

Strymon NightSky

£439

Bruce Aisher explores the infinite world of modulated reverb with Strymon's new time-warped reverberator

CONTACT WHO: Strymon **WEB:** strymon.net **KEY FEATURES** Three selectable reverb types. Mod section to modulate the reverb or tone filters. Tone section to sculpt reverb timbre. Shimmer for adding pitch shifting of up to the reverb. Glimmer dynamically enhances high/low frequency harmonics



Although Strymon predominantly cater to guitar players and their requirements for floor-based effects pedals, they have gained plenty of fans elsewhere through their delay and reverb effects alongside the occasional foray into Eurorack territory. Their BigSky and BlueSky reverbs, in particular, have found a lot of favour in both studio and live synthesis circles. NightSky, their latest pedal, takes some aspects of these as a starting point but it is nevertheless very much designed to cut its own furrow in terms of sound and usability.

Like a BigSky, the NightSky comes in a sturdy metal chassis, with foot switches and controls on the top, and audio and other connectivity (MIDI, USB and Expression pedal input) on the rear. The unit is powered by an (included) 9V DC supply adapter.

Do the Time Warp

The BigSky caters for a wide range of reverb types, and employs an LED display and multifunction knobs for some parameter editing, whereas the NightSky largely embraces a one knob/button-per-function approach to editing, and is built around some of the processing techniques pioneered by Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois in the 1980s. Their so-called 'shimmer' effect combined delay, pitch-shifting, reverb and EQ to create otherworldly ambiances not possible with reverb alone. NightSky isn't designed as a direct clone of this process, but rather employs its own building blocks to create what Strymon call a 'Time-Warped Reverberator'.

Adjust to taste

The front-panel sections give some indication of what type of processing is on offer, and the real action starts in the Decay section where different types of reverb can be selected, each with progressively more complexity and diffusion. The Mod section takes care of modulation, by applying LFO or dynamic envelope-controlled modulation to the reverb delay lines (like some classic vintage Lexicon reverb algorithms), reverb size/pitch



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or filter settings. Length and Size can be adjusted, with the later also speeding-up or slowing down any audio already in the reverb (much like adjusting the speed/delay time of tape delay).

Watch your Tone

A touch of the Infinite foot-switch will freeze the reverb decay, and this is where the ability to also adjust the aforementioned reverb pitch in semi-tone or scale-based stems is handy. The Tone section Low and High Cut controls let you tailor the overall timbre and decay characteristics of the chosen reverb, but with the option to also engage a post-reverb low-pass filter, and the Voice section adds pitch-shifting to either the reverb input or within its regeneration loop (for rising/falling pitch 'shimmer'). You'll also find the Glimmer and Drive buttons for altering the harmonic spectrum and adding saturation.

The NightSky isn't quite done yet though, as it also includes an 8-step sequencer (that can be clocked via MIDI) for stepping through different decay pitch settings, and with further MIDI control allowing you to send and receiving real-time tweaks, or even 'play' the Size/Pitch parameter using MIDI notes. **FM**

FM VERDICT

9.0

A powerful pedal that excels at creating ambient drones and experimental soundscapes, catering for synth-based sources well

THE PROS & CONS



Rear switch allows unit to be optimised for either Instrument or Line level sources

Full-size audio and MIDI ins and outs

Sends and Receives MIDI CCs for all parameters



No labelling of 'Live Edit' parameters (secondary functions) on front

Currently no way to clock internal MOD-section LFO to external MIDI clock