

Arturia 3 Delays You'll Actually Use €199 PC MAC

This plugin triple-header from Grenoble brings old and new together in a thoroughly engaging toolbox for the echo-hungry producer

> The fourth in Arturia's rapidly advancing series of smugly-titled plugin three-packs comprises two vintage hardware delay emulations and an original new design. Its 3 Filters... (8/10, **cm257**), 3 Preamps... (9/10, **cm257**) and 3 Compressors... (10/10, **cm271**) counterparts were all very successful, so expectations are high.

To get housekeeping out of the way, all three Delays feature a resizable (60-200%) GUI, a consistent preset browser, and a pop-down 'Advanced' control panel housing extra parameters that extend their capabilities beyond those of their corporeal forebears. We're surprised to find that the helpful 'Sound Design Tips' feature included with 3 Compressors hasn't made the cut this time, though.

Delay Tape-201

Kicking things off, Delay Tape-201 is a virtual

recreation of the Roland RE-201 Space Echo - see *Back in time*. Unlike the real thing, Tape-201 is stereo, as reflected in its choice of L/R, Ping-Pong and Mid/Side modes; separate Repeat Rate (delay time) knobs for the Left/Mid and Right/Side channels; and Rate Offset and Width controls, which dial in discrepancies between

"Tape-201 does a stand-up impression of Roland's timeless classic, delivering warm delay and reverb"

the two delay times, and widen or narrow the stereo image. Crucially, all 12 RE-201 configuration modes are accessible, each setting up a different combination of the three playback tape heads, with and without spring reverb, or just the reverb on its own.

In the Advanced panel, the Input EQ section gets the jump on the main Bass and Treble tone controls, enabling pre-processing frequency shaping using low- (3-20kHz) and high-pass (20Hz-1.2kHz) filters, and a parametric peaking band (20Hz-20kHz). Alongside that, the Motor section lets you dial in tape Flutter and Noise for analogue realism - the latter very subtle - and adjust how fast playback speed changes kick in with movement of the Repeat Rate knobs.

The most creative addition to Arturia's 201, though, is its onboard LFO. Running at up to 20Hz and syncable to host tempo, this can be aimed at any one of the main or Input Equalizer

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controls to modulate it with one of six waveforms, including Sample + Hold.

Tape-201 does a stand-up impression of Roland's timeless classic, delivering suitably warm delay, reverb and - now - modulation effects, with convincing tape-style distortion making its presence felt as the input gain is cranked up.

Delay Memory Brigade

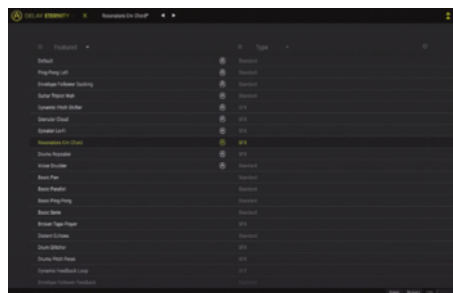
Partnering nicely with Tape-201, Memory Brigade is an emulation of the Electro-Harmonix Memory Man bucket brigade delay pedal. Being the 'Deluxe' version, you get input preamp gain control, and a choice of depth-adjustable Chorus and Vibrato; but handily, the longer delay time range of the more modern versions (up to 1000ms, as opposed to 400ms) are available if required. And again, the stereo implementation proves transformative, with separate L/M and R/S delay times, and Stereo Offset and Widening.

The same Input EQ and LFO as found in Tape-201 are in the Advanced panel, alongside an Envelope Follower, for modulation of a single parameter by input signal amplitude. This is a great inclusion, opening all kinds of dynamically controlled effects and expanding the remit of this deliciously grungy delay plugin.

Delay Eternity

As a glance at the interface makes apparent, the all-original Eternity is a far more powerful proposition than its retro teammates, with five core modes determining the routing of its two stereo delay lines. Single, Ping Pong and Pan modes use one line, the last progressively widening the stereo image out from mono with each successive repeat; and Dual and Dual Serial add in the second delay line in parallel or series. Then you've got a multimode filter (HP/LP/BP) with a choice of 6, 12 (SEM, resonant) and 36dB/octave slopes, and digital distortion (bitcrushing and sample rate reduction), both of which are switched in for each delay line independently.

After the Input EQ (which, in this case, for reasons unknown, extends the low-pass filter



All three delays share the same simple-but-effective preset browser



70s icons: Roland's RE-201 Space Echo and the Electro-Harmonix Memory Man

Back in time

The stand-out plugin here - for us at least - is the completely original Eternity, but when crusty vintage vibes are called for, Tape-201 and Memory Brigade are the two to turn to.

Manufactured between 1974 and 1990, Roland's RE-201 Space Echo is one of the most sought-after and beloved delay units ever made. The characteristic dark, melting feedback of its tape delay, and funky 'sproing' of its spring reverb made it a perfect fit for dub and reggae in particular, and it still commands serious prices on the second hand market.

Debuting in 1976, the Electro-Harmonix Memory Man bucket brigade

delay pedal has remained a firm favourite of guitarists through numerous revisions over the decades, and indeed, you can still buy it today.

The bucket brigade delay (BBD) was invented to stand in as a cheaper, more reliable alternative to tape, but found its own spot on the analogue audio effects landscape thanks to its uniquely gritty sound. It works by passing the input signal through a series of consecutive capacitors in order to delay it, with the speed of progression determining the delay time, and various means used to rein in the inevitable aliasing - companding in the case of the Deluxe Memory Man.

range down to 1kHz but tops the high-pass out at 1kHz), the Advanced section doubles up on the other two plugins with two LFOs and an Envelope Follower each able to modulate two targets at a time. The LFOs can be linked, too, so that LFO 2's rate becomes an adjustable multiple of LFO 1's for synchronised modulation.

Eternity is clearly the most versatile and creatively liberating of the three plugins. The dual delay lines encourage complex rhythmic work, the filter and distortion sound lovely, and the modulation setup is hugely enlivening. The 1 Delay You'll Actually Use Most, perhaps.

Actual reality

Ultimately, 3 Delays You'll Actually Use is a perfectly straightforward proposition, serving up two easy-to-use and evocative classics and a more imaginative headliner that, disregarding their differing analogue flavours, feels like the focal point. There's not much to criticise, apart from the puzzlingly restricted downward range on Tape-201 and Memory Brigade's low-pass filters, and the lack of unipolar LFO modes.

It's worth mentioning, too, that each plugin can be had individually for €99, so you can buy Eternal on its own if you're already sorted for tape delays and BBDs. **cm**

Web arturia.com

Alternatively

Soundtoys EchoBoy
cm227 » 10/10 » \$199

Models the Space Echo, Memory Man and many more. Reviewed as part of Soundtoys 5 bundle

AudioThing Outer Space
cm245 » 10/10 » €69

Another stunning Space Echo emulation plugin

Verdict

For Superb Space Echo and Memory Man emulations
Nifty modulation, EQ and other 'extras'
Eternity is a creative powerhouse
A broad sonic palette, all told

Against LFOs could be more flexible
Needlessly limited filter ranges

Two sterling vintage delay emulations and a much more flexible new design - although you may well not need all three

8/10