

DUNLOP

ECHOPLEX DELAY

EP-103

REVIEW BY **SAM HILL**
STREET PRICE **\$199.99**



When I heard Dunlop was getting into the tape echo game, I was excited. The company has owned the Echoplex name for some time, first introducing the EP101 preamp pedal, and I wondered if it would ever make a delay. Well, it did, and it's freaking awesome. There are many tape delay pedals on the market. Some are simple echo devices with preset amounts of tape-style modulation, while others are complex mechanisms that offer the ability to adjust every possible parameter of a tape machine. The Echoplex is a brilliant design that fits perfectly in between the two.

The Echoplex looks like a typical delay pedal. Three knobs keeps tweaking to a minimum with Sustain controlling the repeats, Volume for mix, and Delay for delay time. The Volume knob has a secondary function that controls Age, which is the amount of wow, flutter, grit, and high-end rolloff you can add to the delayed signal. It also features a jack for an external tap tempo switch. Using the external tap opens up the Echoplex to delay times of up to four seconds, compared to 750 milliseconds without it. I used the excellent new MXR Tap Tempo switch to explore

the possibilities. The tap tempo switch can adjust the time when the pedal is off, making it extremely friendly for live use.

The Echoplex sounds amazing. If you're like me, you've tried every tape echo-style pedal you can get your hands on. I've owned several of them, and have also had the chance to play through real tape echoes. There's nothing like the real thing, but emulations have gotten so good, it's almost silly to lug around a delay the size of a car battery that might not work when you need it. In Normal mode, without any tape modulation added,

the Echoplex delivers clean, clear, yet warm repeats, with just a hint of wobble. It sounds fantastic for ambient clean chording, slapback, and everything in between. If you've ever played through an actual tape echo, you know that one in good health sounds much closer to a digital delay than any analog device. The Echoplex has that sound—not quite pristine, but almost there. Age mode, however, is a different story.

If you like your delay down and dirty, the Echoplex is a real treat. Pressing the Volume knob accesses Age mode. With the knob pushed in, the Age LED indicator blinks red and you can select the amount of Age you want. When you push the knob again, the Volume knob returns to its normal function, and the LED stays a solid red to let you know you're in age mode. With the knob fully counterclockwise, there is a subtle, but noticeable, darkening of the tone, with a few more warps and wiggles than normal mode. As you turn it up, the tape

machine gets sick as a dog, and your repeats become a gritty, dark, warbly soup—a delicious one, at that. Although there's only a single knob to control it, there is a lot of variation available. My only concern is that when a significant amount of Age is added, the volume of the pedal increases, which may be a nuisance if you want to keep your levels the same during a live performance.

Dunlop has knocked it out of the park—this pedal is phenomenal. It is easily my favorite tape echo on the market. If you're looking for an authentic-sounding tape delay that is easy to use, this is a gift from the tone gods. Just go buy one, but you'll have to get in line behind me.

WHAT WE LIKE

Great variety of tape echo tones in a compact package. Simple operation. Built to last. Tons of delay time with accompanying tap tempo switch.

CONCERNS

Volume knob will need to be adjusted depending on the amount of Age dialed in.