



IK Multimedia T-RackS 5 Space Delay

€120 PC MAC

Classic tape delays add character in weird and wonderful ways. Let's see how this latest Roland emulation from IK Multimedia shapes up

> T-RackS is IK Multimedia's processing system and it provides a multitude of plugins that work either alone or as modules inside their mastering framework, T-RackS Suite. Over time T-RackS has accumulated an enviable array of almost 50 rather excellent processors, many of which, such as their Echoplex-inspired Tape Delay, are based on classic hardware processors. To get started you can buy one of the T-RackS bundles or download their free T-RackS CS version and purchase just the modules that you really want.

On the test bench is their latest addition, Space Delay, which emulates the unique sound of Roland's RE201 Space Echo. This tape-based delay actually combines a three-head delay and spring reverb, and you can use these independently or together to create anything from more subtle-sounding spaces perfect for vocals to more extreme, weird or unpredictable-sounding effects.

Although the colour scheme is red rather than green, Space Delay is styled to look just like Roland's original, and to that end you have a pretty similar layout to the hardware, with input and metering to the left, delay EQ (Bass and Treble), Rate and Feedback to the right and the large Mode knob in the middle.

The Mode knob (more on that below) activates specific head and reverb combinations

and the red LEDs in the Heads Pan section tell you if a head is in use.

Modernize

As you'd expect Space Delay has a number of software-only extras. Features include tempo sync, high and low-pass filters across the whole effect output, stereo or mono reverb setting, and panning both for individual tape heads and the overall reverb and delay components. A couple of options, Tape Age and Noise, do a good job of adding vintage flavour. Both work really well with our favourite feature, Ducking, to create some excellent pumping effects. Ducking also does a great job keeping the delays in check when the dry signal is present.

Just like the original hardware, maximum and minimum delay times are limited and different for each head – the maximum is 489ms (head 3) and minimum is 69ms (head 1). They are also controlled collectively by the single Rate control. This is of course authentic, but we do feel it's a shame you can't adjust times more freely and extensively. On a positive note, Space Delay is great fun, particularly when you modify the controls in real time, or use the FX Feed to spin small snatches of audio into the delay. So, throw in a bit of DAW automation and you'll be adding dub-inspired flavours in no time. Space Delay has only a handful of presets that don't really

showcase its capabilities, and, used as an insert across anything from guitars and horns to basses and drum loops, we conjured up some pretty whacky sounds.

Overall Space Delay retains the functional familiarity of the original and has plenty of sonic flavour. We particularly like the additional stereo options such as individual pans for each head and the ducking feature is very welcome. A bit more flexibility with delay times would have been good, but Space Delay is nevertheless a solid addition to the T-RackS family. **cm**

Web ikmultimedia.com

Alternatively

UAD Galaxy Tape Echo £149

UA's tape delay delivers a close emulation of Roland's RE-201 both in sound and features

Arturia Delay Tape-201 €99

Excellent adjustable extras including input EQ and tape and mechanical settings

Verdict

For Hardware-inspired familiar layout
Visual indication of active tape heads
Excellent ducking feature
Plenty of stereo and panning options

Against Delay times limited to match original hardware
Limited number of presets

Space Delay is a solid emulation of this Roland classic with very useful software extras thrown in for good measure

Modes

To provide quick access to a variety of delay configurations Roland's RE-201 includes a 12 mode selector, and this is replicated on the T-RackS version. The first four modes activate only the delay heads (the spring reverb is bypassed) with modes 1 to 3 each activating a specific head and mode 4 a combination of heads 2 and 3. Modes 5 to 11 activate combinations of specific delay heads and spring reverb, and in mode 11 all three delay heads and the reverb are active. Mode 12 is

just the reverb. If this all sounds a little bit confusing, LEDs next to the Delay Pans provide you with a visual indication of which of the heads are active. If you really need to check what's happening there's a detailed table in the manual. Replicating the delay time limitations of the original hardware means picking a mode that works best. So, Mode 5 is great for a reverby slap back delay, while Mode 4 is better for simple panned double delay.