

DELAY & OFFSET

Use these two controls to set the base delay time and delay time modulation

LINE
Select one of three delay lines to edit

LFO
Select one of three LFOs to edit

OSCILLATOR PHASE
Adjust the left and right channel phase independently

CONFIGURATION
Choose from one of three LFO routing configuration options

ANALOG BBD
Activate the bucket brigade device emulation



TREMOLO
Use this to adjust the amount of amplitude modulation

FILTER
Select the filter type by clicking on the graphic and set cutoff and cutoff modulation using the controls

LFO SETTINGS
Choose from six osc waveforms, set the rate and activate the sync option

MIXER
Set the panning and mix levels for the three delay lines

QUALITY
Choose the realtime and offline processing quality from this drop-down menu

D16 Syntorus 2 €59 PC MAC

Chorus has proven to be a tricky effect to create in plugin form. Let's see if this upgraded classic hits the spot

> Polish developer D16 produce some of the finest analogue emulations available, ranging from the Roland-inspired Drumazon and Nepheton drum machines right through to hardware emulating effects such as their Antresol flanger, Repeater delay and Redoptor tube distortion.

A decade ago they released their original chorus plugin, Syntorus. This captured the classic analogue chorus sound you'd find on synths, pedals and beyond and needless to say we loved it and still do. But ten years is a long time, and so it's great to see this excellent processor finally getting an overhaul.

So what's new?

Syntorus 2 (VST, AU, AAX) builds on version 1 in a number of ways. The big news is you now have three rather than two delay lines and three rather than two LFOs. This simple though significant change has necessitated a layout

redesign, and what you now have are two panels, one for delay Lines and one for LFOs, with the red LEDs acting as selectors for the processor you want to edit. A third Mixer panel provides level, pan and metering for each delay Line, and a Configuration panel gives you three options that dictate how the LFOs control the delays. These include an Independent setting

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with LFOs simply controlling their respective delays, a Summed option and a combination of the two (Mixed). Overall the redesign works excellently and the new panning option is particularly handy for creating stereo effects or simply tweaking the stereo image.

On the delay lines themselves you have the same key parameters (Depth, Offset and Tremolo) albeit with slightly extended parameters (up to 20ms). However, the global high-pass filter on version 1 has been replaced by delay Line-specific multimode filters (Low, High and Bandpass) with corresponding Cutoff control and LFO Modulation depth. This in itself is a powerful addition that facilitates frequency-specific processing. Looking at the LFOs, once again you have six types with tempo sync option, but now there's LFO Amplitude (with invert), and independent left and right Phase shift controls rather than a single stereo phase knob. As before, Syntorus includes a Bucket

“Classic chorus effects generate an obsessive loyalty; thankfully Syntorus 2 retains the original’s vibe”

Brigade Device (BBD) Emulation mode (see box out for more info) and next to this are the global wet/dry mix (FX), Output Volume, and Output Meter. Rounding things off are options for realtime and offline processing quality (Normal, High, Ultra), and you can also assign and learn MIDI controllers, and load and save MIDI controller maps.

Sounds

Syntorus 2 comes with a seemingly modest set of 100 factory presets, and these are categorised by type (intense, mild, subtle) rather than by target application. The preset system is well spec'd and user presets support user-created tagging and categorisation. Let's have a look at what effects are on offer.

Electric piano is a popular target for chorus, and there are some great options here. Dreamy Rhodes adds width and wobble, opening up the midrange, and Ensemble provides richness and a slightly wandering stereo image. Meanwhile, Classic 1 provides a kind of pulsing wash. All three are categorised as 'mild' but the effect is pretty transformative.

On acoustic guitar Classic 2 delivers a wonderful rich swirl, while Cramped Space captures a tight mono flanger effect. We also like Highest Harmonics on acoustic as it rejigs the tonal balance towards higher frequencies, adding nice stereo width in the process. On clean electric guitar Flat Detune and Perfect Triangle both achieve the classic 80s picked effect; meanwhile, for something more distorted, Juicy adds pitchy width.

Syntorus 2 is great for simply thickening pads (Gentle Expander) and if you want a more flangey or phasey effect, Gentle Smearing and Aether both do the trick. Meanwhile, for string machine lovers there are four Solina-inspired presets, including the super rich Solina on Anabolic Steroids. For short stabby synths, Light Dual Chorus adds subtle width, and the three



Syntorus 2 includes three configuration options that affect how the LFOs influence the delay lines



If you want to add the flavour of a classic bucket brigade device, select the Analog BBD option

Bucket Brigade

Bucket Brigade Devices (BBDs) form the cornerstone of solid state delay lines and unlike a digital or tape-based delay, they actually use a chip that's full of capacitors to create a delayed version of the original signal. This can be used to implement a delay effect or combined with modulation to create a chorus. The typical BBD design includes input and output filtering, and this, combined with the noisy nature of the chips themselves, creates a distinctive sound. The Analog BBD mode on Syntorus 2 is D16's attempt to emulate these solid state chips. With it

switched in there's a clear difference to the sound; and, for want of a better description, with BBD switched out, the sounds is quite hi-fi. With it switched in, it's darker and more retro sounding. Putting the plugin on the analyser and comparing the signal with and without the BBD option indicates that although the whole frequency range is being affected by this setting, most of the action is happening in the lower mid frequencies. Needless to say, having both options is ideal and in practice we'd simply choose whichever setting worked best in context.

Synthex presets create width with a bit of movement. For more intense wobbly effects both the Prophet and Eminent 1 presets also sound pretty good. For plucky synth sounds we particularly like the Choruser preset, and for stereo enhancement Stereo Separation is great.

Syntorus 2 also uses synced modulation to create some rather cool sequencer effects. Trance Gater, Circular and Chord Gater deliver more traditional sequencer sounds, while Derivative Sequence, FX Sequence and Tribal 1 produce more unusual rhythmic effects. There are also some truly oddball effects (Alice in Particleland, Madness and The Queasemaker are just three examples) to round things off.

Bigger and better

Classic chorus effects, even plugin versions, generate an obsessive loyalty and thankfully Syntorus 2 retains the vibe of the original. Nevertheless, we were concerned that the 100 factory presets might be limited. Thankfully, on closer inspection, they cover a lot of ground and provide a great springboard for more tweaking.

All told, we found Syntorus 2 to be better than its predecessor - more flexible, easier to use and, dare we say, better-sounding. One of the best-sounding chorus plugins about. **cm**

Web D16.pl

Alternatively

XILS-lab Chor'X
cm179 » 8/10 » €59

Four BBD chorus effects with integrated dynamic spatialiser screen deliver excellent classic chorus sounds

Sinevibes Blend
\$29

16 chorus layers and three chorus-type algorithms; a wealth of effects

Verdict

For Three delay lines and three LFOs
Multimode filter on each delay line
Delay line mixer with pan and metering
Optional bucket brigade emulation
Great price

Against Not much

D16 have achieved the tricky task of taking an excellent plugin and making it even better. Syntorus 2 is one of the very best chorus plugins available

10/10