



Dark descent

EQD's latest sonic mindbender is a trip worth taking

BY BLAKE WRIGHT

WHEN IT comes to new pedals from Akron, Ohio's EarthQuaker Devices you would do well to know your regional theme park history. You see, many of the names of EQD unique sound machines are taken from rides (and former rides) located at Cedar Point — the self-proclaimed roller coaster capital of the world — in Sandusky, Ohio. Disaster Transport? Dispatch Master? Avalanche Run? They all have ties to a former roller coaster there at the park.

So what about the new Space Spiral? Well... the Space Spiral was a gyro tower at Cedar Point. It was located near the front of the park,

next to the Disaster Transport. It opened in 1965 and closed in August 2012. Where I grew up, in Houston, Texas, we had a 'space spiral' in the form of the Astro Needle at the long-defunct AstroWorld.

The more you know.

The pedal is something different, of course. It is a modulated digital delay designed for fans of oil-can style or well-worn tape delays. It sports six knob controls: Time, Repeats, Mix, Depth, Shape and Rate. These all basically function the way they would on most delays. Shape morphs the wave shape from a triangle to a square as it is turned clockwise, and

you can get the regenerations to self-oscillate with the Repeats knob up full. The delay time runs from 30ms to 600ms which will get you everything from classic slapback sounds to washy cosmic rhythms.

Plugged in, the Space Spiral is a lo-fi charmer more akin to the earliest echo machines than most of the sharper delay releases in recent memory, with dark to darker repeats you can either drown in modulation or have the notes float on the surface of the subtlest shifts.

You can get utilitarian delay sounds/settings from the Space Spiral, but limiting the pedal to those

is like flying a spaceship, but only through school zones — it's just not what the pedal (or that spaceship) was made for. The Space Spiral embraces the quirk and begs to be unleashed into a black hole of swirling notes than bounce and redirect off one another, or at the very least, a wash of shoe-gazey melancholy. There is something oddly satisfying about building a wall of wash as the background to some front-and-center ambient noodling.

Just as the pair were neighbors in Cedar Park, there is a kinship between the EQD's Space Spiral and Disaster Transport. For EarthQuaker, the Space Spiral was an exercise in getting some of the noise removed from the signal of that traditional DT family, as well as cleaning up the delay line while maintaining its dark character. There was also effort to

fine tune the modulation. To get it a unique voice, playing off the repeats in a more rhythmic way.

There is no shortage of dark delays on the market currently. It seems to have been a flavor of the moment over the past 12 months or so, but if you're looking for one with just the right amount of lagniappe, the EQD Space Spiral could be your ticket to ride. ⚙️



EARTHQUAKER DEVICES SPACE SPIRAL

Controls: Time, Repeats, Mix, Depth, Shape and Rate knobs

Dimensions: 4.625" L x 2.5" W x 2.25" H

Price: \$195



BLACK CAT PEDALS

BOUTIQUE GUITAR EFFECTS MADE IN THE USA SINCE 1993 WWW.BLACKCATPEDALS.COM 203.764.2644