



ELECTRO-HARMONIX DELUXE MEMORY BOY

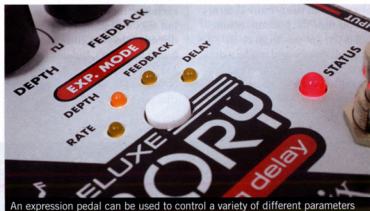
The third of Electro-Harmonix's recently released analogue delay pedals is top of the pile in terms of features. Daniel Hodgson makes friends with the new boy

Analogue delay is a highly desirable effect. A good analogue delay is capable of adding incredible depth to even the simplest passages, with an organic warmth that many prefer to the pristine clarity of a digital delay. Functionality has always been a bit of a barrier when it comes to using these effects in practical situations, however. Modern digital delays trump almost every aspect of their analogue counterparts' performance, from their longest delay time through to handy features such as tap tempo and multiple presets. A few boutique builders have figured out ways and means of incorporating some of these

features into their analogue designs, but it isn't until now that an affordable analogue delay with a few of these niceties has been made available. And it's no surprise that Electro-Harmonix is the company behind it.

Construction & Features

The Deluxe Memory Boy is very much in keeping with the previously released Memory Boy and Memory Toy in many respects. Housed in a larger dual-footswitch enclosure, the top of the pedal has been screen-printed with black and white graphics, straight onto the bare metal of the cast enclosure. It



An expression pedal can be used to control a variety of different parameters

isn't the neatest thing we've ever seen, but given the price and the features supposedly contained within, we're not too concerned. Six rotary controls are arranged across the top of the unit. Starting

on the left, we have controls for the wet/dry blend and input gain, which should make balancing your sound fairly easy. The next two knobs deal with the Deluxe Memory Boy's built-in modulation

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effects. The rate control serves up super-speedy or extra slow warble at either extreme, while the depth control allows for varying degrees of two different modulation types: This control is notched at its centre position, where the modulation circuit is bypassed. Turning this control clockwise introduces a choppy, square wave modulation effect which isn't for the faint of heart, while the smoother sine wave effect can be found left of centre. A huge amount of depth is available in both cases, allowing for a whole host of wacky effects, but that does mean there is a fairly small amount of the knobs' travel which will be useful to the average player.

The final pair of knobs control feedback (number of repeats) and delay time. The former is quite sensitive and can easily be set for self-oscillation, while the latter, which is capable of serving up delay times of between 34 and 700 milliseconds, can be overruled by the tap tempo feature. Helpfully, the Deluxe Memory Boy will respond to the last method of delay time input used.

The tap tempo footswitch is located at the bottom left of the unit, while a green 'beat' LED indicates the time you've input. Meanwhile, the 'tap divide' button offers five additional subdivisions of the tapped input – for example, you can tap in the 4/4 tempo of the song you're playing, but set the delay to eighth notes, triplets and so on. This part of the unit is clearly not analogue in nature – a 'digital brain' is used to process the tapped tempo. Up to 1.5 seconds of delay is available when using the tap tempo control, but note that the quality of the delays will degrade significantly as you approach this limit.

As well as input and output jacks there is also a series effects loop which affects only the delayed signal, should you wish to apply a different modulation effect to the



one built in, or a different type of pedal entirely.

Finally, an expression pedal can also be used to control a variety of parameters. Using the 'exp. mode' button, delay time, feedback, modulation depth and mod rate are all adjustable in this way, allowing for plenty of creative options. The Deluxe Memory Boy can only be powered via a 9V DC input, which is of the Boss-style centre-negative type. It's also worth noting that, if you want to power this pedal alongside several others from the same power supply, you'd be advised to invest in a high-current supply or else give it its own dedicated wall wart due to the Deluxe Memory Boy's relatively hefty 100 milliamp power requirement.

Sounds

It comes as little surprise to find that the Deluxe Memory Boy sounds similar to both the



Memory Boy and Memory Toy that precede it. Lo-fi, but not overly so, the repeats have more definition than most cheaper analogue delays, thanks to the greater emphasis on the higher frequencies. In turn, this does present a little more background noise than we'd hear from more expensive units. Delay times of about 500ms and over are fairly gritty and only get dirtier as the delay time is increased, but were of the opinion that very few players will have use for delays longer than 600ms in reality.

Some of the controls can be quite difficult to balance – getting just the right combination of blend and gain settings in particular can be tricky – and we find that both the feedback and modulation depth controls have a very small window of usefulness in their sweep. Having said that, the modulation section is excellent. Lush warbles and extreme pitch-bending effects are available, and even if you'll spend 90 percent of your time with modulation off or set for a mild sine wave oscillation, it's handy to have these more extreme sounds to hand nevertheless.

The tap tempo feature works a treat, and with the comprehensive subdivision options there's plenty to satisfy fans of every genre. The eighth- and sixteenth-note options give instant access to quicker repeats in time with the beat, while dotted-eighth and triplet divisions will add instant interest to arpeggiated passages, not to mention plating fans of The Edge's signature sound.

Expression pedal control gives rise to a host of experimental

sounds and UFO noises, while the effects loop is a nice addition for those with extensive pedal collections. A phaser, a flanger and an octave divider all provide interesting results, and the scope of this feature is only limited by your imagination.

Conclusion

Like the Memory Boy and Toy before it, the Deluxe Memory Boy turns in a very good performance, especially considering its price tag. The fact is, there are only a few true analogue delay pedals out there that can do even half as much as this can, and none of those can match it for price. True, it's not the quietest or highest-quality analogue delay about, but it's far from disappointing. With such a huge range of useful options built into it, there's very little we can think of that's wrong with this pedal. Electro-Harmonix has a winner on its hands. **GB**

ELECTRO-HARMONIX DELUXE MEMORY BOY

Price: £129

Features: Wet/dry blend, input gain, modulation rate & depth, feedback & delay time controls, tap tempo subdivision & expression pedal mode buttons, tap tempo & true bypass footswitches, effects loop send & return, expression pedal input, mono input/output jacks

Power: 9V DC mains adaptor only (included)

Dimensions: 54(n) x 150(w) x 119(d) mm

CONTACT DETAILS

Electro-Harmonix
www.ehvc.com

GB VERDICT

GOLD STARS

- ★ Great analogue delay tones
- ★ Nice modulation
- ★ Tap tempo and expression
- Input very handy

BLACK MARKS

- Some controls difficult to balance

IDEAL FOR...

Those who want an analogue delay pedal with modern appointments

GBRATING
★★★★★