



BOSS WAZA CRAFT CE-2W CHORUS £189

Celebrating 40 years of chorus pedals, Boss's latest recreates the sounds of the company's very first two, the CE-1 and CE-2. Let's go back to the future

Words Trevor Curwen **Photography** Neil Godwin

It's just over 40 years since Boss brought out the very first chorus pedal and undoubtedly got something very right, because although the company has had various chorus pedals in its range ever since, it's still that long-discontinued large mains-powered CE-1 Chorus Ensemble and 1979's tweaked-for-guitar compact-sized CE-2 that get talked about in hushed tones by pedal aficionados. Okay, they were pioneering, but were the sounds that those pedals delivered really that good? Well, Boss seems to think so as it's designed its latest compact chorus pedal, the Waza Craft CE-2W, to recreate both CE-1 and CE-2 sounds "with complete sonic accuracy". Armed with a pair of a vintage CE-1 and CE-2 choruses, let's see if Boss has achieved its aim.

Possibly an unfortunate name for Brits in conjuring up an image of something warm and wet or Manchester United's all-time leading goal scorer, Waza translates

loosely from Japanese as "art and technique", symbolising a level of excellence in Japan that is only achieved through years of dedication and commitment to one's craft. Boss therefore chose the Waza Craft label for a select range of pedals to express the enthusiastic spirit of dedication that has gone into their development. There have so far, from 2014 onwards, been Waza Craft versions of the BD-2 Blues Driver, SD-1 Super Overdrive and DM-2 Delay, and now this chorus pedal which uses analogue circuitry, including bucket brigade devices.

Finished in the same pale blue as the original CE-2, the CE-2W can be used in mono, but adds a second output for optional mono input/stereo output use, something that the original CE-1 had but the CE-2 didn't. Rate and Depth knobs come as standard, with a new three-way toggle switch that provides access

ABOVE Boss designed the CE-2W to recreate the iconic CE-1 and CE-2 sounds "with complete sonic accuracy"

RIGHT Use the slider to switch between smooth CE-2 sounds and the fuller chorus and vibrato sounds of the CE-1



to three different sounds. The S (Standard) switch position offers CE-2 sounds, while the other two positions offer the two sounds that the CE-1 delivered (it was switchable between chorus and vibrato).

Sounds

In its Standard mode, the CE-2W yields the familiar spacious shimmer that defines Boss chorus, hinting at a sense of more than one instrument. Switching the CE-2W from Standard mode to CE-1 chorus mode with the Rate and Depth knobs in the same place, the difference is immediately apparent with a tonal shift into a fuller midrange and chorus that seems a little deeper and richer. The two choruses sound different for sure, but both are excellent in a guitar signal chain where they naturally become an integral part of your guitar sound. What's more, they really open things up spatially if the pedal is connected up to two amps or recorded to a stereo track. The vibrato mode delivers a range of musically useful sounds, although like many vibratos, it can get a bit seasick-sounding with the Depth fully up. Comparing the CE-2W to our vintage CE-2, the resulting sounds are virtually identical.

In terms of overall EQ, there isn't much between the vintage CE-1 and the CE-2W, although the CE-1's variable Level control is able to introduce an element of mild distortion that can be pleasing to the ear. The CE-2W reproduces the original's chorus very well, but when comparing the CE-2W with a vintage CE-1, it has to be remembered that the CE-1 had just a single Intensity knob to control its chorus effect, adjusting

elements of rate and depth at the same time, so you have to be careful with the juxtaposition of the CE-2W's Rate and Depth knobs to get the exact sound. Leaving the CE-2W's Depth knob at around 2 o'clock seems to be a good ballpark arrangement while adjusting the rate.

One thing we notice is that the Intensity control on our CE-1 can actually dial in a faster rate than that in the CE-2W, so not all of the vintage sounds are covered. However, we'd trade that for the extra flexibility conferred by having two knobs to set against each other. The CE-2W also nicely reproduces the CE-1 vibrato sounds, albeit at different knob positions to the original.

Verdict

For anyone looking for those early Boss chorus tones, the CE-2W is your pedal. While there may be minor sonic variations between it and our vintage pedals, that's not so surprising bearing in mind their age – but the core sound of the effect is very accurately reproduced. Later Boss chorus pedals may have strayed away from the original designs, but this new pedal is absolutely back on track, putting the vintage sounds that started it all into a modern compact pedal with stereo operation. A no-brainer. **G**

PROS Vintage Boss chorus sounds accurately recreated; stereo operation; compact size

CONS None really, although you can't footswitch between chorus and vibrato like an original CE-1

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: Japan
TYPE: Chorus pedal
FEATURES: Buffered bypass
CONTROLS: Rate, Depth, 3-way toggle switch (CE-2 chorus, CE-1 chorus, CE-1 vibrato)
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard outputs A (mono) and B
POWER: 9V battery or 9V adaptor (not supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 73 (w) x 129 (d) x 59mm (h)

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9/10