

Visual Sound H2O Chorus/Echo V3

By Sarah FitzGerald
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Visual Sound has produced a third version of the H2O, a dual pedal that features both lush chorus and analog-tone echo. The H2O has long been a cornerstone of Visual Sound's lineup, as part of the trifecta that gave rise to Visual Sound's prominence: the H2O chorus/echo, Route 66 comp/drive, and Jekyll&Hyde overdrive/distortion pedals showed up on the scene with brilliantly paired effects and won over legions of players in the process. I've owned several Visual Sound pedals in my day, but never picked up an H2O and was beyond curious about exactly how lush this thing could be.

I plugged the H2O into a Princeton Reverb to start but soon took advantage of the stereo outs on this pedal and added a Marshall JVM-1H running through a Vox 1x12 cab with a Celestion Greenback. Playing this pedal in stereo is *where it's at*. Let's run down the controls on this thing—because there are many of them!

The chorus side features pots for speed, width, and depth. There are two slider switches, one for intensity and one for detuning. The chorus side also features two smaller pots that let you tweak the tone or adjust the mix between chorus and vibrato, although in a dream world, vibrato would be a third, separate effect on this box. On the delay side, there are controls for delay (time), repeats, and level and an additional switch that selects for short or long repeats. Each effect is independently selectable via footswitch, and additionally each effect has its own I/O, meaning you can route the effects in different orders in your chain however you see fit. It's a wildly flexible box capable some incredible tones.



WHAT WE LIKE

The chorus is indeed very, very lush and nears (though doesn't match) CE-1 territory. I'm always searching for a box that can do a great 70s era analog chorus and this pedal comes so, so close! I'd put it on my shortlist as a chorus pedal alone, nevermind the fact that you get a wonderful analog-sounding delay to sweeten the deal. With no tap tempo, this delay is never going to replace my arsenal of delay pedals, but as a short or long echo, it perfectly thickens up the tone of this pedal.

I've never been a fan of the seasick-warbly chorus sound, but if you are, you're going to love the H2O. With the detune switch enabled and the intensity cranked up (and especially if you're running in stereo)—this thing can surely induce motion sickness!

Also, I always found the home-plate shape of the original Visual Sound products a little weird, so I was happy to find that they've moved to a more traditional shape which actually helps with the economy of your pedal board: jacks are all on the back side of the enclosure which means you can jam more pedals onto your board horizontally.

CONCERNS

Well. I'm trying really hard to think of something concerning to say about this pedal and I've got nothing. There might be ways to make this thing better, but it's already "Great" so let's not nitpick too badly.

TONE

Amazing analog chorus tone with stellar analog-voiced echo- rich, thick, and syrupy, perfect for your Cocteau Twins cover band.

BUILD QUALITY

Rock solid enclosure using the Forever Footswitch™ which are rated for 10 million hits.

VALUE

A great analog chorus pedal will run you \$179 alone. The combination of chorus and echo in the H20 is a perfect pairing.

