



Lord of Lush

The Electro-Harmonix Cathedral Stereo Reverb

Along with its redesigned Nano Grail and Holy Grail Plus reverb pedals, Electro-Harmonix recently introduced what could well be the holiest of its reverb pedal offerings—the Cathedral Stereo Reverb.

Housed in a heavy-duty chassis measuring 5 7/8" x 4 7/8" x 1 1/2", the Cathedral has chassis-mounted stereo in/out 1/4" jacks, dual stomp switches, six chassis-mounted controls, and an array of status and preset LEDs.

The Cathedral has eight modes/presets including Grail Spring (which uses the same circuit as the Holy Grail spring reverb), Accu Spring (an emulation of an Acoustics reverb tank), Hall, Room, Plate and Reverse digital reverbs, along with Grail Flerb (reverb/flange) and Echo presets. The control layout includes a wet/dry Blend, Reverb Time, Dampening/Tone, Feedback, Pre-delay, and a Mode/Pre-set selector. Switches and jacks include a Tap/Infinite momentary footswitch, a true-bypass footswitch, and true-stereo in/out 1/4" jacks as well as a 9-volt power jack.

Plugged in between a Fender Stratocaster and a couple of all-tube combo amps, the Cathedral's Holy Grail setting offered a fantastic surf reverb with plenty of front-end "splash" and a rich, lively decay, while the new Acoustics emulation setting offers a smoother (but still lively) reverb that works well with overdriven amp settings. The Grail

and Accu settings are both very guitar-friendly, with musical characteristics voiced for guitar—not just a modified digital reverb. And there are enough tonal variations in both that you can emulate a variety of stock-reverb-tank sounds. The three studio/digital modes (Hall, Room, and Plate) offered high-quality (24-bit/46.88 kHz) reverb that was crisp and warm, with complex reflections in their respective formats—good for a natural reverb on guitar, vocals, and other instruments.

The Reverse mode does an excellent job simulating the cool backward-tape effect. With shorter Reverb Time and Pre-Delay settings, it worked well as a volume-swell effect with the Blend control turned up all the way. One control most reverb pedals lack is the Cathedral's Pre-Delay, which adds "space" before the reverb, helping preserve the clarity and definition of the notes. And making the Pre-Delay adjustable as opposed to pre-set is key to tailoring the type, blend, and depth of reverb. It's very preferable to a more-typical "global" pre-delay setting.

Another option borrowed from the Holy Grail is the Grail Flerb setting, which mixes Hall reverb with flange to produce a huge liquid effect, especially when the pedal is used in stereo with two amps.

With its seven reverb modes, the Cathedral offers a basic digital with a Tap Tempo feature and delay times up to two seconds.

The Dampening/Tone control does double duty in acting as a low-pass filter in the Delay mode (for a low-fi echo sound) or a high-pass filter, depending on which direction it's turned.

In the Echo mode, the pedal can blend reverb with the Time control, giving the repeats a washed-out sound that softens their intensity.

Along with solid delay and echo sounds, it can make cool sci-fi effect sounds by manipulating the Tone, Reverb Time, and Pre-Delay controls when using the Infinite footswitch. And the Cathedral can save settings, one for each of the eight reverb/echo types.

The Electro-Harmonix Cathedral Stereo Reverb is loaded with high-quality guitar-friendly reverb and delay effects, accessed via clean, well-conceived controls that are the perfect compromise between a complex, hard-to-program rack-mount reverb and the typical over-simplified guitar pedal. —Phil Fesser