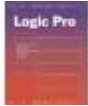


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Universal Audio *Boss CE1* Formats: Mac & PC UAD1

It's no secret that Roland/Boss have produced some of the most musical-sounding chorus processors ever, and what is so extraordinary is that they got the process sounding right first time around. Those early devices were based around analogue, charge-coupled delay lines, which gave them their soft, musical character — many subsequent digital chorus effects ended up sounding too clinical and hard-edged. In an agreement between Roland and Universal Audio, which will hopefully see the modelling of more Roland classics (oh, a Space Echo and Dimension D — please!), Universal Audio have developed and very accurately crafted an emulation of the classic Boss CE1 stomp box for their UAD1 PCI card. The CE1 is a very simple pedal with very few controls, which can generate either chorus or true pitch vibrato. It sounds 'right' on almost any sound source, especially guitar and fretless bass; it also suits keyboards particularly well.



The vibrato-chorus switch on the lovingly rendered plug-in (complete with vintage paint chips and scrapes) toggles between Vibrato and Chorus modes, while the other switch is really a bypass button. A single control knob adjusts the chorus intensity by simultaneously controlling both depth and rate, while two further knobs adjust the vibrato depth and rate when the pedal is in Vibrato mode. Universal Audio have, however, taken one liberty with the original design by adding a new stereo mode. In Classic mode, the left output signal is the direct dry audio while the delayed, modulated version is sent to the right output. This is how the original pedal worked to create a pseudo-stereo signal from a mono source; when only the mono output was used, the delayed and dry signals were summed as they still are in most guitar stomp chorus pedals. However, the new Dual mode works as two CE1s that can be fed from a mono or stereo input, and the two outputs carry the summed dry plus delay/modulation components for each channel, but with the modulating low-frequency oscillators running 90 degrees out of phase with each other to create a wide stereo image. In other words, it's like having separate chorus pedals in the right and left-hand signal paths, but with their LFOs locked 90 degrees apart.

I've owned a number of Boss chorus units over the years and listening to the Universal Audio *CE1* made me feel quite nostalgic. Chorus is now a much overused effect, but in situations where you need it, it has to sound right, and this one does, achieving the smooth, liquid sound usually associated only with analogue pedals. It's particularly good on clean guitar. Universal Audio have done a great job with the modelling, and though the pedal has very few controls and looks simple, I'm sure they had to meet a few challenges to get the sound this close. The vibrato option also works well when used gently and can add depth and interest to an otherwise static sound. If you want that old classic analogue chorus sound in a plug-in format, and you own a UAD1 card, then *CE1* should make you very happy. *Paul White*

\$99.
 www.uaudio.com

Friday 30th September 2005

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