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1 MOOG MF CHORUS £159

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Chorus pedal

FEATURES: True bypass, BBD circuitry, pulsing LED, exponentiated triangle LFO

CONTROLS: Rate, Depth, Time, Feedback, Mix switch, bypass footswitch, internal mono/stereo switch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output, expression pedal input

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied) 20mA

DIMENSIONS: 83 (w) x 144 (d) x 58mm (h)

Source Distribution

020 8962 5080

www.moogmusic.com

One of Moog's Minifooger range of pedals as opposed to the larger and more complex Moogerfoogers, the MF Chorus carries on the all-analogue tradition, being based around a BBD chip. Moog actually calls the pedal a 'Bucket Brigade Time Modulator', which hints at the promise of more than just straight chorus sounds within. This comes set up as a mono pedal, but there's an internal switch for stereo use, employing a split cable with a TRS jack in the output, while an expression pedal input lets you control the modulation rate on the fly.

While standard Rate and Depth knobs control the modulation, the actual delay time that the effect is built around can be adjusted by the Time knob, which offers a maximum delay time of 60ms (70ms when modulated). With no modulation applied, there

is a range of ambiances up to a very tight slapback. A Feedback knob increases the number of repeats that, in this context of short delays, can manifest itself as a metallic sheen of reverb, even hinting at ring mod.

Three variations are provided by the three-way Mix knob that offers two different ratios of wet/dry sound: the first is a natural transparent mix; the second has a heightened sense of the effect and a fatter sound, a setting we found compared the most closely to a vintage Boss CE-2 used for reference. The third position is wet signal only, described by Moog as the Vibrato position, and pretty much the place to go for more outlandish sounds beyond the vibrato (which it does just fine). This is a Moog after all, and

without any dry signal, you can dial in the likes of *Apocalypse Now*-style analogue synth-generated helicopters.

If you take the time to see how all the knobs interact, this is a very rewarding pedal. Keeping Time and Feedback close to zero serves up some classic 80s chorus sounds, while turning up Feedback and tweaking Time moves things towards flanger territory, with plenty of settings reminiscent of rotary speakers. Overall, the pedal can be very musical but Moog has built such a deep range of control into all of the knobs that it's also easy to get outlandish and outrageous, especially with large amounts of mod depth, making this a pedal for experimentalists as well as those looking for musical fairy dust. **[TC]**

VERDICT A Moog modulation masterclass: chorus and more from the staid to the spectacularly seasick

8/10

2 EARTHQUAKER DEVICES SEA MACHINE V2 £179

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Chorus pedal

FEATURES: True bypass, hybrid digital and analog circuitry, pulsing LED, adjustable LFO shape

CONTROLS: Shape, Rate, Intensity, Depth, Dimension, Animate

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 67 (w) x 126 (d) x 55mm (h)

Rocky Road

01494 535333

www.earthquakerdevices.com

Where many chorus pedals just give you control over the rate and depth of the effect (which may be as much as you need for that classic Boss CE-style chorus, ubiquitous in the 1980s), there are other aspects to the way that chorus is created that are ripe for some knob-driven control. EarthQuaker was determined to offer those options with the Sea Machine V2 and has equipped it with six closely spaced knobs to allow plenty of tweaking.

The basic architecture of a chorus pedal is a delay line that is modulated by an LFO, and the bottom three knobs here (Depth, Dimension, Animate) relate to the digital delay line at the Sea Machine's heart, while the top three (Shape, Rate, Intensity) concern the actions of the analogue LFO. The juxtapositions available with all six knobs deliver a wide range

of effects that could broadly be described as chorus, but go further than many units.

Depth is the first port of call to set the subtlety or strength of the overall effect – it adjusts the mix of the modulated wet signal against your dry guitar signal. Looking at the delay line first without any modulation (Intensity at zero), the Animation knob offers control over the delay time: at low levels you get the really short delays needed for classic chorus, but turned up, there's a doubling effect and at full, it's almost a slapback. Dimension is said to adjust spatial generation. Effectively, it's a feedback knob for the delay, so with Animation and Dimension working together, you have access to a range of ambiances – metallic

reverb being the predominant flavour. When it's time to add some modulation, the Rate knob (with associated LED flashing in time) is what you'd expect on any chorus pedal, as is the Intensity knob, which adjusts the modulation depth. More variation is provided by the Shape knob, which changes the wave shape of the LFO between a soft triangle and a square wave for on/off action that's harder-edged.

With six knobs to get into position relative to each other, it may take a bit of work to find the sweet spots, but it's worth the extra effort because there are plenty of them to be found, from a slight otherworldly shift in the sound, through lush rotary speaker styles to full-on pitch-wavering warbles. **[TC]**

VERDICT Lots of knobs and lots of control equals lots of cool sounds – you just need to find them!

7/10