Strymon Echo Plug-In Bundle

DIG Dual Delay and El Capistan Delay Pedals as Software

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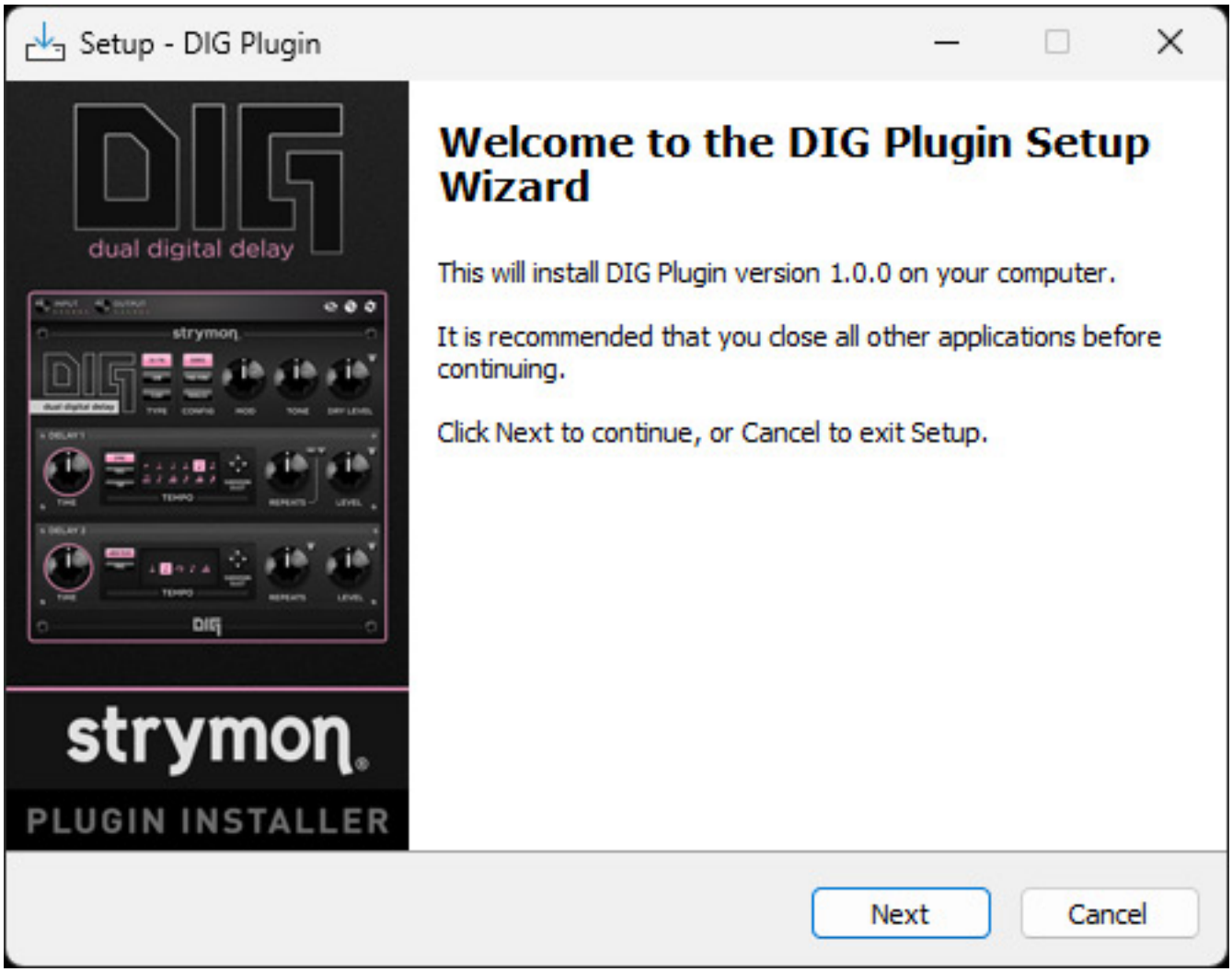
Strymon is of course known for its effect pedals, such as the flagship BigSky MX, which we have also already tested, but it also offers plug-ins with the DECO Tape Saturation Doubletracker and the Big Sky Multi Reverb. In September 2024, the “Echo Bundle” was introduced, a software simulation of the two effects pedals DIG Dual Digital Delay V2 and El Capistan Tape Echo V2 from Strymon in the form of plug-ins.

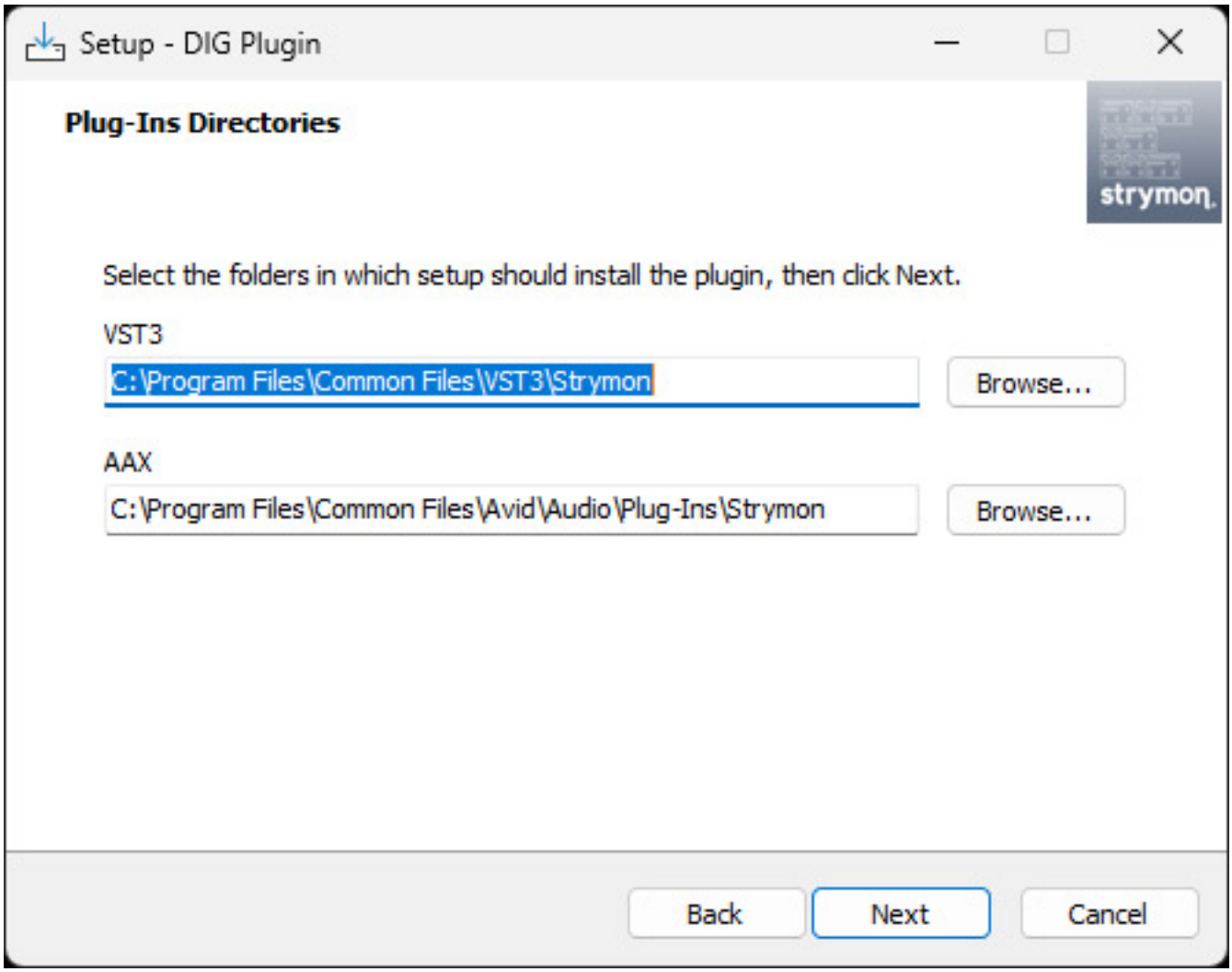
Requirements, installation, and licensing

The bundle is available for macOS (from 12.7, also for Apple Silicon) and for Windows (from version 10). The requirements are very low, such as at least an i5 processor (or M1 for macOS) and 8 GB RAM. Licensing is done via iLok, which means that a corresponding user account is required. Software activation is also possible. Therefore, you don´t necessarily need to have an iLok dongle. Two

computers can be activated with a single license.



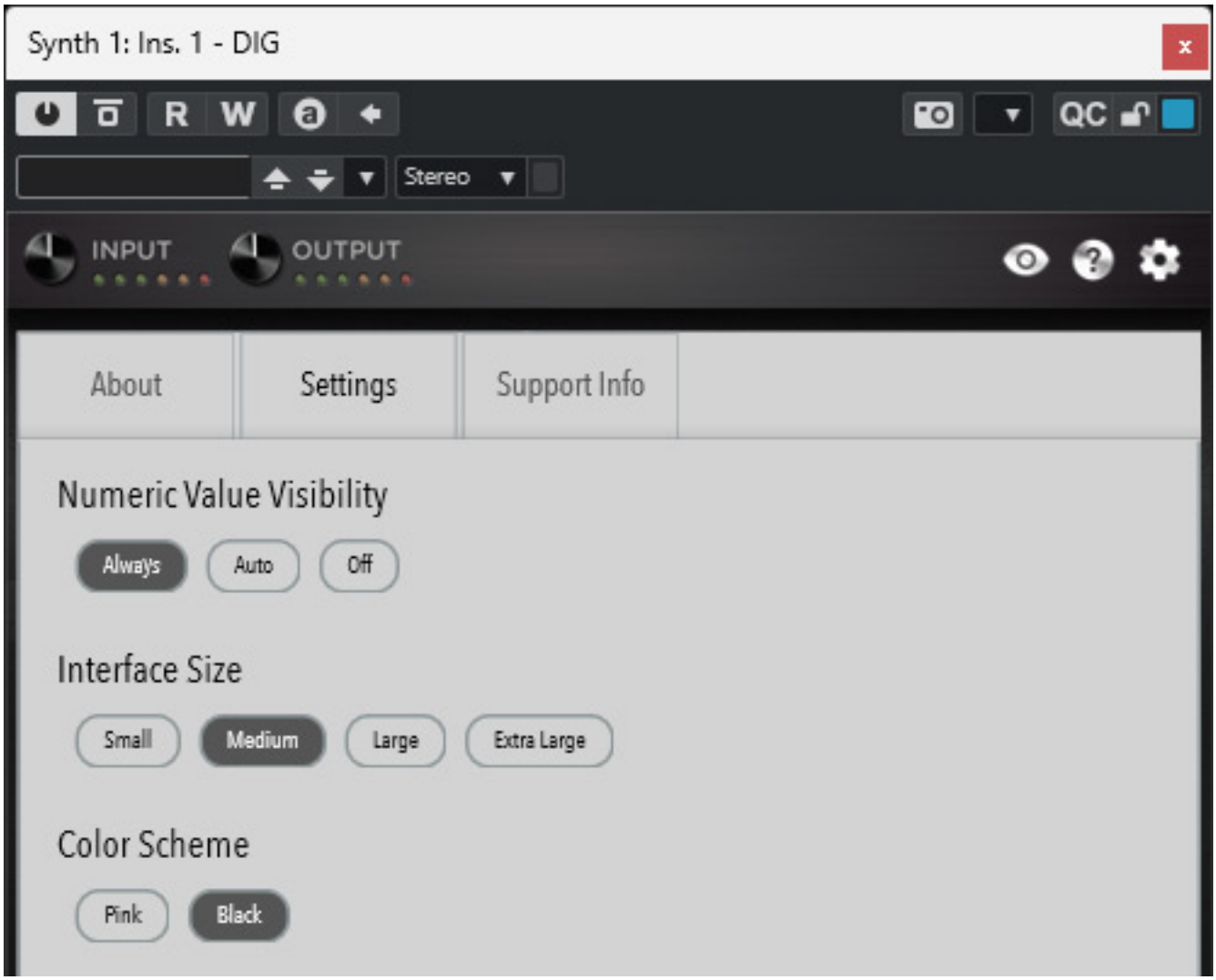
There are separate installation programs for installing the two plug-ins in the bundle (see figure above).



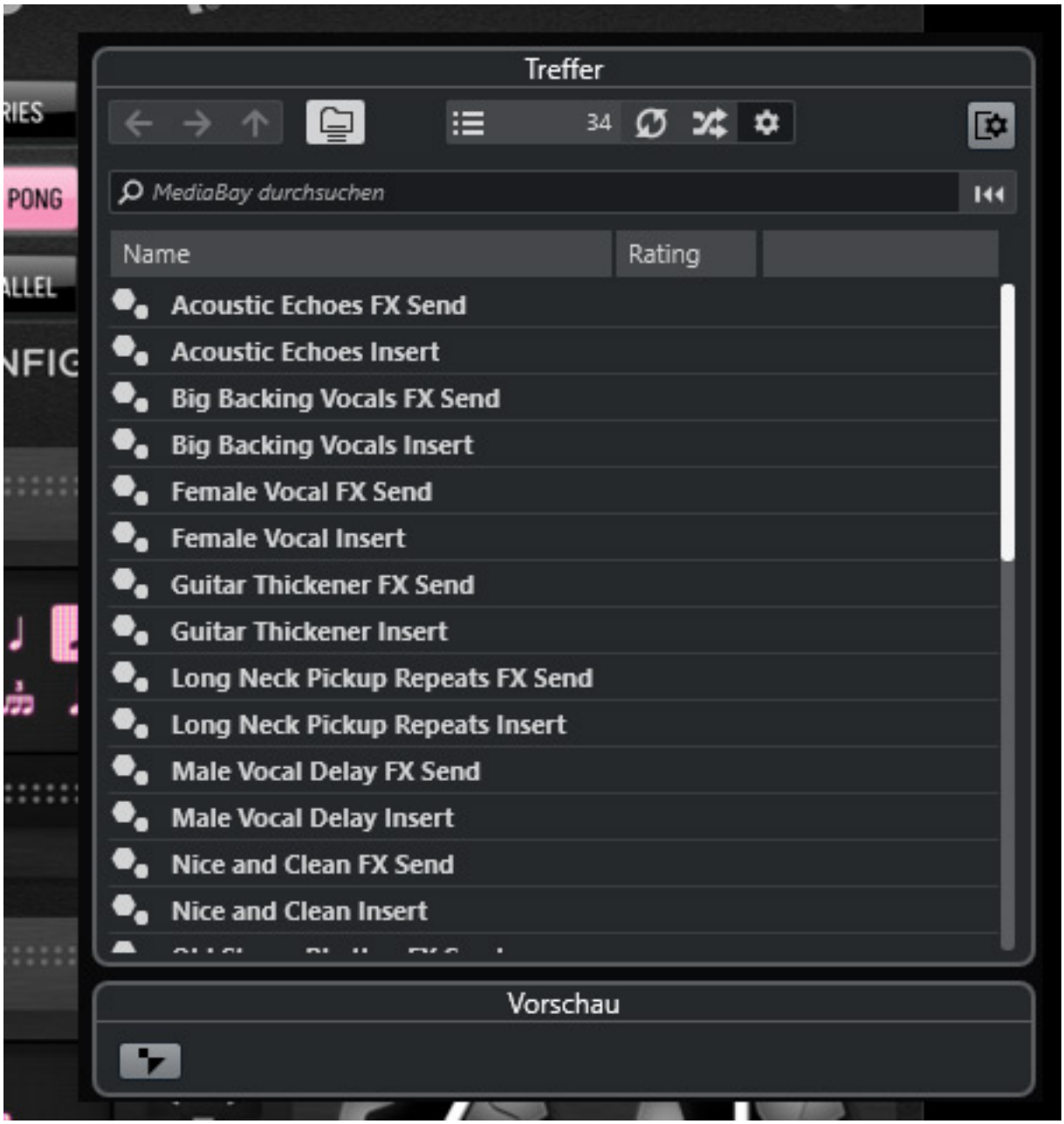
The plug-ins are available in the plug-in formats VST3 and AAX, as well as Audio Unit for macOS. The installer allows you to customize individual paths; however, an individual installation of the plug-in formats is not provided.

The plug-ins can be operated at sample rates from 44.1 up to 192 kHz with a quantization of 16 or 24 bits and an internal calculation of 32-bit floating point. It is possible to operate in a mono, mono/stereo, or stereo channel.

Plug-in handling



The basic handling of the two plug-ins is very similar. Therefore, let´s take a look at the global settings of the DIG plug-in. There are three settings that can be changed: whether parameter values should be displayed on the GUI, the size of the plug-in window (which can be set to one of four fixed sizes), and the color scheme of the DIG plug-in (you can choose between two color variants).



The factory presets for both plug-ins are also installed. These presets can be selected using the preset management of the respective plug-in format in the header, or you can save your own presets. There are always presets available for use as inserts in channels, as well as presets for use with effect sends.

DIG Dual Digital Delay

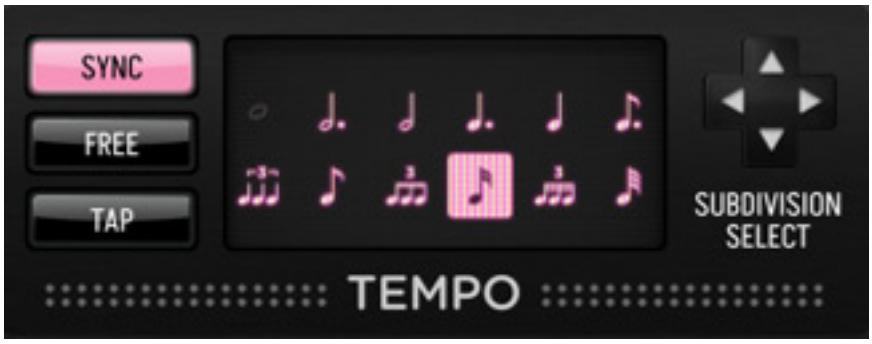
Let´s start with the DIG Dual Digital Delay. As the pedal model is designed in pink, the GUI can be switched between pink and black. The user interface includes everything the hardware pedal offers (six encoders and four switches), but there are additional settings.

At the top, you can adjust the input and output levels. There is a bar graph for each, and three icons can be used to switch the parameter value output on and off to access help and global settings dialog. The plug-in is divided into three sections: one for the global parameters at the top, and one each for delay 1 and delay 2.

As with the pedal, there are three different simulation modes available. "12 BIT" is a simulation of the 80s delays with 12-bit converters, "ADM" simulates delays from the early 80s that worked with adaptive delta modulation, and "24/96" can be chosen for modern delays with 24-bit resolution. The TONE knob allows you to change a filter in the feedback signal path, and the filter frequency can be adjusted. And that´s about it for the similarities with the original in terms of settings because the plug-in offers much more flexibility and more options.

For example, the modulation index can be set using a knob. With the pedal, this can be achieved using a switch with only three switch positions. Instead of two knobs, the level of the original signal and the levels of the two output levels of the two delays can be set independently. The routing of the two delays can also be changed flexibly: the delays can be switched in series or in parallel, and there is a PING PONG mode for alternating echo outputs in stereo mode on the left and right channels.

In the two lower sections, the delay time and echo repeat count can be set for each delay. The two delays can be operated independently or synchronized. The virtual button TAP allows you to set the tempo by clicking.



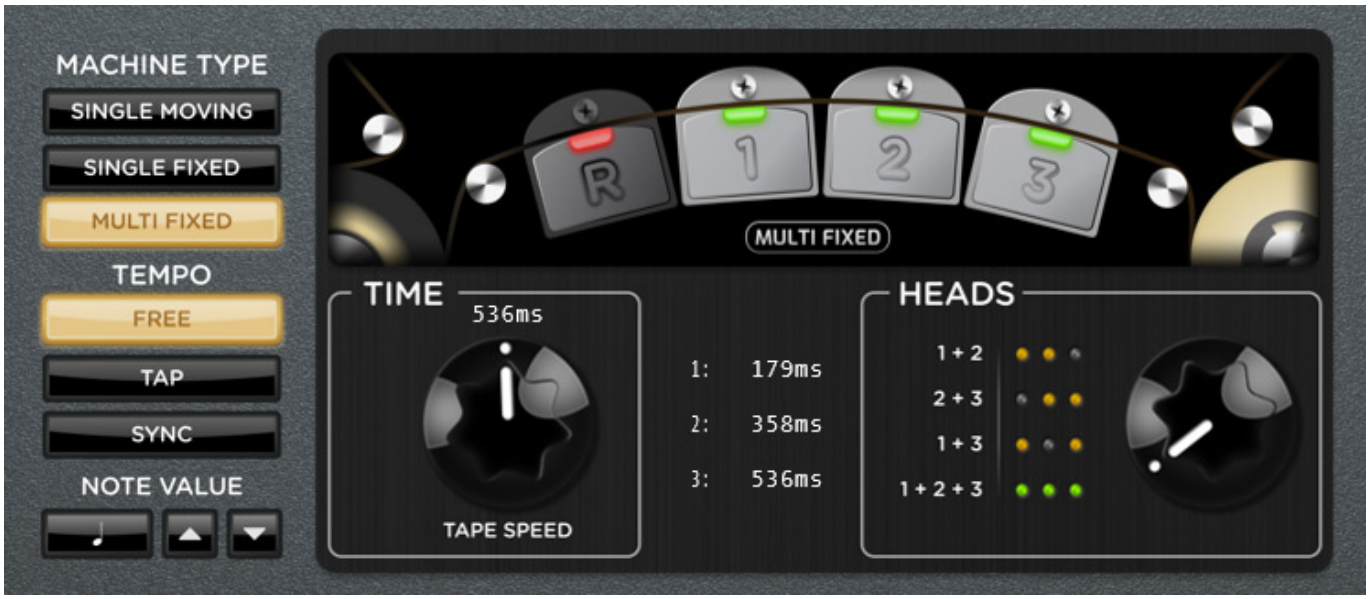
When DAW SYNC is activated, note values based on the DAW tempo can be entered instead of fixed times. Triplets and dotted notes can also be set.

El Capistan Tape Echo

The El Capistan simulates an echo effect based on a tape loop with one recording and up to three playback heads, as known from the Roland Space Echo and the Watkins Copicat, for example. There are three different modes of arranging the two heads.

In SINGLE MOVING mode, one head can be moved freely, and the tape speed can also be doubled (2x SPEED) independently of the set delay or head position.

In SINGLE FIXED mode, one of the three fixed-position heads can be selected, and the tape speed can be continuously adjusted.



In MULTI FIXED mode, the three playback heads are also fixed, and the tape speed can be varied. Instead of one, two, or all three heads can be activated. The TEMPO can be freely selected or synchronized with the DAW tempo and then based on note values. It is also possible to enter this using TAP.

The number of repetitions, the temporal modulation via wow and flutter, and the transmitted effect bandwidth (TAPE AGE) can be set at the bottom. There is also a spring reverb effect, the strength of which can be adjusted using a knob (SPRING), and a mixing knob for the ratio of the original signal to the effect signal.

Compared to the hardware pedal, however, the plug-in version of El Capistan offers a few more parameters. For example, the virtual tape saturation (BIAS) can be adjusted, and the TAPE CRIKNKLE knob can be used to simulate tape artifacts such

as magnetic coating detachments or repair cuts, and the frequency response in the effects loop can also be adjusted using the LOW END CONTOUR knob.

Practice

We tested the plug-ins on a B14 AudioKern DAW from Digital Audio Service with the Windows 11 operating system and Nuendo 13 as host software. No problems were encountered during operation. The required processor resources are extremely low.

The GUI is designed to allow experienced users to intuitively operate the plug-ins. If questions arise, a detailed manual in English is available for each. The “Large” setting has proven to be the best one for screens with a standard resolution. “Medium” is a bit small, and the labels are difficult to read. A continuous size adjustment of the plug-in window would be nice.

The delay plug-ins offer the full range of delay effects from existing hardware models. Particularly noteworthy is that the plug-ins offer more settings and are still easier to use than the hardware models from Strymon. They can be used in a wide range of applications, such as keyboards/synthesizers, electric guitars, and, of course, vocals and drums.

Conclusion

The Strymon Echo Bundle is available for purchase directly from the manufacturer´s online store for 99 US$. The hardware pedals DIG V2 Dual Digital Delay and Padle El Capistan V2 Delay each cost about 380 US$. Given the possibilities that go beyond the hardware pedals, the price is therefore absolutely reasonable. So if you don´t need to use pedals for live performances or as an effect before the guitar amplifier, or rather like to work more in the studio with a DAW, the Echo Bundle is a good choice.

www.strymon.net