

Plates of Legend Vol. 2 X



General Info

Plate reverbs- legendary for their sound, originally conceived as an alternative to real echo-chambers, but still maintained and found in many studios over half a century later. This is the second in this Nebula reverb series all about the classic plate sound. Here we have two more examples of the king of reverbs, sampled and recreated through the power of Nebula. If you already have Plates of Legend I, these compliment the plates in that set nicely, and will provide you some additional flavors of that plate sound. This release also includes a bonus 'bionic' plate reverb, which gives you some very different sounding options, and is explained in more detail later in the manual.

I already went over the reasons why it can be nice to have access to multiple examples of the same model of plate in the manual for part one of this series, but let's go over it again. These old plate reverbs can sound very different due to these factors:

- Tuning. That's right, just like you have to tune the strings on a guitar, the springs that hold the plate to the frame should be tuned for just the right amount of tension. Some studios/owners probably keep up on this more than others, and even if there are instructions available on how to do it, it's not an exact science. With so many springs, no two tunings are going to be the same. This will affect the sound.
- The plate itself. Even with a pretty consistent fabrication process, there will be minute or not-so-minute variations between different plates. Consider that this model was in production for a few decades and those differences may factor in a little more between a pair of plates made 20 years apart. Plates may also accumulate tiny dents and dings, rust, or other distinguishing blemishes over the years (which will affect the reverberations).
- Aging, maintenance, modifications. These factors are going to affect every plate and accompanying electronics differently, depending on the owners.
- Revisions, options. This model originally shipped with a tube amplifier which was at one point switched to a solid state amp. They were also originally mono, with stereo becoming a later option.
- Placement. These things are sensitive. They have been known to pick up sounds of traffic outside, or a person walking by the frame. Ideally they'd be placed in a room where they can be isolated. Who knows what environmental factors could affect the sound here? Temp, humidity, dirt, dust, etc.

- The Electronics. This ties in with the 'aging', 'mods', and 'revisions' points mentioned earlier, but the amps driving the things, as well as anything else in the signal chain (such as the mixing board, etc), will have some effect on how the plate sounds.

Installation

There are two main steps to the installation-

- 1) Install the programs/vectors. Just copy the .n2p files to your Nebula 'programs' folder, and the .n2v files to the 'vectors' folder. Before moving on to the skin install, check to see that the programs load properly in default Nebula, by loading them from Nebula's program finder. The programs are in the 'REV' category, then the 'PX4', 'PX5', 'PX8', or 'PX9' categories, for each sample rate. 'PX5' is for the 48khz rate.
- 2) To install the skin, follow the section of the skin installation manual relating to either Nebula 3 or Nebula 4, depending on which you're using. After installing the skin you will be loading these programs as a unique plug-in, so don't ever load them from the default Nebula and its program selection list again! The program buttons will not work if you do!

The Reverbs

Volume 2 includes another stereo plate with solid state amp, but this one (unlike the one in PoL 1) had a popular after-market electronics mod that gives a cleaner signal with lower noise floor (we'll call this plate "Apollo"). I feel that this one is a little more mellow/richer sounding compared to the slightly brighter stereo plate in PoL 1 (Olympus). Then there's another of the older mono plates with the tube amp ("Minotaur"). Compared to the one in PoL 1 (Styx), this one is smoother, with less early reflections, and not quite as big sounding.

There are three alternate versions of the Apollo plate, sampled with an unusual method and are contained in one program with a selector control to choose between them ("Bionic Apollo"). These were made using a sampling technique I came up with a few years ago and have called 'bionic' ever since. It involves playing/recording the sampling tones through the hardware at faster or slower speeds which has at least 2 effects. First, the reverb decay time is either shortened or lengthened. Second, the frequency response element of the tone is shifted either up or down (making it brighter or darker).

There's a stereo swapped, and multiple mono variations of the Apollo plate program, as well as eleven reel to reel versions that were resampled to tape using various decks and speeds. 'Stereo swap' has the left and right impulses swapped. 'Mono L' uses only the left impulses for both sides. 'Mono R' does the same but using the right reverb impulses. 'Mono mix' uses a 50/50 mix of both the left and right impulses for both channels, providing a thicker sound than the other versions. For the normally dark Minotaur plate there's a brighter EQ'd version, and six variations where I used an Orban 'stereo synthesizer' which uses comb filtering to produce stereo from a mono source.

Lite, Full

The lite versions use less CPU, have no dynamics, and only have 1 kernel, so you don't get any harmonic distortion. The full programs have the dynamic response and some sampled harmonics. You can use the lite versions while mixing and then switch to full just before rendering. With the included custom skin, the controls won't reset when you switch.

User Interface/Controls, Reverb:



- 1 – Dry Mix** – Turn this up to bring some of the dry signal back into Nebula's output. It's turned down all the way by default because the best way to use my Nebula reverbs is in a send slot in your DAW (as opposed to as an insert).
- 2 – Reverb Mix** – Adjusts the level of the reverb itself. You can think of this as a combination of your input and output gain. All you need is this one gain control. These 'Full' programs are dynamic and will react differently if you boost the gain to higher levels, but it is subtle. 'Lite' versions have no dynamics so there is no change in sound when gain is adjusted.
- 3 – Damper** – Adjusts the sampled damper control. More dampening means a shorter reverb. Also alters the tone significantly.
- 4 – Feedback** – Introduces some feedback. Be careful with it.
- 5 – Input Meter** – The meter is a peak dBFS meter, not VU.
- 6 – Output Meter**

7 – Mode control – Only used in the 'pseudo stereo' Minotaur program, the Bionic Apollo program, and the 'Taped' program. It lets you switch between the different reverbs contained in each of those programs.

8 – Program Matrix – Here's where you pick the program you want. The 'L' column are the lite versions, and 'F' are the full versions. The Apollo plate programs are on the left, Minotaur on the right.

General Use

I strongly recommend you use these reverbs as sends in your DAW as opposed to inserts, and they are set up with that use in mind, for several reasons. If you really want to use them as inserts I recommend using your DAW's built-in wet/dry mixer control for the Nebula plugin, instead of trying to mix between the 'dry mix' and 'reverb mix' controls in the programs. If you insist on using the 'dry' control in the programs to add the dry signal back in, avoid using the 'feedback' control because it will also feedback the dry signal.

Using the reverbs on a send track is the only way you can also use any EQ, chorus, or other effects, and have it only affect the reverb. Another benefit to using these programs in a send slot in your DAW is that you can also then apply a delay to the signal with whatever means at your disposal to get a pre-delay for the reverb effect. Nebula doesn't have this ability built in.

Tape Program – More Info

#1-3 on the 'mode' selector was resampled onto and off of reel tape using a MCI-JH-24 deck at 15IPS. #4 = same deck, 30IPS. #5 = Studer B67 at 7.5IPS, #6 = same deck at 15IPS. #7-9 = Otari MTR10 at 7.5IPS. #10 = Otari MTR-90ii at 15ips. #11 = Otari MX5050ii at 15ips. #1-9 used the Minotaur plate EQ'd to be less bassy as the source. #10 and 11 used the third Bionic Apollo reverb as the source, and have longer reverb lengths. #10 and 11 were too similar so I mixed the left and right channels of 11 down to create an almost, but not completely mono result. The full range of the damper control was not resampled to tape for any of these, only one position. To achieve the dampened settings I applied a fadeout to the impulses.

V2 – use this version number to keep track of updates. If the manual posted at my site has a higher version number than the one you have, your set probably isn't up to date.

Programs and manual copyright March 2016-Dec 2022 Tim Wisecup

www.cupwise.com

Thanks to Max for the skins! Check out his patreon, which helps him continue doing all the great graphical work (and other help) he's been doing with Nebula!

<https://www.patreon.com/join/azzimov>