 3 x 1k (R105, R103, R120)

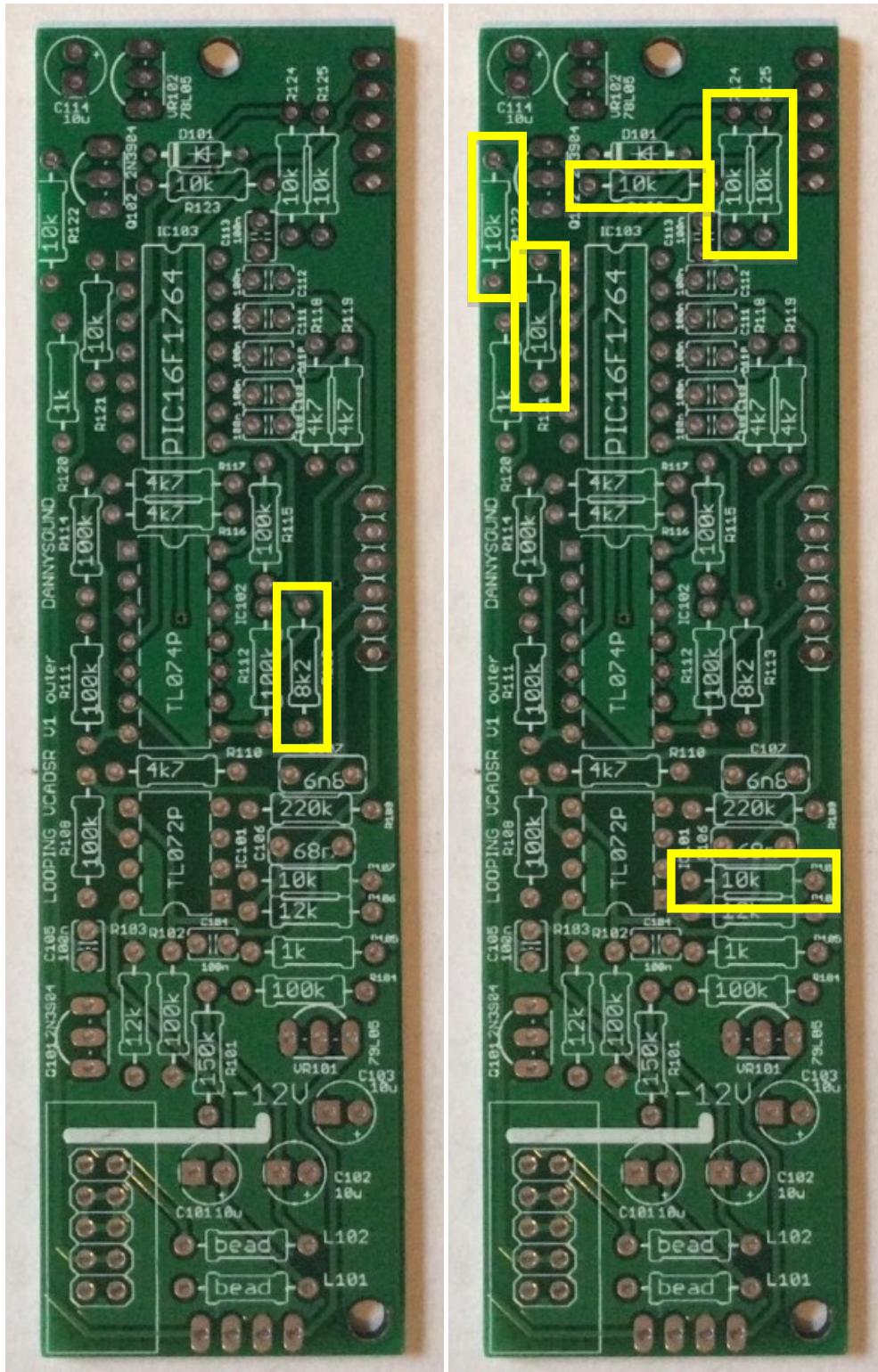
Note: On some PCBs from 2021 and earlier - R103 states 12k on the PCB, but 1k is the correct value to use.



2) - 1 x 27k (R101)

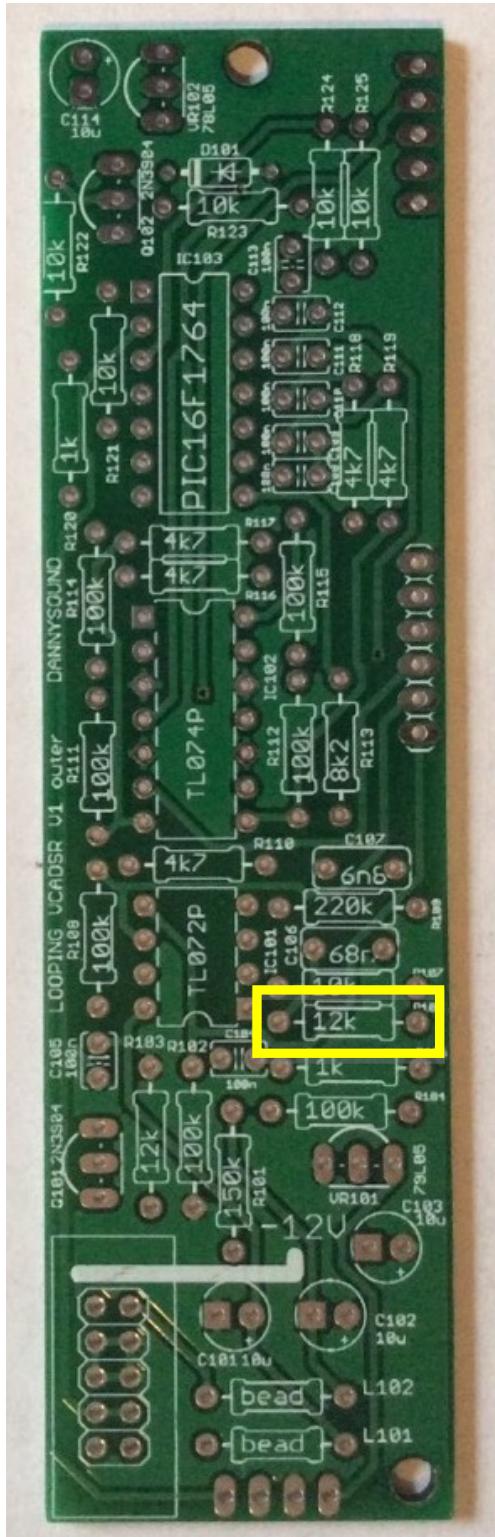
Note: On some PCBs from 2021 and earlier - R101 states 300k or 150k on the PCB, but 27k is the correct value to use.

Now you can move on to the all the remaining resistors

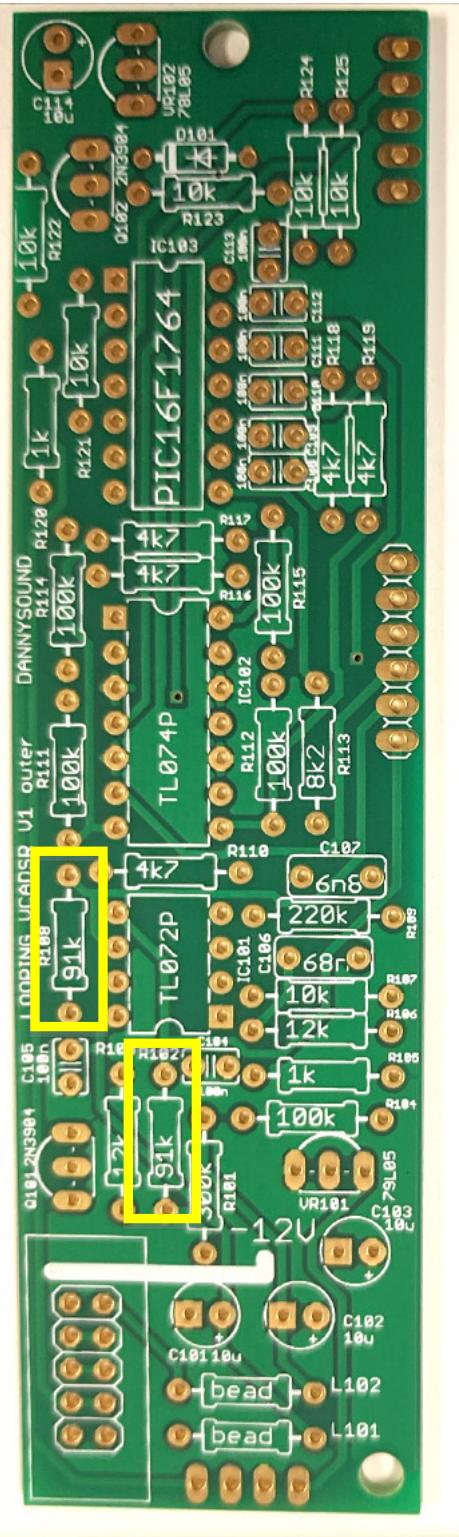


3) - 1 x 8k2 (R113)

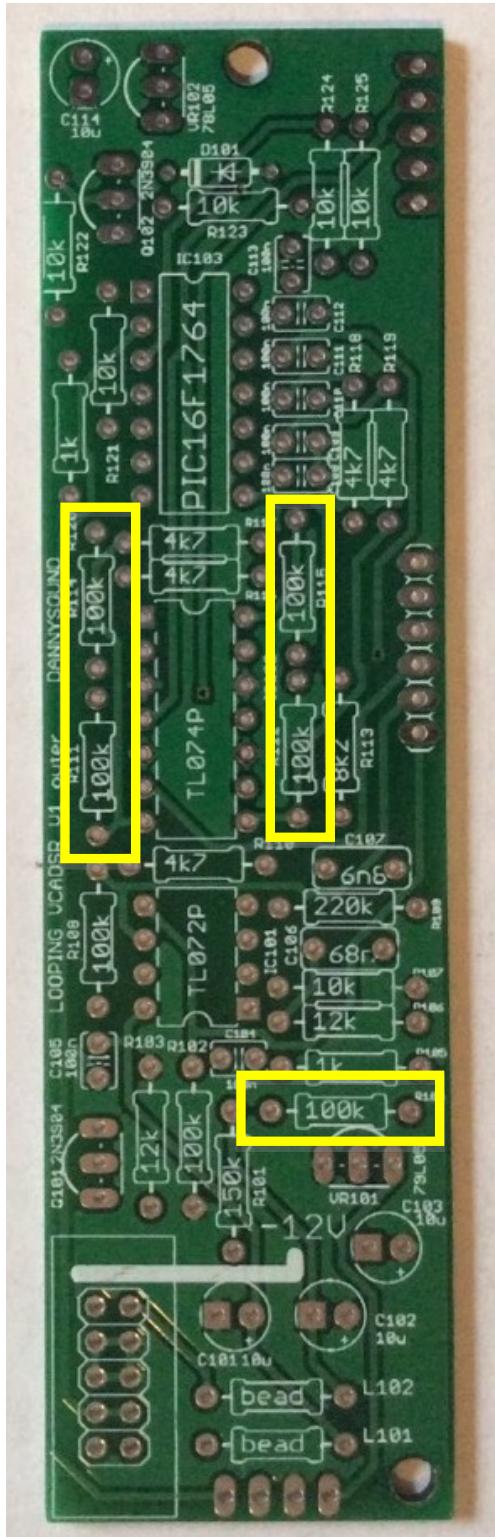
4) – 6 x 10k (R107, R121, R122,
R123, R124, R125)



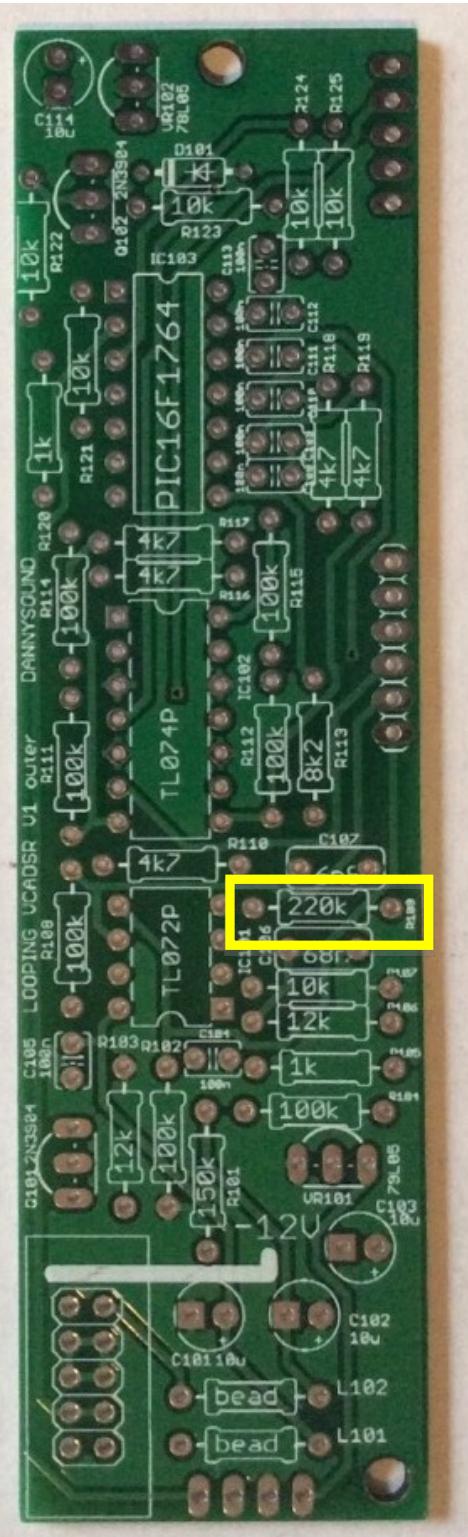
5) – 1 x 12k (R106)



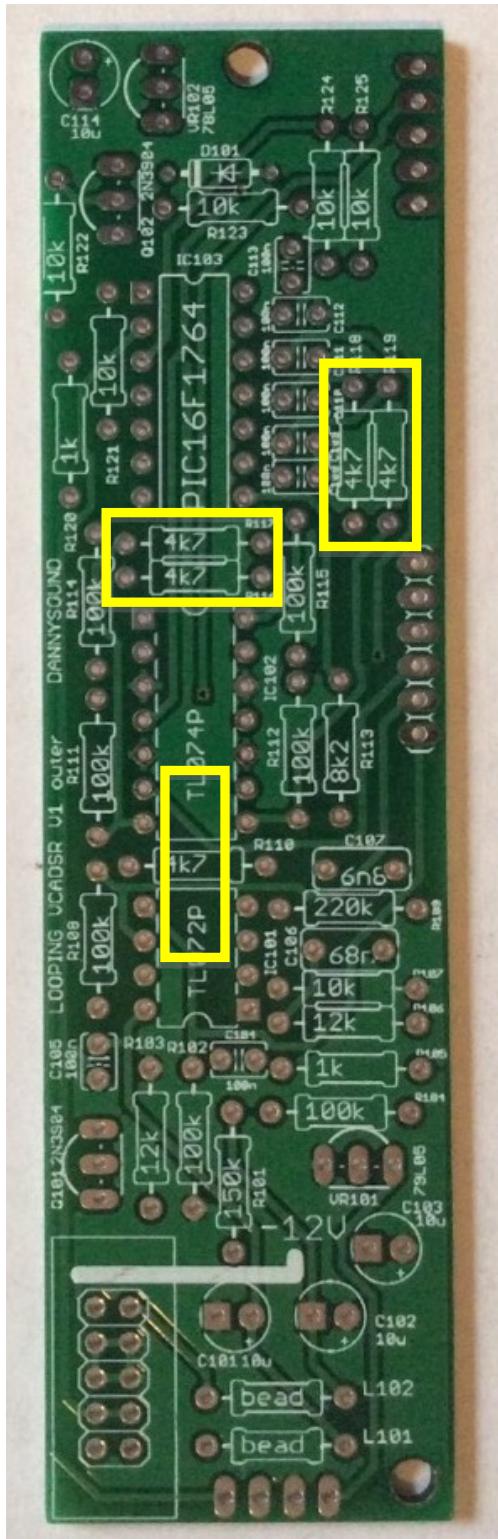
6) – 2 x 91k (R102, R108)



7) – 5 x 100k
(R104, R111, R112, R114, R115)

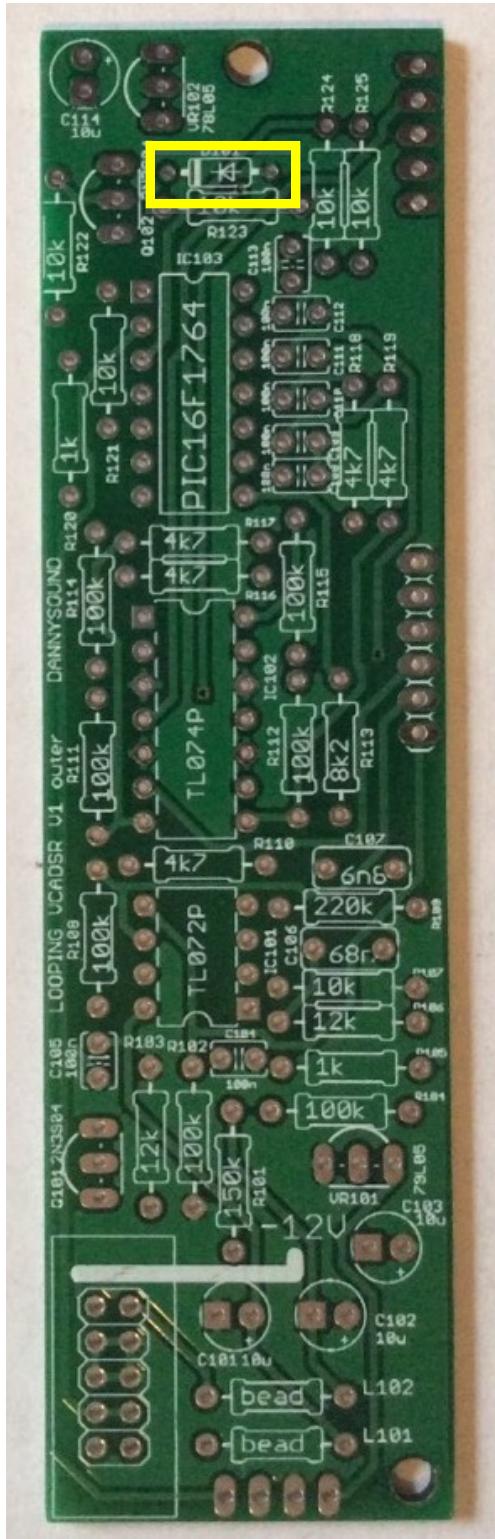


8) – 1 x 220k (R109)

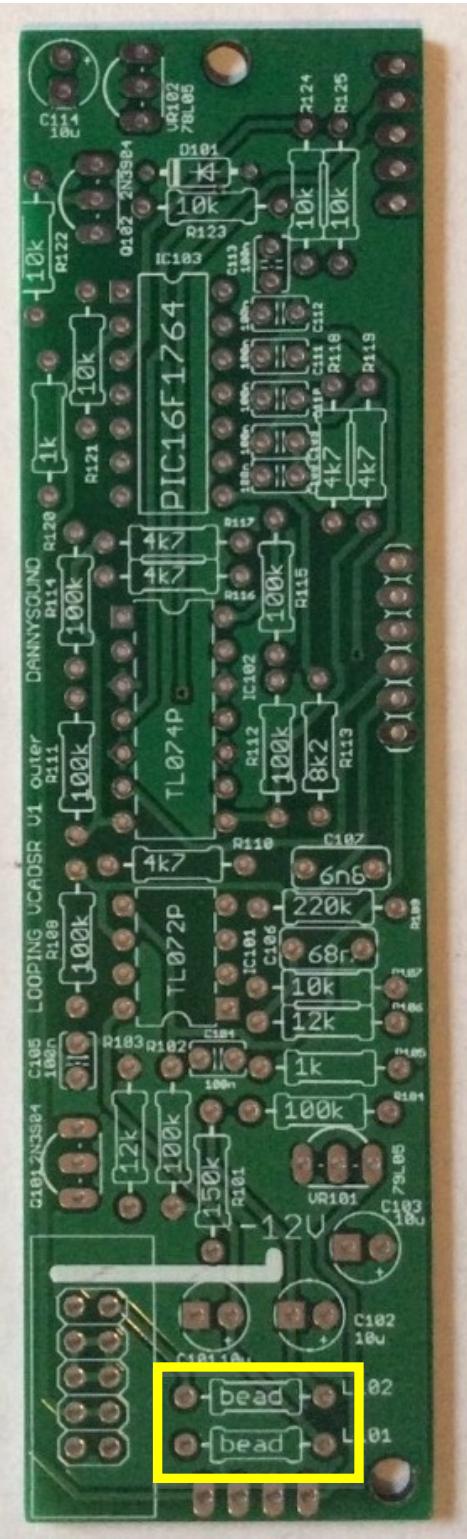


9) – 5 x 4k7 (R110, R116, R117, R118, R119)

DIODES AND BEAD INDUCTORS



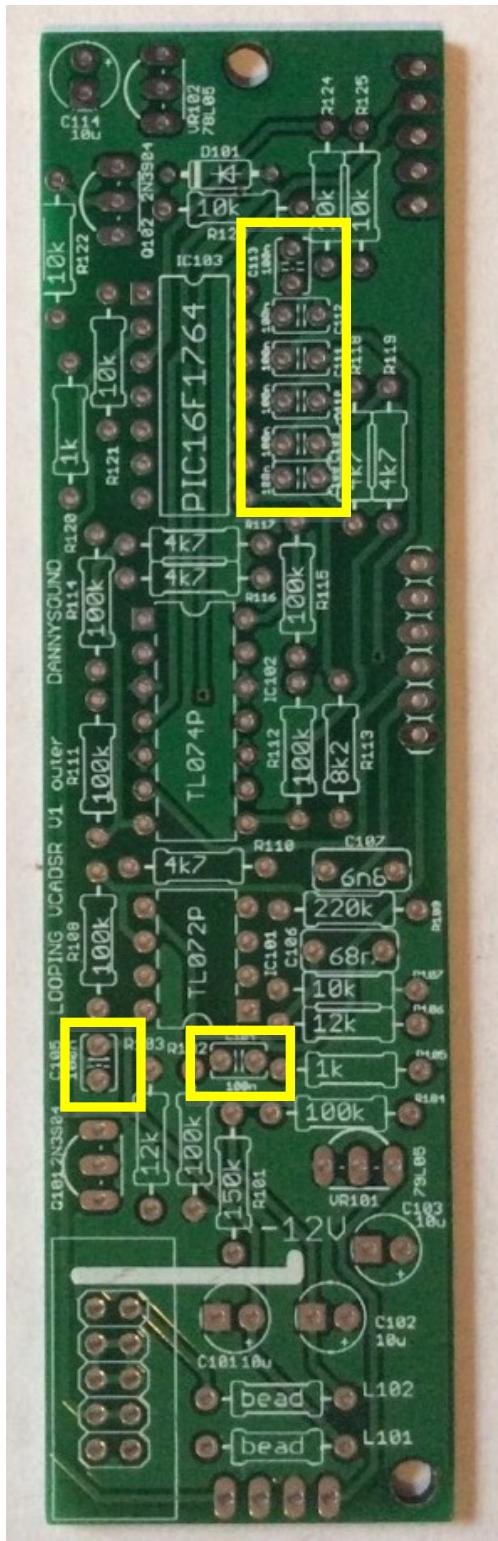
10) – 1 x 1N4148 Diode (D101)



11) – 2 x Bead Inductors (L101, L102)

Note: orientation of the diode is vital - be sure to match the line on the component with the line on the PCB silkscreen

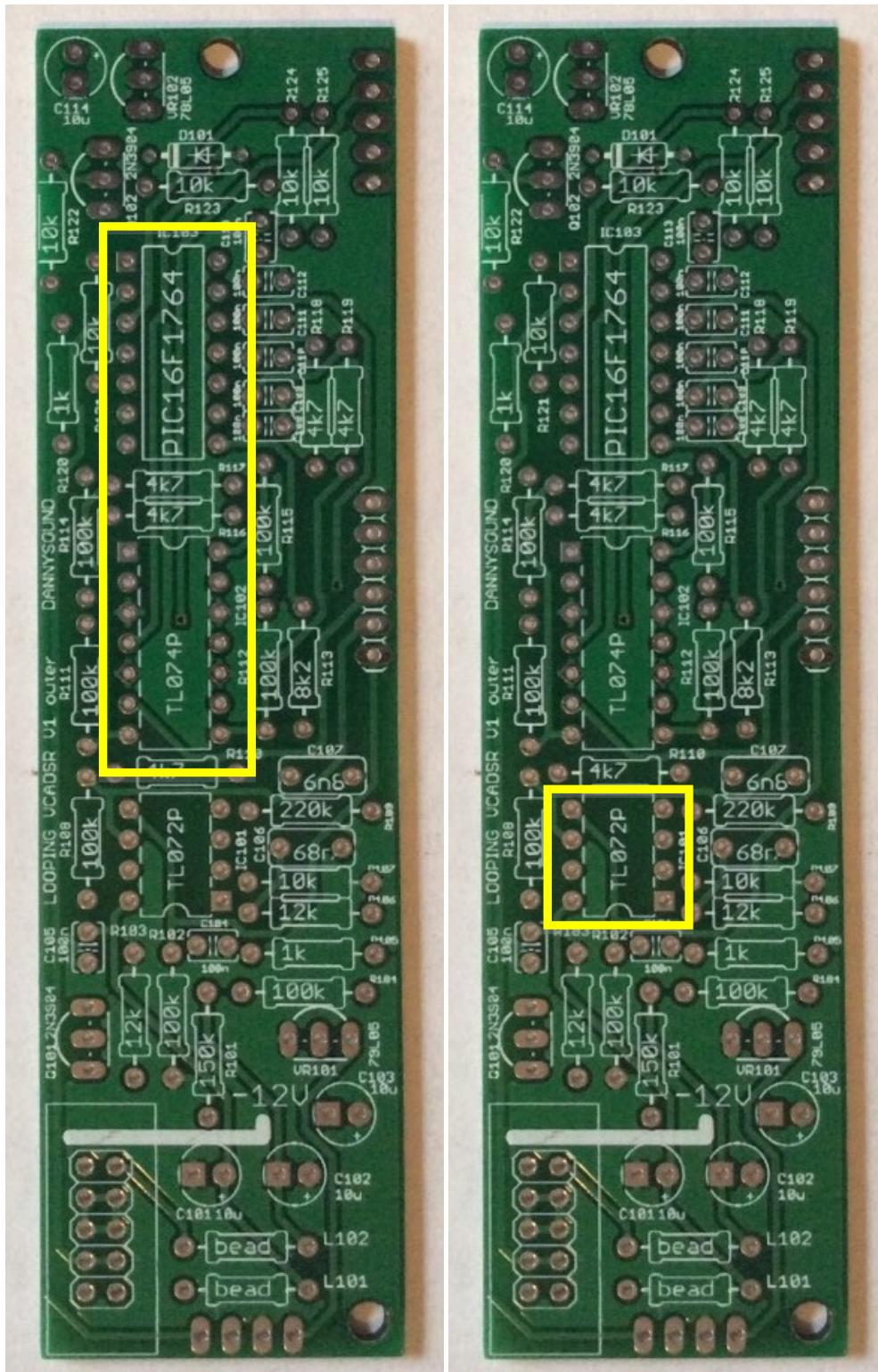
LOW PROFILE CAPS



12) – **8 x 100n Caps (2.5mm pitch leads)**

(C104, C105, C108, C109, C110, C111, C112, C113)

IC SOCKETS

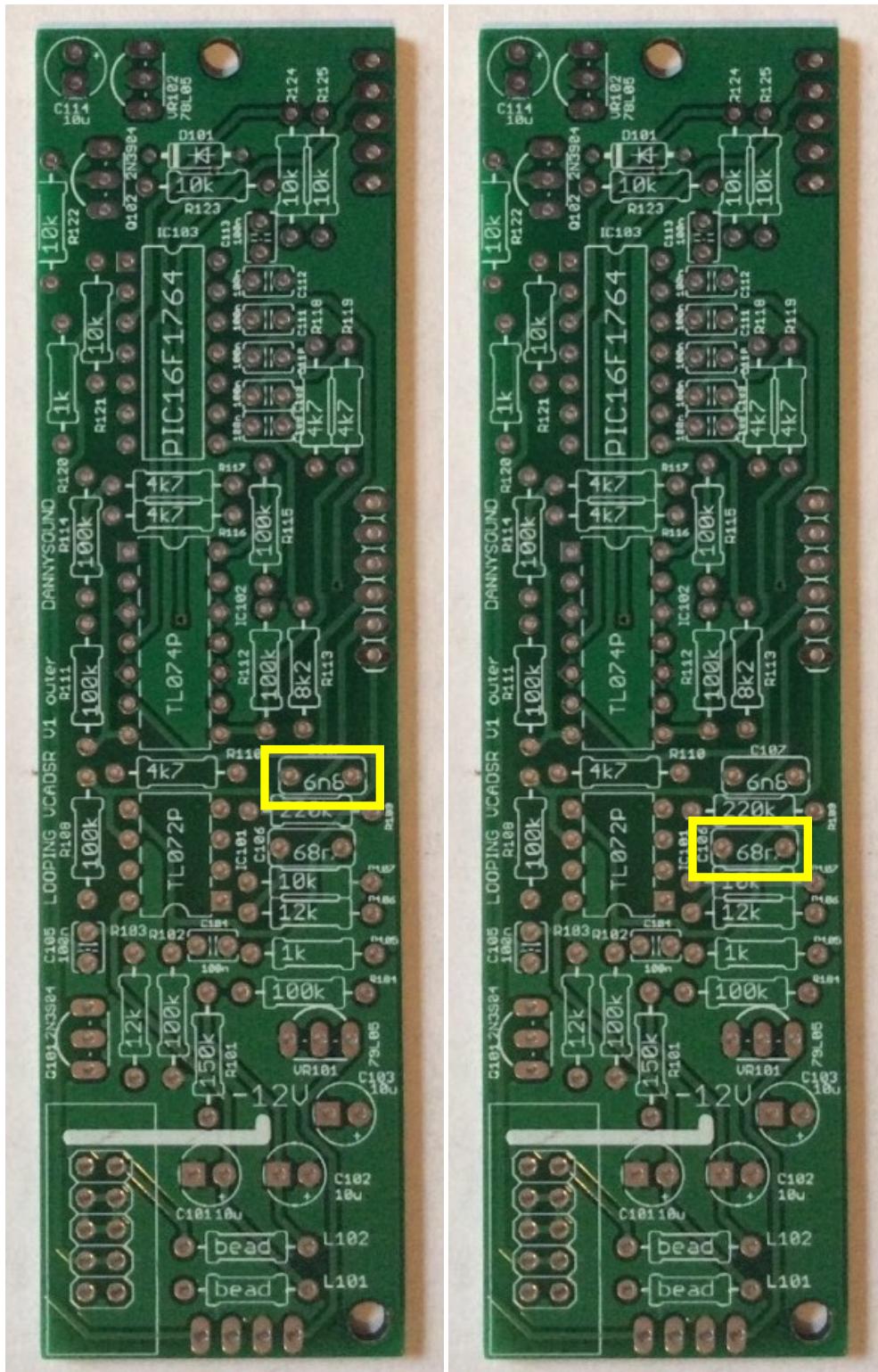


13) – 2 x 14 pin IC sockets

14) – 1 x 8 pin IC socket

Note: Mind orientation – match the notch on each socket with the notch on the PCB silkscreen.

CAPS – MKT POLYESTER BOX

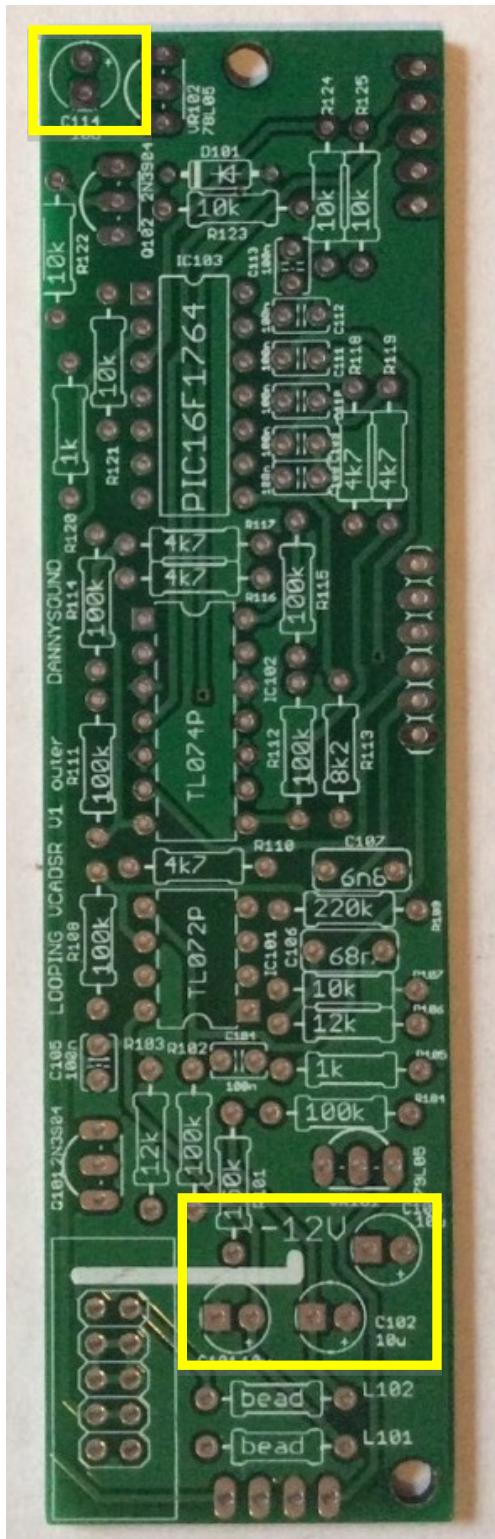


15) – 1 x 6n8 (C107)

16) – 1 x 68n (C106)

Note: these two capacitors look very similar – be sure to check the part codes on the bag and correctly identify each part before placing.

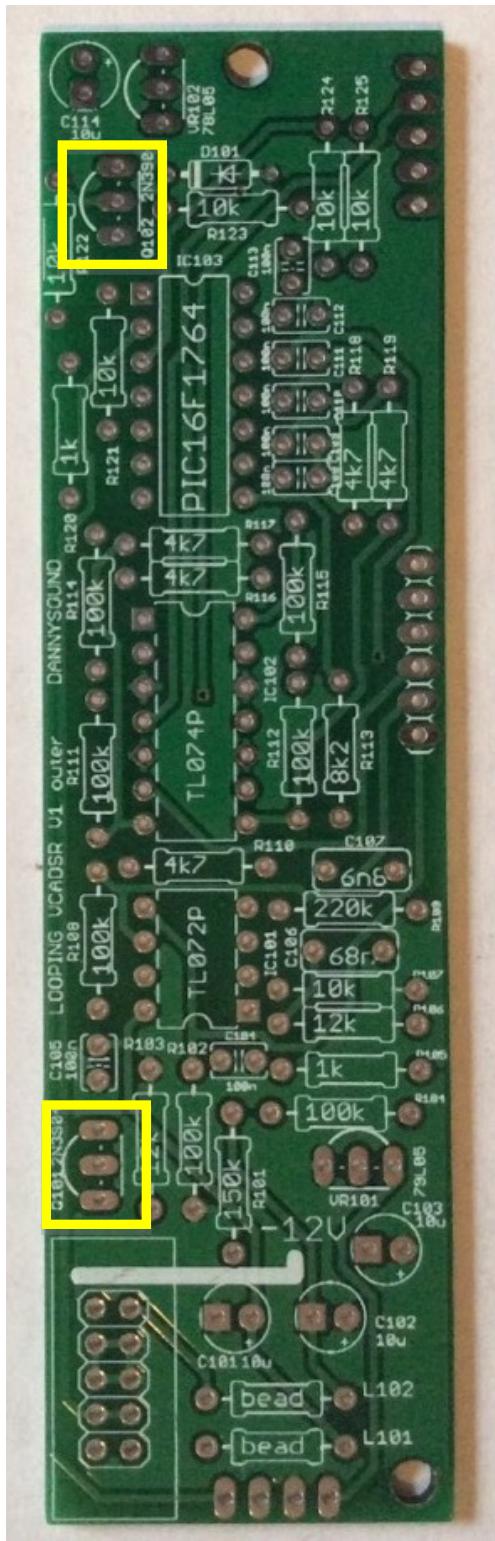
CAPS - ELECTROLYTIC



17) – 4 x 10 μ (C101, C102, C103, C114)

Note: mind polarity - the negative shorter lead should go to the square pad on the PCB

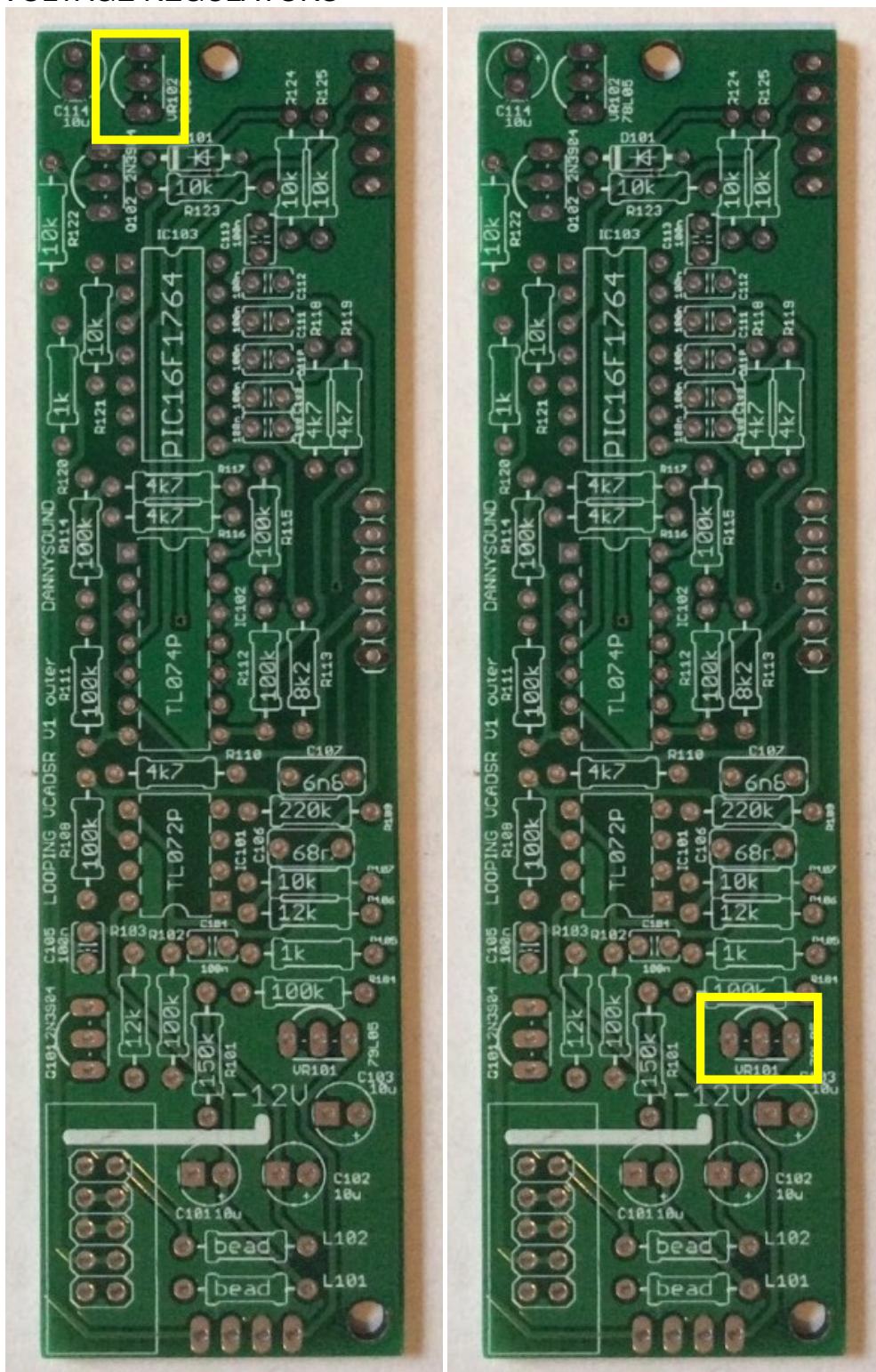
TRANSISTORS



18) – 2 x 2N3904 (Q101, Q102)

Note: mind polarity – match curve of component with PCB silkscreen)

VOLTAGE REGULATORS



19) – 1 x 78L05 (VR102)

20) – 1 x 79L05 (VR101)

Note: these two parts look very similar! Be sure to read the part code on each regulator carefully before placing them.

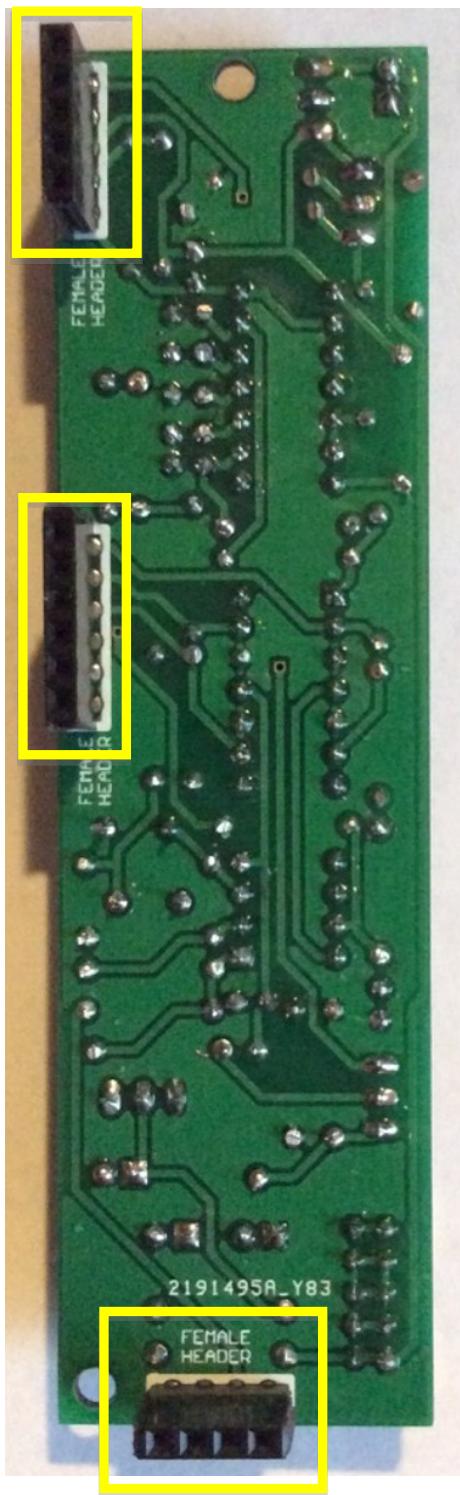
mind polarity – match curve of component with PCB silkscreen

POWER HEADER

**21) – 1 x 2x5 Power Header**

Note: orientation is vital! Be sure that the slot faces the edge of the PCB as indicated above.

FEMALE HEADERS

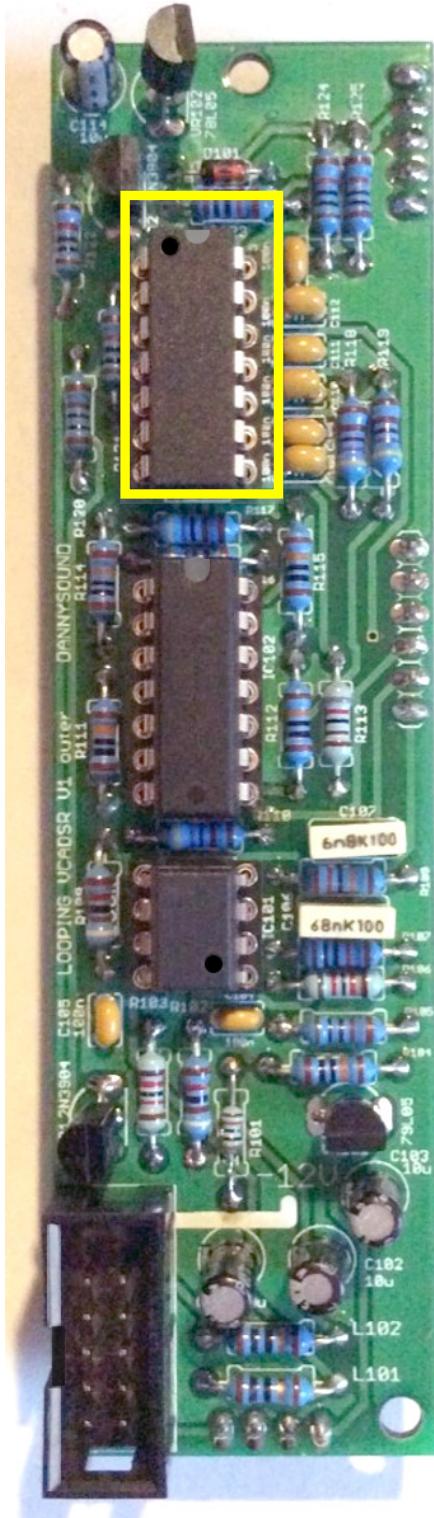


22) – 3 x FEMALE Headers

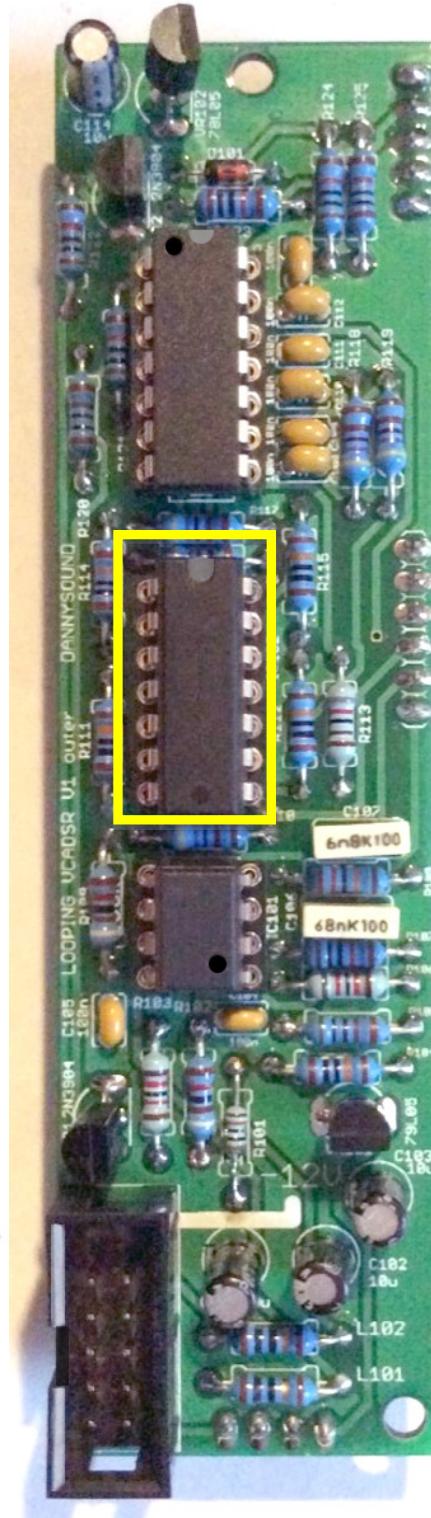
Note: these headers are placed on the opposite side to all previous components

How to cut female headers to size: <https://youtu.be/qDG3VFSMSPQ>

ICs

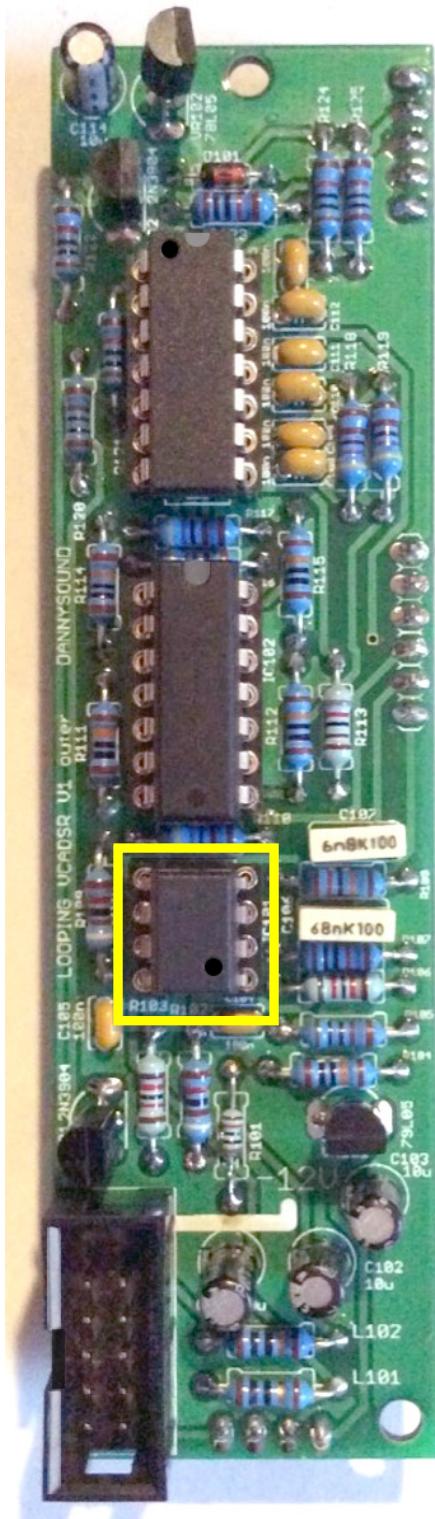


23) – 1 x Electric Druid IC



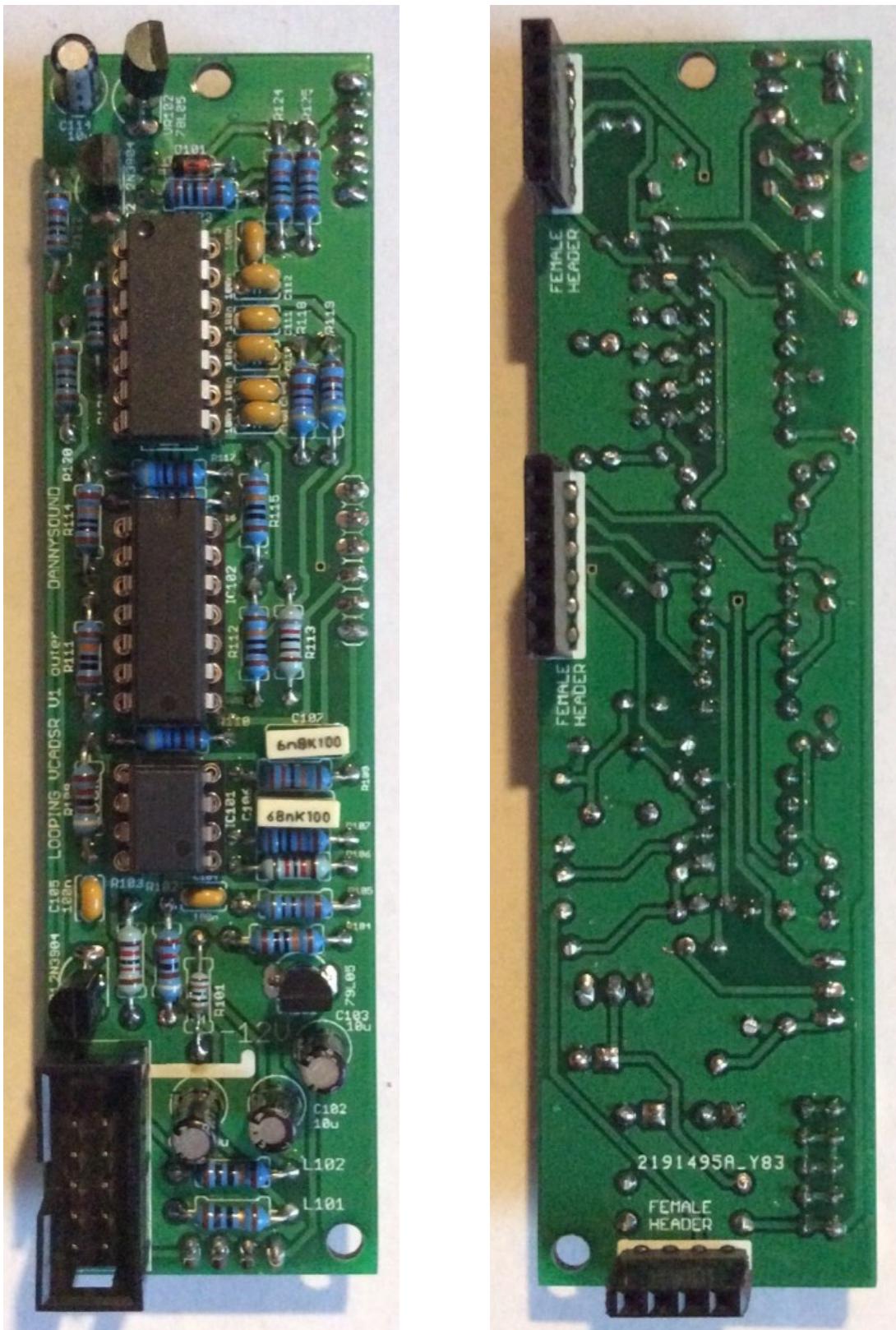
24) – 1 x TL074

Note: Mind orientation – match notch on each chip with the PCB and IC socket



25) – 1 x TL072

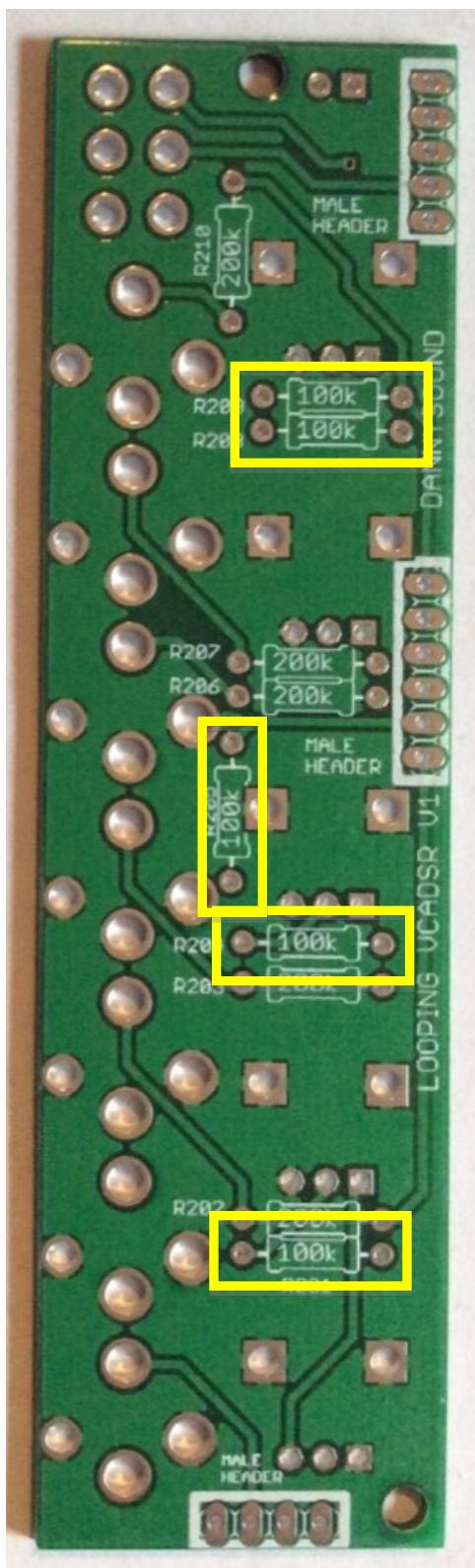
Note: Mind orientation – match the dot on the chip with IC socket notch



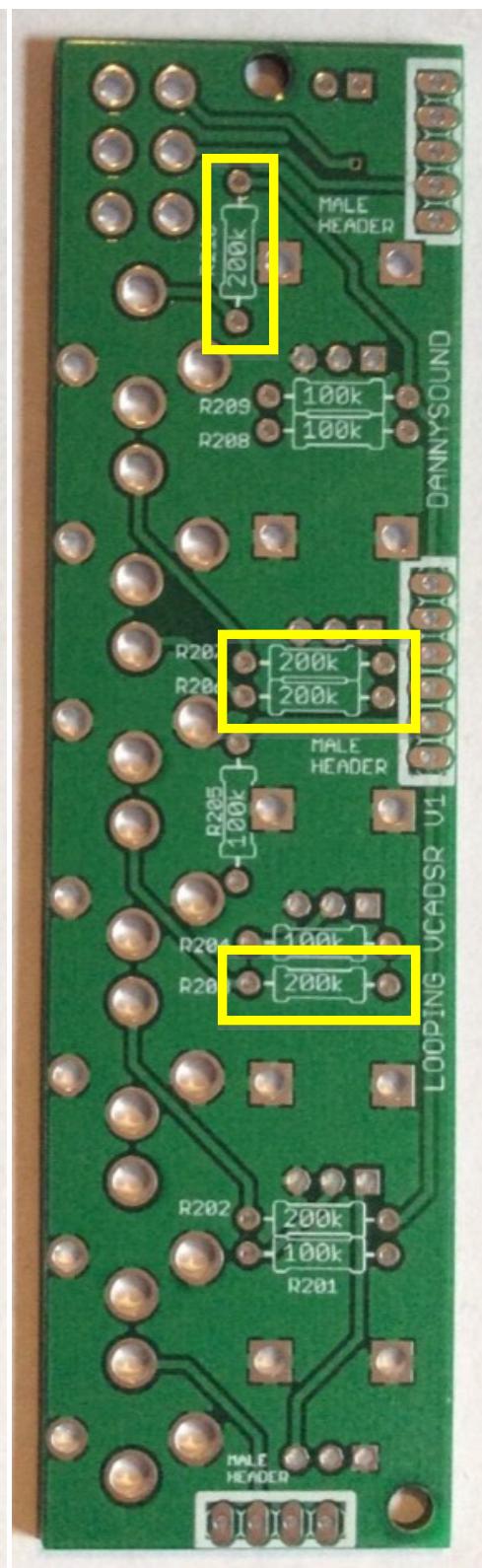
The back PCB is now complete!

5 Outer Board

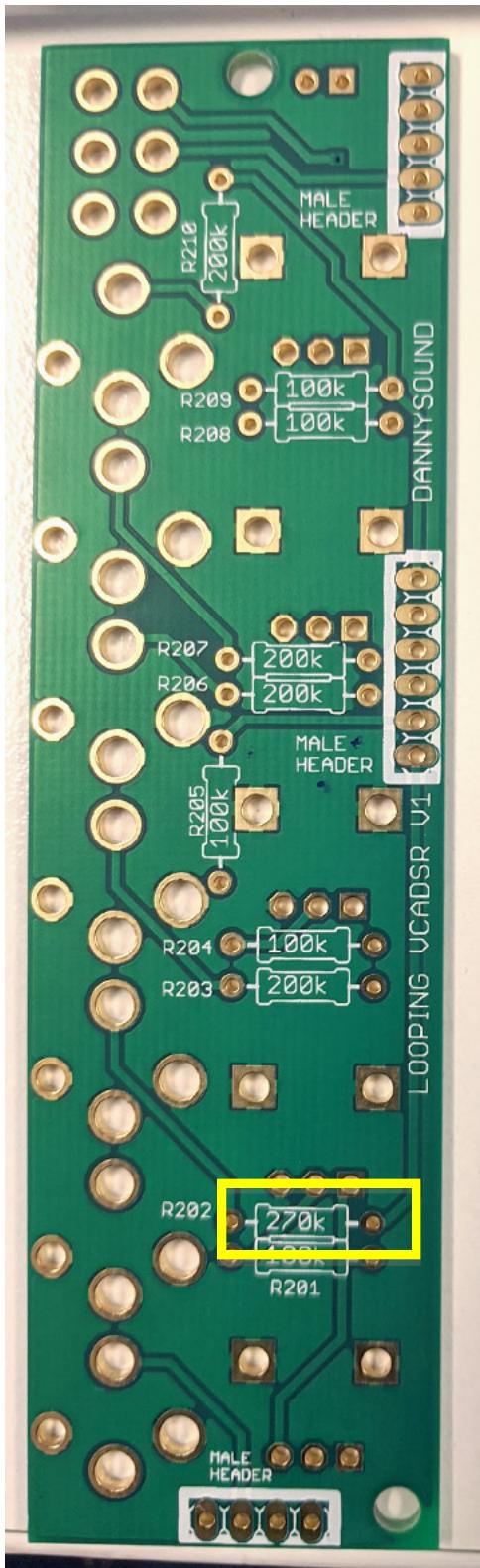
RESISTORS



26) – **5 x 100k**
(R201, R204, R205, R208, R209)

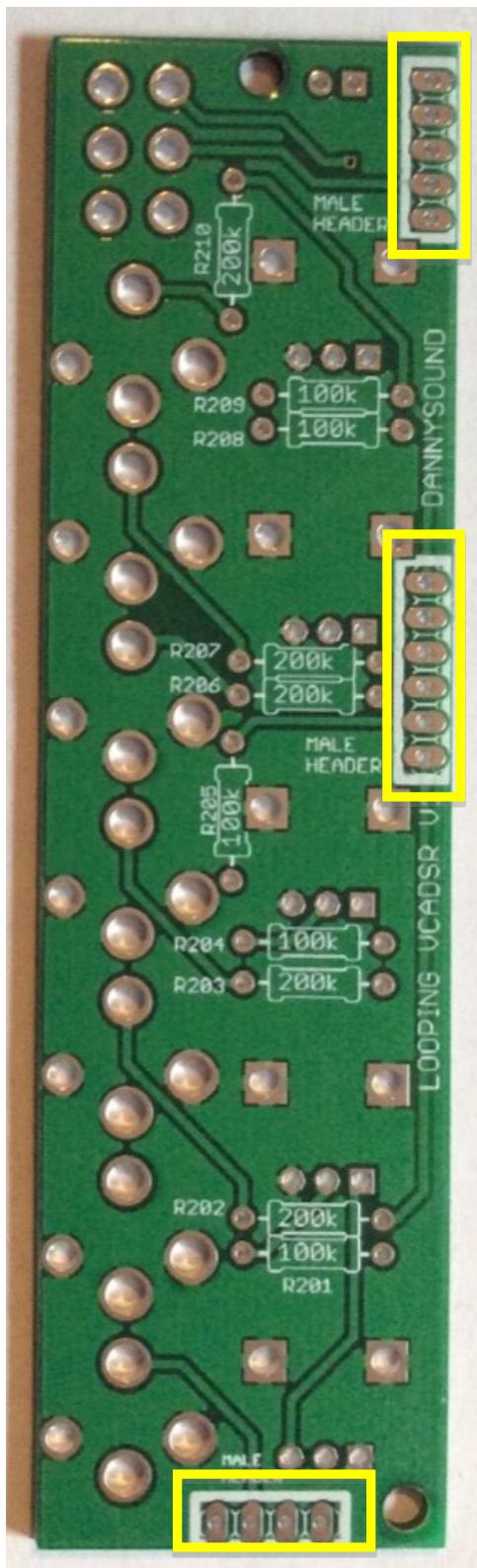


27) – **4 x 200k** (R203, R206, R207, R210)

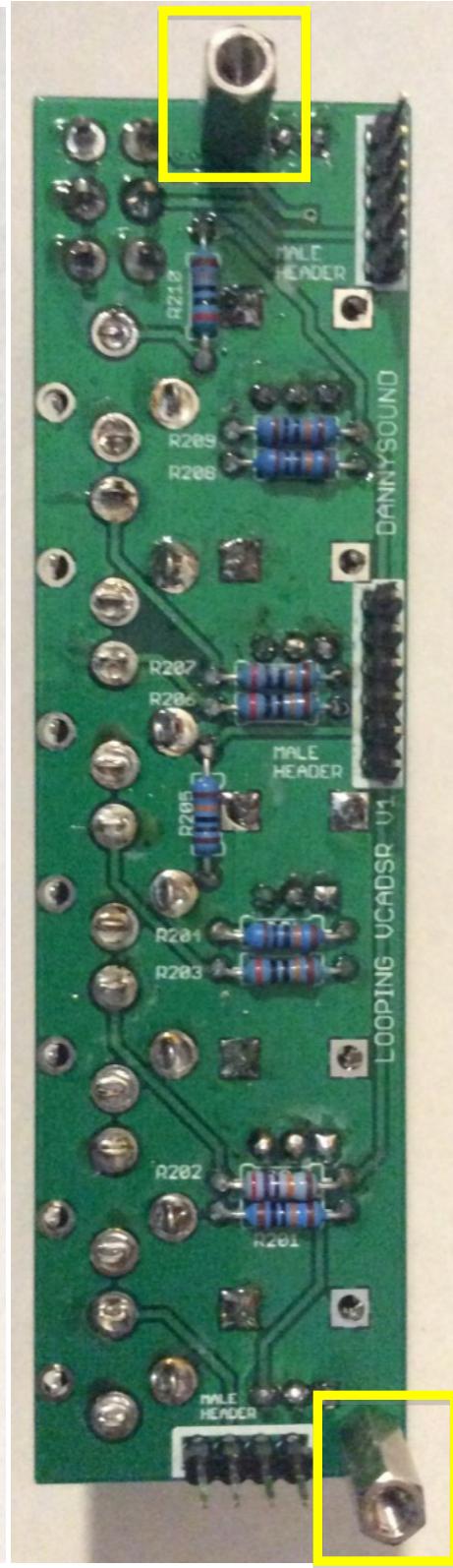


28) – 1 x 270k (R202)

HEADERS



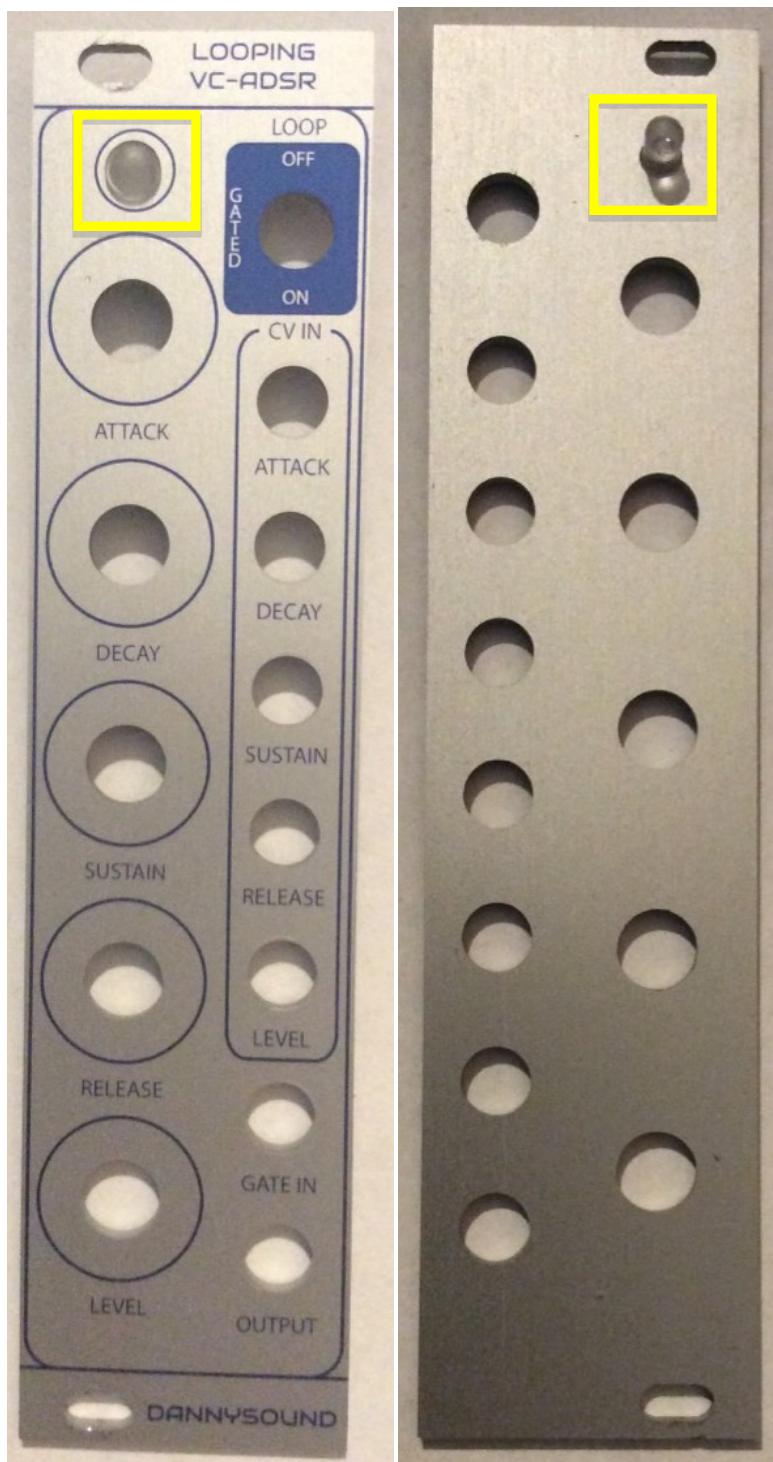
29) – 3 x MALE Headers



30) – 2 x 11mm female standoff

6 Panel Components and Final Assembly

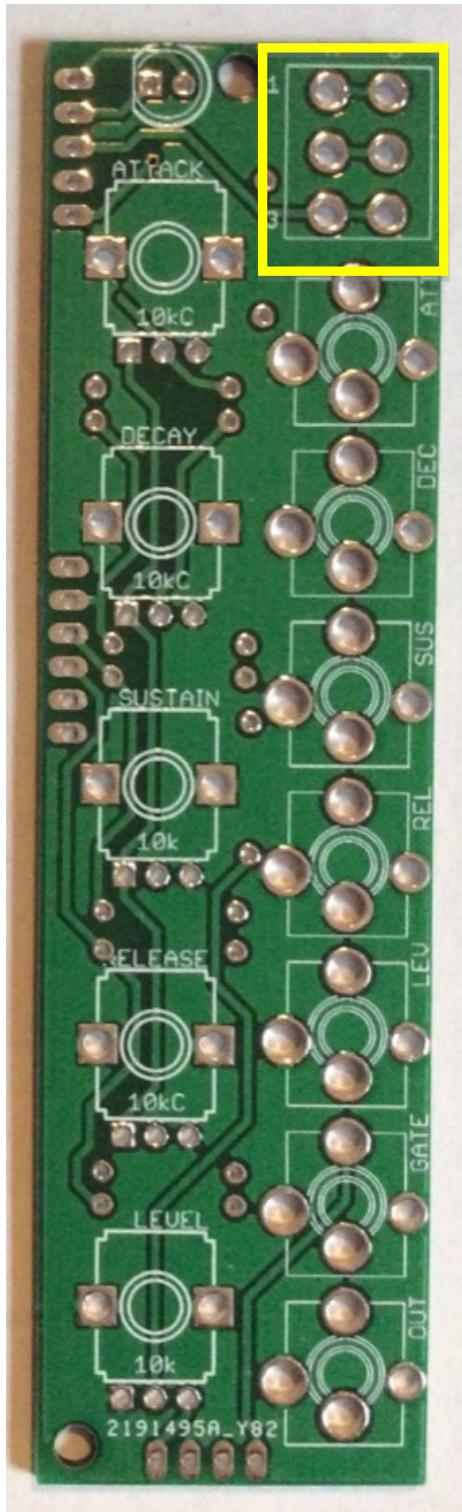
Apart from the toggle switch, these Components should be inserted but **NOT SOLDERED** until the panel has been placed on top of the PCB. This is to ensure that the PCB fits the panel properly.



31) – **1 x 5mm light pipe** (secure in place the rubber holder)

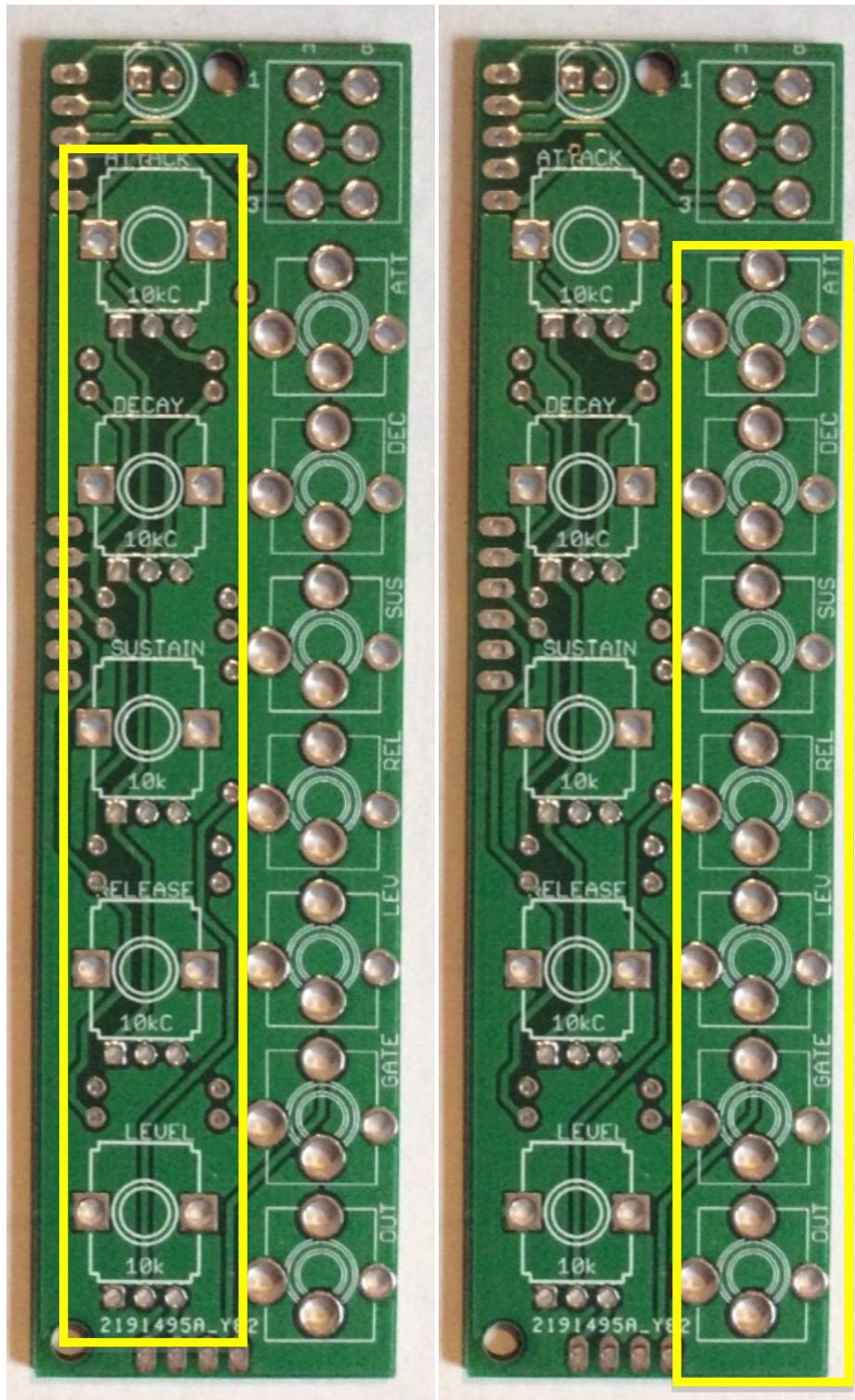
SWITCH

Solder **ONE PIN** of the DPDT switch to keep it in place and allow easy repositioning if required.



32) – **1 x DPDT (centre off) Toggle Switch**

POTS AND JACK SOCKETS

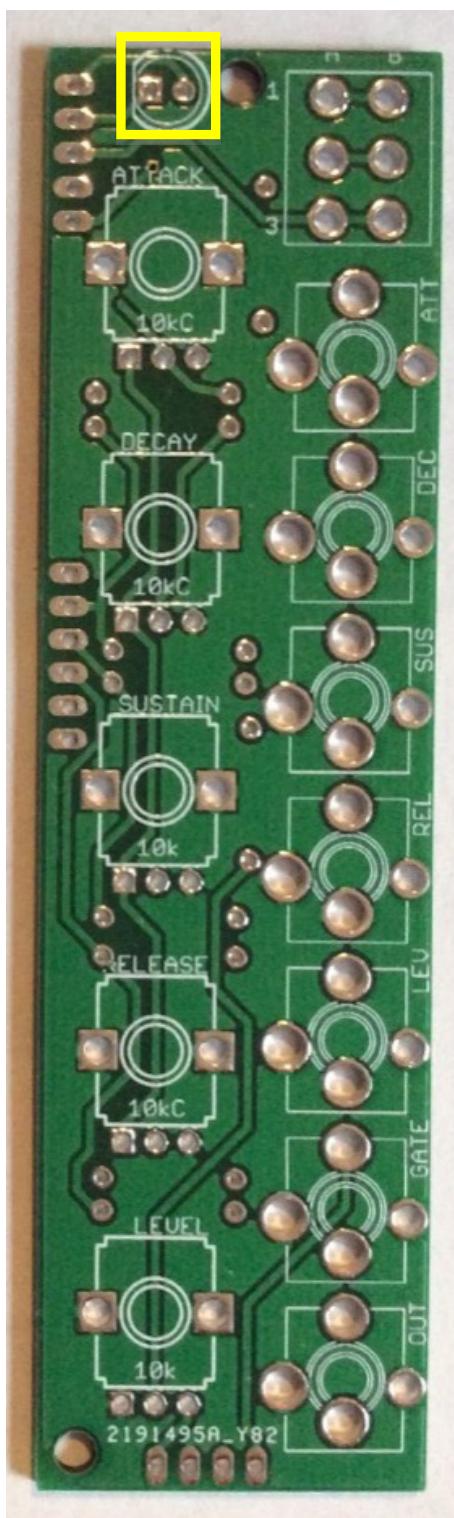


33 – 5 x B10k (linear) pots

34 – 7 x PJ301BM Jack Sockets

(**Note:** PCB may be marked
incorrectly for some pots – B10K is correct for all)

LED AND SWITCH WASHERS



35) – 1 x Amber LED

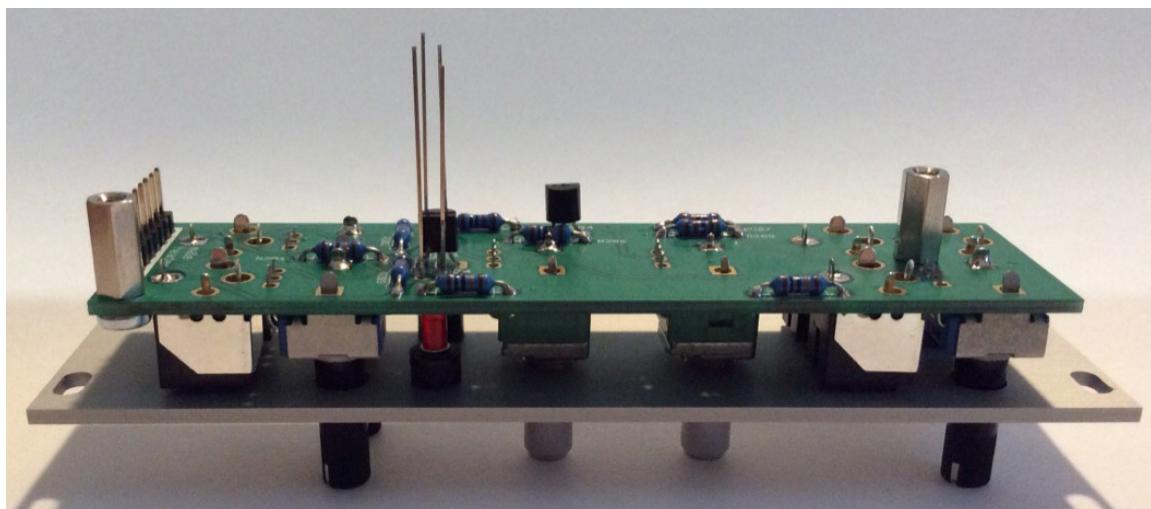
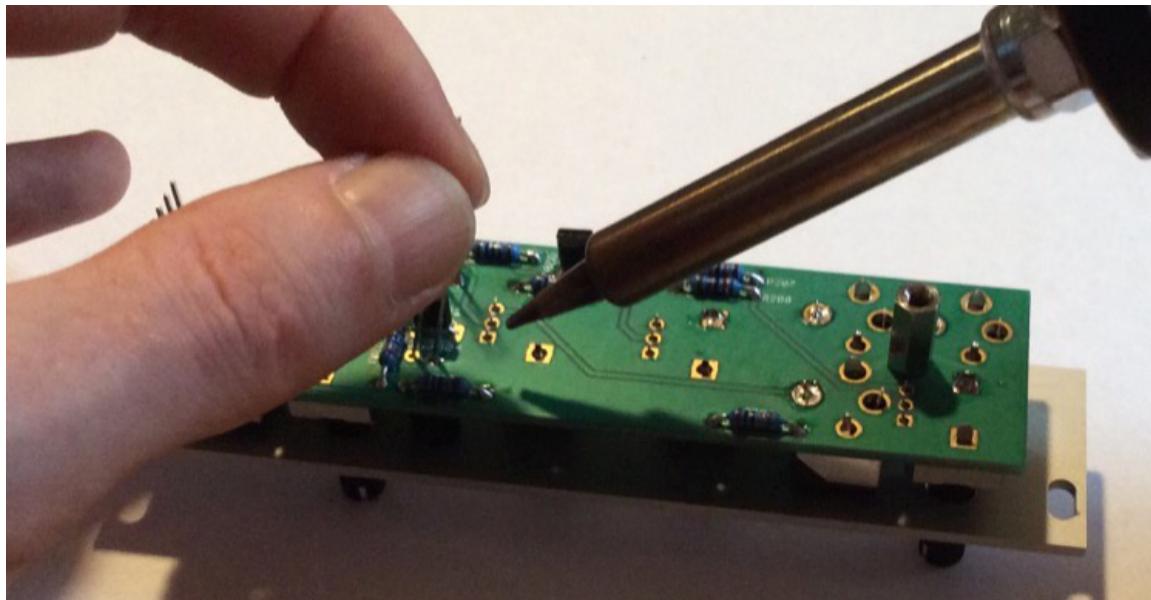
36) – 1 x flat washer 1 x crinkle washer

NOTE: orientation is vital for the LED, the shorter leg should go to the square pad and flat side of the PCB silkscreen diagram



37) – Fit the panel in place then while holding everything together turn over and solder one pin of the ATTACK CV jack socket and one pin of the OUTPUT jack socket.

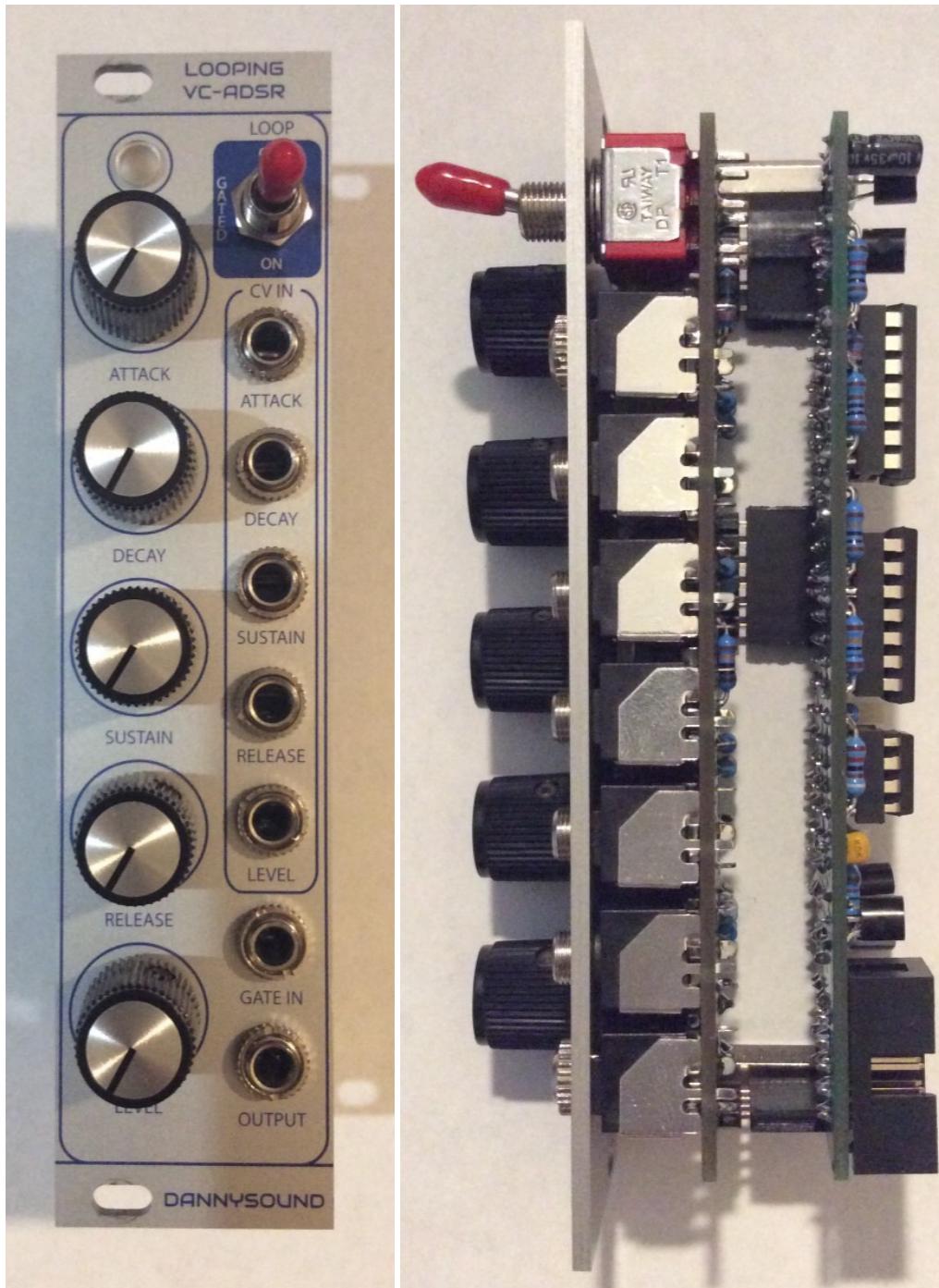
Ensure these sockets are pressed to the PCB properly (reflow the solder whilst applying pressure to the socket if it's not a snug fit) then attach the 2 nuts as shown above to keep everything in place.



TIP – Solder only one leg of the LED, you can then reflow the solder to that pin while holding the LED legs to position it against the light pipe when the pots PCB is attached to the panel.



38) – Add the knobs then solder one of the ground tabs of each pot. There is a little room for adjustment of the pots so if they look out of alignment against the graphics you can reflow the solder whilst applying a little pressure to get them positioned perfectly.



39) – Add the rest of the nuts to the jack sockets to hold everything together firmly.

Once that's all done and looking good you can solder the rest of the pins of each component. Finally add the outer PCB and screws.

7 Testing

There is no calibration required for the Looping VCADSR, only testing. If you have an oscilloscope you can connect it to the output of the VCADSR. If you don't have an oscilloscope you can monitor the VCADSR LED as a visual indication that the module is functioning properly.

Set the control as follows:

LOOP – ON

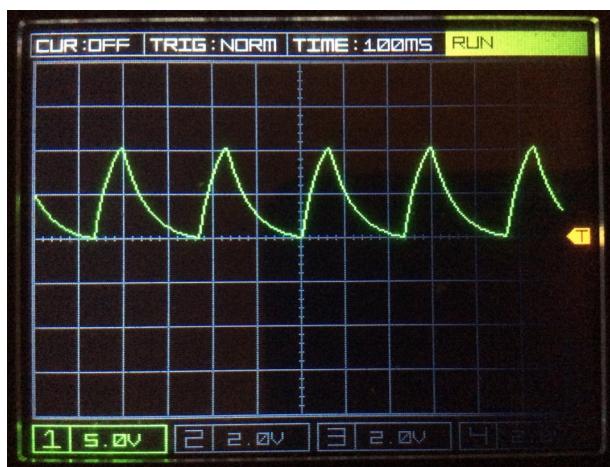
ATTACK – 50%

DECAY – 50%

SUSTAIN – 0

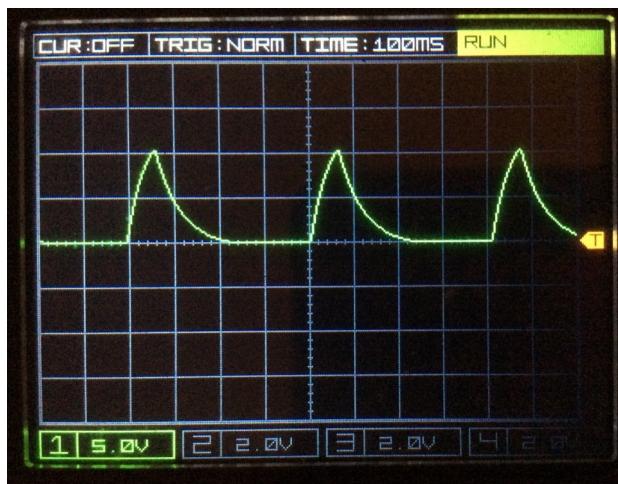
RELEASE – 0

LEVEL – 100%



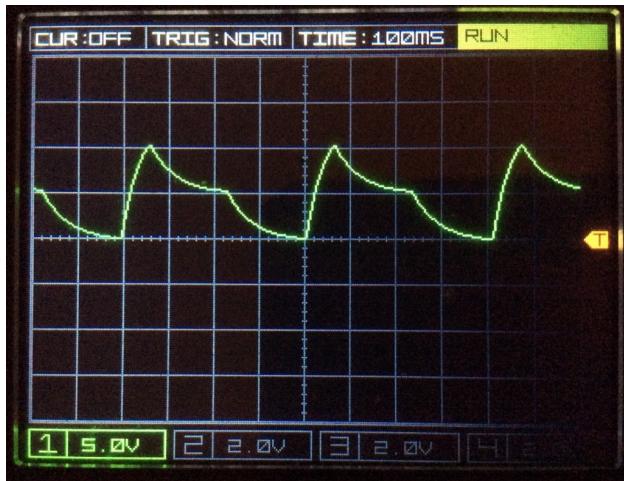
You should see the LED flashing quite fast and the wave form shown above.

Increase the RELEASE to add a delay between the ATTACK / DECAY cycles.



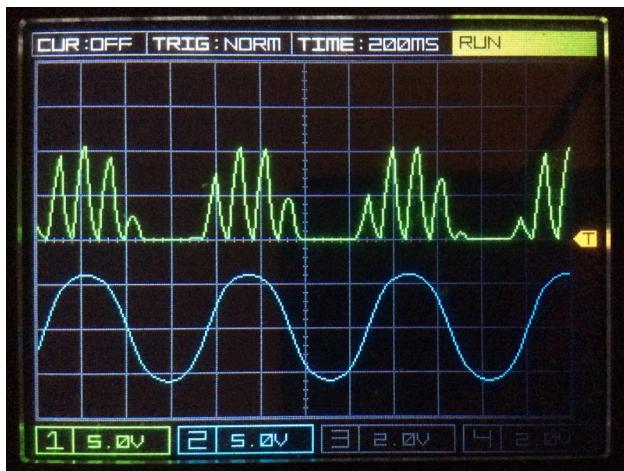
You should see the LED flashing a bit slower and the waveform shown above.

Increasing the SUSTAIN will add a midpoint voltage level between the decay end and the release start.

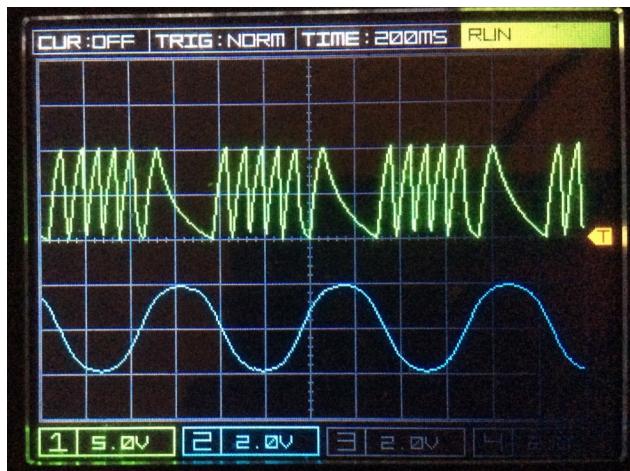


You should see the LED flashing in keeping with the waveform shown above.

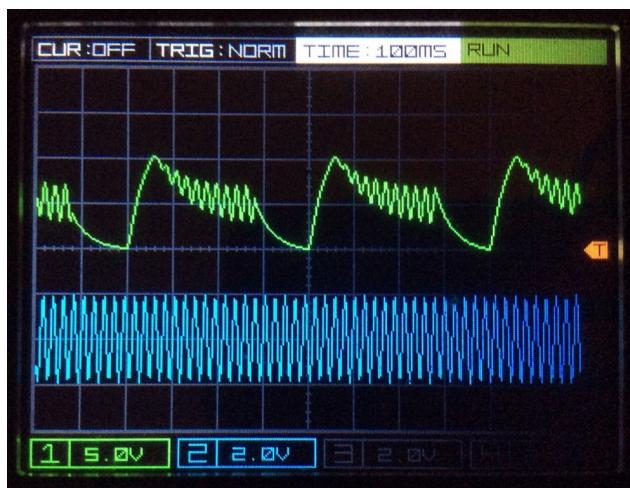
To test the CV inputs you can connect an LFO (preferably through an attenuator) to the CV inputs and observe the output.



The oscilloscope plots above show the ADSR output in green being amplitude modulated by the LFO in blue. The LEVEL control is set to 50% and the LFO is providing $\pm 5V$ into the LEVEL CV.



The plots above show the LFO modulating the DECAY CV. The LFO has been attenuated to $\pm 2V$.



These plots show the SUSTAIN CV being modulated by a much faster LFO (in blue). The SUSTAIN control is set to 50% and the LFO is providing $\pm 2V$ into the SUSTAIN CV.

You can now test the GATE input by setting the LOOP mode to GATED or OFF and apply a gate signal to the GATE input.

NOTE:

To use the module with Velocity Sensitivity (0V to 10V) set the LEVEL control to 0 and connect the Velocity CV to the LEVEL CV input.

8 Modifications

The CV input resistors can be increased to reduce the amount of CV sent to the microcontroller. This might be useful if you wish to connect LFOs directly without attenuating the signal first.

The input resistors are:

ATTACK – R210 (200k)

DECAY – R207 (200k)

SUSTAIN – R206 (200k)

RELEASE – R203 (200k)

If the value of the resistor is doubled (390k would be fine), the CV amount will be halved.

The LEVEL CV works with 0V to 10V signals. If you wish to use it with 0V to 5V can try reducing the value of R202 from 270k to around 100k. This hasn't been tested though!