

TC Electronics

Wizard M2000

Paul White presents a lightning tour of the TC Wizard M2000 effects processor, the forerunner of TC's expanding range of mid-price signal processors.

With TC Electronic about to launch a whole new range of mid-price processors, now is a good time to look at the M2000, the unit that made TC quality accessible to serious private studio owners as well as to professionals. While the M2000 doesn't compete on price with the more familiar budget effects units, it does provide some very real competition for the likes of Lexicon's PCM80, and is certain to enjoy a long life rather than being superseded every few months.

Inside its disarmingly simple 1U case is a powerful dual effects engine utilising TC's own dedicated DARC2 processing chip, enabling it to create two simultaneous effects, either in combination or driven separately from two different effects sends. Two effects may not sound like much, but the emphasis here is on quality. With TC's

dynamic processes such as compressor, limiter, expander, gate and de-esser. Parameters can be changed in real-time via Midi and relevant effects can be synced to Midi clock or a manually tapped tempo via button or footswitch. Tempo can be set in bpm and subdivided into most common musical subdivisions, including triplets.

Feel the quality

On the techie side, the M2000 features both AES/EBU and S/PDIF digital I/O, and balanced XLR analogue connections. The use of precision 20-bit converters yields a dynamic range of over 105dB with headroom up to +22dBu, and though the AES/EBU connection is 24-bit, 16 or 20-bit signals are handled intelligently using dither to maximise quality. The frequency response is



history for creating superb delay, modulation and reverb treatments, you know you won't be disappointed.

One feature borrowed from Lexicon's operating system is the Recall Wizard, a kind of database system for categorising and displaying effects. So when you're looking for a drum reverb, you only have to check out the patches designated as drum programs rather than trawl through all 250 presets and 250 more user programs to find something suitable. For the pro user in a hurry, this is very valuable. Another aspect of the M2000 that will be appreciated by the professional with little spare time is the excellent, intuitive editing system, configured as a single-layer list rather than a complex nest of menus.


TC Effects

The effects on offer are pretty conventional, but listen to the reverbs and you'll know that the M2000 is up there with the best. The room simulations produce a dense, smooth and realistic reverb. You can emulate anything from a small locker room to a cavernous hall, but as with all reverb units, it's the quality of the short ambience treatments that separates the men from the boys.

Other effects include multi-voice pitch shifting, classic TC chorus effects, some superb flanger algorithms, all the usual delay effects, plus a smattering of

nominally flat from 10Hz to over 20kHz, and to facilitate expansion, there's a PCMCIA card slot in the front panel. Because it is possible to use the M2000 entirely in the digital domain, a digital gain trim facility is incorporated into the operating software.

Hear the width

There's no doubt this is a super effects box that really is easy to operate. The reverbs are amongst the few out there that stand direct comparison with Lexicon, and the modulated delay effects are as musical and rich as you could hope for. There's very little to criticise about the M2000 other than perhaps its propensity for being 'safe', but a unit of this quality will probably spend most of its time handling the main reverb during mixing, and this it does beautifully. Those wanting more in the way of audio pyrotechnics might do better to check out the imminent TC Fireworx - it's guaranteed to be very far from safe! 

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