



Boss RV-500

Carefully considered design might let you take care of your reverb and delay needs with one stompbox

Words Trevor Curwen **Photography** Olly Curtis

Although Boss and parent company Roland had been at the forefront of effect technology for many years, they appeared to have missed a trick by not having a direct equivalent to the large format pedals typical of Strymon's Timeline, Big Sky and Mobius. That all changed with the launch of the DD-500 digital delay and now they have done a similar job for reverb and modulation pedals with the RV-500 and the MD-500.

The RV-500 is a three-footswitch pedal that's based around stored patches. There's a Normal setting that sees the first two footswitches recalling patches stored in banks (accessed by stepping on two footswitches together) with the third footswitch assigned to Tap Tempo or a control function within a patch like bringing the shimmer in and out or adding delay to the reverb. There's also real flexibility to configure them for different functions such as instant recall for three patches, stepping directly through presets or the A/B Simul mode that lets you use two presets at the same time in a series or parallel connection and mixed or split A/B output.

There are 12 selectable reverb modes with 21 reverb types between them, and each patch also has a full-function digital delay with modulation that can be used in series or parallel – even by itself if you turn the reverb level down. Five knobs

give you instant on the fly tweaking for the major parameters but there's also a massive range of editable parameters tucked away in menus, clearly seen in the large well-lit display or accessed via the USB connection to the free editor/librarian software.

We get the classy reverbs of all varieties that Boss/Roland is capable of but they have also thrown in a Space Echo multi-head tape delay emulation for extra flexibility and an alternative to the delays with the reverbs. With all of that there's a massive amount of variation available, especially in A/B Simul mode where you can effectively have two reverbs and two delays combined, or have the onstage practicality of reverb on one footswitch and delay on the other.

VERDICT

There's plenty to be explored in this immensely practical pedal that brings reverb and delay together. With all that memory and the various footswitching options it's the perfect tool if you need different ambiances for different songs. **G**

PROS: Flexible switching, delay with each reverb, Space Echo mode, plentiful patch memories

CONS: Setting up sounds with the front panel menu may be tedious for some users

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: Taiwan

TYPE: Reverb pedal

FEATURES: Buffered bypass or True bypass, 297 onboard patch memories, MIDI control, software editor/librarian

MODES: Room, Hall, Plate, Spring, Shimmer, Fast Decay, Early Reflection, Non-Linear, SFX, Dual, SRV, Space Echo

CONTROLS: Mode switch, Time/Value, Pre-Delay, E Level, Low, High, four function buttons, footswitch A, footswitch B, TAP/CTL footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard inputs (A/Mono, B), standard outputs (A/Mono, B), CTL/EXP input, MIDI IN, MIDI OUT, USB

POWER: 4x Alkaline battery (AA, LR6), 9V adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 138 (d) x 170 (w) x 62mm (h)

8/10

MANUFACTURER
BOSS

PRICE
£385

MODEL
MD-500

CONTACT
01792 702701 WWW.ROLAND.CO.UK



BOSS

Boss MD-500

They made the first chorus pedal but has Boss come up with the ultimate pedal for multiple modulations?

Words Trevor Curwen Photography Olly Curtis

We all like a bit of the swirly stuff on our pedalboards and the MD-500 offers it in just about all the guises that guitar players crave. There are 12 distinct modulation modes with most having options to select several variations on the theme (there's 28 algorithms in all). In Chorus mode, for example, you can have chorus unique to the MD-500, the chorus and vibrato sounds from a vintage CE-1 or a 1980s LA sessionman favourite. The whole footswitching/patch recall scenario and deep editing capability is the same as the RV-500 but there's a different set of values assigned to the knobs - as well as the crucial Rate and Depth, you get Parameter 1 and 2 knobs with functions determined separately for each mode.

Alongside the standard triumvirate of Chorus, Flanger and Phaser the MD-500 offers more specialised variations on these themes, notably Dimension simulating Roland's Dimension D studio rackmount that delivered its own unique spacious sparkle, and Classic Vibe, a tasty Uni-Vibe emulation. Incidentally, to answer that question of whether to have fuzz before or after a Uni-Vibe, an insert loop function lets you add another pedal into the MD-500 signal chain and flexible routing saved with a patch allows you to have it before or after the modulation or even between two modulation types in Simul mode.

You won't need to insert a dirt pedal for the Rotary effect though as one parameter adds a growly driven-Leslie sound. Smooth amp-style tremolo is on offer but if you want to get more extreme with amplitude modulation there's the Slicer with its choppy on/off that can be so effectively used with tap tempo. On top of those there's excellent auto-wah, ring mod and octave effects. As individual effects there's excellent stuff onboard but the fact that you can combine two in A/B Simul mode takes this to a whole new place of creating stunning hybrid effects or just having a different pair of effects instantly available for every song in a set.

VERDICT

The single pedal supplying a whole range of modulation needs is a very practical genre but some of them are limited to just one effect at a time. That the MD-500 can do two independent effects separately or combined gives it an edge over the close competition: it's a powerful machine with a flexibility that's hard to beat. **G**

PROS: Comprehensive range of modulation types, A/B Simul mode's combined effects, practical insert loop, good number of patch memories
CONS: Again, the setting up isn't for all

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: Taiwan

TYPE: Modulation pedal

FEATURES: Buffered bypass or True bypass, 297 onboard patch memories, MIDI control, software editor/librarian

MODES: Chorus,

Flanger, Phaser, Classic Vibe, Vibrato, Tremolo, Dimension, Ring Mod, Rotary, Filter, Slicer, Overtone

CONTROLS: Mode switch, Rate/Value, Depth, E Level,

Parameter 1, Parameter 2, four function buttons, footswitch B, TAP/CTL footswitch

CONNECTIONS: USB, Standard inputs (A/Mono, B) and outputs (A/Mono, B), CTL/EXP input, MIDI IN, MIDI OUT,

POWER: 4x Alkaline battery (AA, LR6), 9V adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 138 (d) x 170 (w) x 62 mm (h)

Guitarist
CHOICE

9/10