



u-he Colour Copy

£64

PC MAC

With so many top-tier delay plugins around, can the revered analogue-modelling experts bring something new to the party? Let's find out...

> Touted as “a virtual-analogue effect inspired by classic bucket-brigade delays”, Colour Copy (VST/AU/AAX) is the latest plugin effect from Berlin's u-he: a greatly expanded version of the Lyrebird delay module found in their Repro-1 and Repro-5 synths.

Known for their distinctively dark sound, analogue BBD delays work by passing the input signal down through a series of capacitors to the output, analogous to a queue of firefighters passing buckets of water down the line from one to the next (hence the name). This results in sonic ‘spillage’ with each subsequent repeat, plus saturated echoes with hot input levels. Changing the rate at which the signal is passed from capacitor to capacitor alters the delay time with less glitching than digital delays, as well as the pitch of the delays – think dubby, pitch-shifting feedback. u-he's software emulation aims to bring all of this and more to your plugin-hosting DAW.

Bucket list

Starting from the far left of Colour Copy's

interface, Input gain (-24/+24dB) is used to drive the signal harder and thus control the degree of echo saturation. Delay rate is set with the Time Base drop-down – choose between four unclocked rates (.001s, .01s, .1s and 1s) or 15 straight, dotted and triplet synced times, ranging from 1/32 to 2/1 – while the bipolar Rate control scales the Time Base value from 1/4 at minimum to 4x at max, and can be swept or automated for those pitch-wobbling repeats described earlier. Change the delay time and you'll see the delay time period change in the central window – more on this later.

“A true tweaker's delay – think dub-style performances and pitch-sweeps”

Then there's the Regen(eration) knob: raise this to progressively route the output signal back into the input for roaring feedback. If that gets out of control, as can easily happen, there's a handy Panic (!) button to cut off the repeats. Over to the right, you've got a trio of self-explanatory controls: stereo Width amount, dry/wet Mix, and Output (-24/+24dB) gain for setting the final level.

Tap dance

The top half of Colour Copy's green central window displays real-time visual feedback for the left and right delay lines. As mentioned, the horizontal timeline represents the current delay time as set with the Time Base and Rate parameters, with note divisions overlaid on top. Drag an L or R pointer to reposition those taps along the horizontal timelines, and hold Cmd/Ctrl to snap these to those note values. Doing this doesn't affect the repeat times of either delay line at all, but instead lets you shorten the time between dry signal and echo for L and R independently, facilitating stereo offset effects.

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These tap positions can also be modulated, as we’ll get to shortly.

The bottom of the central window is where you customise signal routing. Choose between Stereo, Cross, Mono, Mono-L and Mono-R for the Input signal; and set Feedback routing between Stereo, Cross and Mix. The polarity of the feedback signal can also be inverted with the Invert switch to the right, which is particularly effective at changing the tone when using very short delay times.

Modulation station

Colour Copy’s Modulation options enable you to assign a pair of stereo LFOs to the delay Rate or Tap Positions, creating complex and distinctive effects. There’s also the Rate + option, which extends the modulation range in both directions for delays up to four times slower or four times faster. The Amp(litude) modulation destination, meanwhile, allows you to dial in auto-panning or tremolo effects.

Duck tales

Perhaps less intuitive but even more useful is the Ducking section in the bottom left, which enables the Regeneration signal to be suppressed whenever the input signal exceeds a set threshold. The aim here is to avoid the delay signal overpowering the input, and it’s incredibly effective. In Amp mode, the whole delay signal will be suppressed, but the clever FB mode allows the first delayed signal through unaffected before ducking the rest. Simple, but highly useful.

CC me in

Unlike straight-up digital delays, u-he’s BBD modelling is designed for smooth, glitch-free changes of buffer length in real time, and this makes Colour Copy a true tweaker’s delay – think dub-style performances and hands-on echo pitch-sweeps. There’s also a cool Freeze option which loops the delay indefinitely. This,

like all of the plugin’s main parameters, can be assigned to a MIDI control, expanding the effect’s potential as a performance tool.

The interface is a little different to other delay plugins, however, and takes a little while to get used to – the way the Rate control and L/R Tap Positions interact isn’t immediately obvious, for example. If you’re looking for a more intuitive design, a plugin such as FabFilter’s Timeless 2 or Soundtoys EchoBoy might be the way to go. That’s not necessarily a criticism of Colour Copy so much as a difference in approach, though, and CC’s sound is worth the learning curve.

As you’d expect from the creators of outstanding virtual-analogue instruments such as Diva, Repro-1 and Repro-5, Colour Copy sounds utterly awesome at pretty much every setting. From screaming echo distortion to lush chorus and flanging effects and more, it’s an absolute beauty. **cm**

Web www.u-he.com



Blend seamlessly between the five Colours with the rotary knob

Colour palette

The Feedback Colouration section is key to Colour Copy’s distinctive sound. The main Colour knob lets you choose from five tone-shaping settings: Reso(nant), Sparkle, Fuzz, Snap and Dusk. What’s clever is that this is actually a continuous control, rather than just a selector switch: set it to a position somewhere in between two of the modes and you’re blending seamlessly between, say, the bright distortion of Sparkle and the darker, more resonant Fuzz.

In Vintage mode, the Floor toggle switch to the right adds an authentic BBD noise floor to the signal, while dedicated Brightness and Saturation controls allow you to adjust the filtering and distortion more precisely once you’ve chosen a Colour.

It’s quite a simple approach at its core, but highly effective in use, especially when you start cranking the Input gain dial to overload the effect and start drawing out even more analogue-style goodness.

Alternatively

FXpansion Bloom
cm191 » 8/10 » £69

A different type of echo effect with three models (including BBD), TransMod modulation and more

Soundtoys EchoBoy
cm227 » 10/10 » \$199

This do-it-all delay lets you flip between 30 analogue-modelled echo flavours – but it ain’t cheap

Verdict

For Intuitive interface

Organic, analogue sound

Tons of options for tweaking

Broad range of delay effects, from distorted echoes to lush modulation

MIDI input is ace

Against Time Base/Rate and central panel take a little while to get used to
Other plugins may be more intuitive for basic delay effects

The German maestros strike gold again with this gorgeous-sounding, wonderfully creative delay effect. Essential



The Configuration page makes it easy to assign MIDI controllers to Colour Copy parameters for hands-on tweaking

9/10