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SOUNDTOYS EchoBoy ver 1.2 Echo/Delay Plug-In

FIELD TEST

by Barry Rudolph

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EchoBoy from SoundToys (formerly Wave Mechanics) is an ingenious echo/delay plug-in for MAC OSX and Pro Tools TDM/RTAS/AudioSuite. EchoBoy is capable of every conceivable type of audio delay effect due to its imaginative and musical design, super-comprehensive list of parameters and options, and its unique and completely editable Style section for emulating echo units used in music over the last 60 years.

EchoBoy has four modes: Single Echo, with a single delay value and up to two outputs; Dual Echo with two delay times and two outputs; Ping-Pong is similar to Dual with two delay times and outputs, except that one delay (Ping) feeds the other (Pong); and Rhythm Echo for creating a rhythmic sequence of delays using up to 16 taps from a single delay line. Rhythm Echo's GUI has a grid of up to four measures long (4/4 time) that shows each tap's delay time, level, panning, repeats and number of sequence recycles. Besides a page of main parameters for each mode, Tweak submenus allow mode-specific fine-tuning.

Delay times are entered by keystrokes or up/down delay adjust buttons, with times expressed in milliseconds or as musical note subdivisions (sixteenth, eighth, quarter, half-note); you can also have dotted or triplet notes. Master tempo is set (in bpm or milliseconds) by typing in values, tapping or by following session MIDI tempo. A Groove knob sets the delay output's groove anywhere between shuffle and swing; a Feel control shifts the onset of the first echo between Rushin' (ahead of the beat) or Draggin' (behind the beat).

Adjusting the relative timing and feel of echo and its repeats can affect how the echoes mesh with the music and the feeling it imparts on the song. EchoBoy is the first processor to offer precise control over timing/feel and the sound character of both the echo and the way the repeat echoes devolve in fidelity.

There are 30 specific Styles that change the quality of the echoes only. These range from pristine Master Tape echo, to harder-sounding Digital Delay echo, to old Tube echo--where saturated echoes get thinner with each repeat-- to the low-fi repeats of Telephone. There are more than 300 factory presets, each with a style that's editable in its Tweak submenu.

In The Studio
I used EchoBoy to dress up my lead singer in an effect that widened his sound stage presence, disguised pitchiness, and made him sound hopefully like a star. I used Dual Mode with each output panned left and right and each with slightly different delay times. I used a 1/8-note delay locked to MIDI as a starting point. I adjusted the Feel knob to the Draggin' side so that the echoes were 'late' and I like using the Accent controls so that even (2, 4, 6, 8...) repeats were a hotter level than the odd-numbered repeats. The Width control, that starts at 8ms and goes to 25ms, adds stereo width to just the echoes--a way to distance the lead singer's track away from the effect. So that the echo was not too distinct and clear, I used the Tel-Ray Style, turned the Saturation control down, added high frequencies and increased Wobble to add a wowing vari-speed to the echoes--just like some old, beat up tape echo machine. For a more intimate vocal sound in the verses, I used plug-in automation to reduce

the number of repeats.

Way more to EchoBoy than can fit here but know that if you can dream it up, EchoBoy can do it with many more rhythmic options than any other echo unit, plug-in or effect combination. Quick! Save hard disk space and DSP--throw out all your other delay plug-ins and get this big winner! SoundToys EchoBoy is $495 MSRP.

SoundToys at www.soundtoys.com or 802.951.9700

Barry Rudolph is an L.A.-based recording engineer. Visit his Web site at: WWW. BARRYRUDOLPH.COM

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