

Steinberg Yamaha Vintage Stomp Pack £168

PC MAC

Five classic-style modelled virtual stompboxes made with modulation in mind – but how fine is this particular vintage?

> In the software realm, Yamaha's VCM (Virtual Circuitry Modelling) technology has so far found its way into Steinberg's Portico and Vintage Collection plug-ins. Part of the latter range, here we're looking at the Vintage Series Stomp Pack, a quintet of 70s-style guitar pedal emulations.

The five plug-ins comprise Max 100 phaser, Dual Phaser, Vintage Flanger, Vintage Phaser and Vintage Wah. As you may have noticed, this is a modulation-focused pack, so there are no distortions – and, strangely, no chorus. Each pedal addresses a different vintage flavour, ranging from the simple MXR-style Max 100 (just Speed and four resonance Mode settings) to the more complex Vintage Flanger and Phaser. The last two include tonal and modulation controls, as well as the all-important Manual knob for hands-on sweeping.

By far the most complex are Vintage Wah and Dual Phaser. The first includes not only LFO and pedal control (via MIDI CC), but also a level-dependent Touch control mode. Tone shaping is completed with four frequency emphasis settings, high- and low-pass filters and overdrive.

The Dual Phaser is a twin-channel, twin-LFO design. Settings include LFO Rate and Shape (sine/square), Feedback and Sweep Reverse. Each channel can be bypassed individually, and LFO 1 can be set to control the second channel, too.

All five plug-ins launch in either mono or stereo mode, depending on the configuration of

the host DAW track, with the Vintage Flanger and Vintage Phaser both including Spread controls when on stereo tracks. However, the Dual Phaser exploits the stereo field best, combining its twin processors to create four routing modes in parallel and serial configurations.

Modulation excitement

To put the Vintage Stomp Pack through its paces, we head for some pedal-suitable sounds such as electric guitar, electric piano, organ and drums. First impressions are good for all five. The simplicity of the Max 100 makes it ideal for adding subtle richness to guitar, while the Vintage Wah's Touch mode delivers supremely funky results on electric piano. The Vintage Phaser is more workmanlike, although the Spread control is a nice touch. For more rhythmic sounds, all pedals can be tempo-synced (see *Set phasers to sync*, below), plus the Dual Phaser's twin processors and Reverse Sweep option give great movement, either synced or free-running. Overall, in fact, the Dual Phaser is the star performer here, producing both modulated, wide sounds (in mode 4) and denser, more complex effects (in serial modes 2 and 3).

The only plug-in that lets the side down is the Vintage Flanger, which sounds good generally but struggles to handle that deep, flanged drum effect. Having said that, its Manual control is good for creating more specific effects. Also

slightly annoying is the total lack of presets for Max 100 and Dual Phaser – the other three pedals do have decent selections, thankfully.

Judged purely on the sound, Yamaha have done a fine job with the Vintage Stomp Pack, and the five pedals put out a good range of modulation flavours. Even so, this would inarguably be a much more complete bundle with a chorus, a fuzz and some distortion, and perhaps even some more exotic options, like delay and compression. **cm**

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Alternatively

ArtsAcoustic BigRock
cm158 » 9/10 » £73

Based on the classic Small Stone pedal, but with many useful extras

SoundToys PhaseMistress
N/A » N/A » \$179

Superb plug-in featuring many retro phaser types and lots of presets

Verdict

For Dual Phaser is excellent
Convincing vintage sound
CPU-efficient
Useful tempo sync

Against No fuzz, distortion or chorus
No presets for Dual Phaser or Max 100
Vintage Flanger is only average

This is a solid set of modulation pedals, though it could've been a more well-rounded suite

8/10

Set phasers to sync

Although the sonic emphasis here is very much on the vintage style, one major concession that the Stomp Pack has made to the modern era is the inclusion of tempo sync. Each plug-in has an S setting at the far end of the Rate knob's range. Set the Rate to this and a window pops up, offering control of the beat division you'd like to sync to (1/2, 1/4 and so on) as well as the phase (0-360°).

It's a relatively basic setup, but when working with the Dual Phaser you have

access to two separate LFOs, which makes things considerably more interesting. We had all sorts of fun creating groovy effects by setting them both in sync, turning one on and the other off, or using different offset settings for each.

The final sound-twisting option is the ability to offset the LFO start point, at which point your brain will feel like it's being sucked out through your ears – in a good way, honest!