

JOEY WARONKER (BECK, REM, ATOMS FOR PEACE) **On Blending Analog And Digital Drums**

# RECORDING

The magazine for the recording musician



**Anything-goes rhythm creation**



**Slick studio techniques made easy**

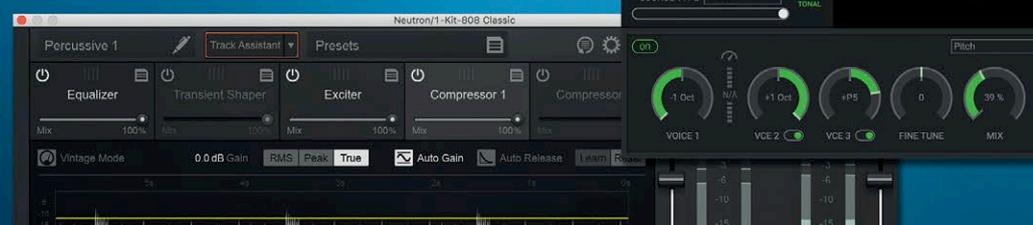
**Hottest new controllers, interfaces, and soundware**

# 12 GREAT GEAR REVIEWS

Antelope Audio • Eventide • iZotope  
Line 6 • Merging Technology • PreSonus  
Spitfire Audio • Steinberg • Universal Audio/API  
UVI • Wholegrain Digital Systems • Zoom



JUNE 2017  
USA \$5.99  
CANADA \$5.99  
VOL. THIRTY  
NUMBER NINE



# REVIEWED AND REVISITED

## Line 6 Echo Farm 3.0

*Modeled delays galore, now running natively in Pro Tools*

By Alex Hawley

*Line 6 Echo Farm features 12 different delay types, which include a combination of classic delay units plus Line 6 originals. It's widely known for its ability to add mojo and depth while sitting very musically in the mix. The long-awaited Version 3.0 updates the plug-in to AAX Native, allowing compatibility on Pro Tools 11 and up. It also supports sample rates up to 192 kHz, and mono or stereo channel formats.*

One of Line 6's main priorities with version 3.0 was to ensure backward compatibility with the previous TDM-only version. Echo Farm found its way onto many hit recordings upon its initial debut, and complete recallability was vital. Rest assured, if you are looking to upgrade an old TDM license to the 3.0 AAX format, your old mixes will translate exactly as intended. For now, the plug-in is only compatible with macOS, but Windows support is forthcoming.

Echo Farm is easy to navigate; with each individual delay type having its own unique parameters, ranging from wow and flutter to bit resolution and more. Delay time can be set in milliseconds, or via tempo sync with adjustable BPM, various subdivisions, and tap tempo. The Time Ramp setting allows Echo Farm to act much like an actual tape or analog delay unit; the change in delay time will result in audible pitch bending up or down. When Time Ramp is turned off, the delay speed will immediately jump to the new time or tempo without any audible pitch change.

### The models

Echo Farm's six analog emulations include the Echoplex EP-1, Echoplex EP-3, Roland RE-101 Space Echo, Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Memory Man, Boss DM-2, and TC Electronic 2290. Anything from gritty tube-driven slap echo to ping pong and modulated delays can be dialed in.

By default, Echo Farm opens up with a tube echo setting called Maestro EP-1. This model is based on the Echoplex EP-1 tube-driven tape echo, originally released in 1963 with a delay time that ranged from 60 to 600 milliseconds. Adapted for the digital domain, the delay time can be pushed up to 2.5 seconds (which is the maximum delay time across all models). This emulation captures vibey rock guitar tones, as the delay has a bit of grit and character to it. Cranking the Wow & Flutter produces an unmistakable vintage guitar sound, and I must say, Echo Farm nails it with this one.



While the Echoplex EP-1 (and EP-2) were driven by tubes, in the EP-3 the tubes were replaced with transistors, resulting in a less distorted tone and a cleaner character than the EP-1. The EP-3 was a huge component in many legendary recordings, being used by guitar-

ists such as Eddie Van Halen and Jimmy Page. For guitar tones, this has been one of my favorite all-around delays. I

love tone shaping with EQ controls, and I identify with the character of the emulation after hearing it on so many classic rock albums.

The Roland RE-101 is an emulation of the iconic RE-101 Space Echo. On the original Space Echo unit, the delay time would be changed by switching between one of its three playback heads, and then further adjusted by tuning the motor speed. The Space Echo could also create multitap delays by playing back on multiple heads at once. The original unit had six settings—one for each of the three playback heads, plus three combinations of heads that were labeled Swell. Adapted for the digital world and free from physical limitations, the emulation has one fixed-playhead setting and the three original Swell settings. Line 6 has added seven of its own combinations, which are labeled Super Swell.

I've always been a fan of how the Space Echo sounds, especially on guitar. When using an original unit, I usually dial in one of the Swell settings and lay it back into the mix. The emulation sounds great, and the added Super Swell settings are a fun addition for more textural options. The graphics for choosing the playhead setting are tiny, and it's tricky to tell exactly which combination you are on at a glance, let alone change it on the fly. Considering how distinct each setting sounds, I would have liked an easier visual interface to toggle between them.

The Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Memory Man analog delay is sought after by musicians and collectors alike. It's known for its warm and organic tone, with waves of lush echoes. Based on a "bucket brigade" design, this unit also has a chorus circuit. The chorus is applied to the repeats only, and the direct signal remains unaffected. This is one of the most popular and recognizable guitar pedals of all time, which makes it a very welcome addition to the Echo Farm palette. Modulating the delayed signal works really well to add thickness or character to a part. I love adding it in with a simple rhythm guitar track and letting the wash of modulated echoes fill out the mix. It also sounds right at home with leads.

The two other emulations include the Boss DM-2, which is an analog bucket-brigade design with a gritty character, and the 'Dynamic Delay', which is based on a TC Electronic 2290. The TC Electronic 2290 is a digital delay with a smart volume control that interacts with the dynamics of your playing. For example, the echoes won't create any extra mud if you are playing a busy part with a lot of notes, but when your dynamics fall below a certain threshold, the echoes start to sing. Pretty awesome concept! This setting sounds great with vocals, too; it very naturally fills in the

spaces between phrases, and is a great tool to automate in and out of as needed.

## Line 6's originals

Adding to the diversity of Echo Farm, Line 6 has added its own take on some various styles of popular delays. These settings include Sweep Echo, Lo Res Delay, Digital Delay with Modulation, Ping Pong, Reverse, and Auto-Volume Echo.

The Sweep Echo starts with the EP-1 emulation, and adds a modulated sine wave that shapes the delayed signal. The controls allow you to modify the modulation speed and depth of the sine wave. This setting is great for some outside-of-the-box creative delay sounds. I opened up a previous mix session of a reggae group, and this felt right at home when creating dub-style delays.

The Auto-Volume Echo is designed to give your track a volume fade-in swell, immediately following the transient. It reacts similarly to the attack time on a synthesizer's envelope generator. In addition to the volume swells, this delay also comes armed with tape-style wow and flutter modulation.

Ping Pong delay is another staple for digital delays, with a very wide stereo effect that has discrete delay times for the left and right channels individually. I also had a blast channeling my inner Hendrix with the Reverse delay setting. This can create some really cool textures on spaced out legato lines.

## Conclusion

Each setting has a distinct character, which is what I love about Echo Farm. It takes practice to learn each of the delay types—this plug-in just has so much to offer. Echo Farm facilitates creativity in a way that I haven't found in a delay plug-in before. While it can be pushed into sound design territory with bold settings and automation, the majority of tones I got were very musical.

This is a creative tool that everyone should pick up for their Pro Tools AAX systems. It won't be leaving my effects chain anytime soon! ➡

PRICE: \$200; AAX upgrade  
for TDM Echo Farm  
registered owners, \$50

MORE FROM:  
*Line 6, [www.line6.com](http://www.line6.com)*