

# DIGITECH

## NAUTILA

REVIEW BY **DAVID A. EVANS**

STREET PRICE **\$149.95**



DigiTech's Nautila chorus and flange pedal rounds out the company's line of modulation pedals. If I had to place it, I'd say that the Nautila sits (sonically) between DigiTech's Mosaic (a polyphonic 12-string emulator) and its Luxe (a chorus-like detune, touted as an "anti-chorus" pedal). And like its cousins, the Nautila delivers a shimmering, multi-voiced signal modulation. But the Nautila also delivers a surprisingly warm and analog sound, if it's desired. The secret to the Nautila's range of sounds—from metallic shimmer to analog warble—lies in its aptly

named "Voices" knob. Essentially, when the knob is set low (7 o'clock), the pedal sounds warm and analog, though perhaps not as watery as, say, the chorus from Electro-Harmonix's Small Clone. Turning the "Voices" knob clockwise adds greater complexity because of the increased number of voices to the mix. (They don't call this effect a chorus for no reason.) As the voice number increases, the effect transforms, somewhat gradually, from the analog-like warble to a slightly metallic tone which is reminiscent of '80s-era choruses. Some people might not care for the

latter sound, but it's good to know that the Nautila delivers a wide range of tones. And to be honest, I thought the Nautila's "metallic" chorus was pretty musical.

The Nautila's other mode, flanger, also seemed more traditional and analog in its lower-voiced setting. Here I dialed in the sort of jet-plane effect that's always discussed in the context of flange effects. In higher speed settings, the flange became playfully bouncy in a manner that reminded me of analog effects. At the highest voice levels, the flanger sounded like a strange chorus-flange pedal:

a bit metallic, but with a bounce that most chorus pedals can't produce.

One really nice feature is the Nautila's four-mode waveform selector. Triangle, log[arithmic], and sine waves account for three of the four modes. The Nautila's selector turns smoothly between these waveform settings, so it's possible to get a blend of triangle and logarithmic waves, or logarithmic and sine waves. The fourth mode, drift, is particularly special, because it sets the Nautila to randomly "drift" between the three different wave-modes. The random-selection adds a bit of the unexpected to your tone. Although I was unable to test the pedal's stereo capability, I imagine that the Nautila will produce some pretty cool stereo effects, especially in the drift mode.

One last thing: the Nautila, like DigiTech's other pedals, is built like a tank. Its thick, metal housing feels like it will survive a nuclear blast, or the more likely (but perhaps equally unfortunate)

drop from a backpack onto a concrete floor. The pedal also features a curious engineering choice: concentric control knobs. I don't recall seeing these knobs on many recent pedals, but the design allowed DigiTech to house the Nautila's components in a smaller housing. So, the Nautila groups its Speed and Depth controls and Emphasis and Voices controls. I appreciate that despite their somewhat unusual design, the knobs feel solid. They seem to be machined from aluminum, which is reassuring.

The Nautila offers a little bit of everything for fans of chorus and flange. It's true that the pedal won't sound exactly like an analog chorus or flange, but it will sound interesting in its own way. Indeed, for guitarists or keyboardists who favor slightly unusual but nevertheless ear-pleasing modulation effects, they could do worse than to have a listen to the Nautila. I'm sure that many voices will agree.

## WHAT WE LIKE

Great chorus and flange with the option to increase or decrease the number of voices in the effect; solid housing; stereo input and output.

## CONCERNS

None.