

SIGNAL CHAIN

My goal is using the pedal board is primarily to widen the capabilities of my acoustic guitar to create an ambience of worship and peace. By adding different effects, like delay, reverb and pitch shifts, I am attempting to broaden my musical expression beyond what the guitar alone can produce. By adding a phrase recorder I can loop musical passages to add complimentary phrases and subtle complexities to enrich the sound.

Signal chain

My signal passes through multiple pedals before it enters the direct box. It begins with the guitar then enters the delay pedals, (T.C. Electric Nova Delay then Boss DD-20 digital delay), followed by my pitch shifting pedal (Eventide Pitch Factor), followed by the reverb pedals (Boss RV-5, then Strymon BigSky) and ends with the phrase recorder (Boss RL-20XL phrase recorder). From this pedal the 1/4" cable connects to the direct box and the signal continues to the sound board and out to the speakers.

Next I'll say how I use the pedal categories.

Delay pedals

I like to use the delay pedals to add a sense of space to my music. By lengthening the time of the delay it sounds like I'm playing in a large, oversized room. If the delay times are shorter then the repeats can add syncopation or texture to the original signal.

Why multiple delays? By changing the values of the delays, one after the other, you can create interesting patterns as they overlap and collide. If you mathematically pair the signals together then they can maintain the original delay pattern and extend it.

Pitch shifting pedals

I prefer to use the Crystals setting (Bank 4, slot 2) on the Pitch Factor to create a bit of a sparkle and shimmer after the repeats of the delay pedals. In subtle uses it sounds heavenly. If it's too prominent it can sound obnoxious.

Reverb pedals

While the delay pedals repeats the guitar signal, a reverb pedal produces ambient reflections of your guitar playing. By smoothing over the original signal it adds depth and space without the crisp repeats of a delay pedal. I always have the RV-5 pedal on to widen the signal — even if I have no other pedal on. I use the BigSky more discretely to extend the signal beyond what's naturally conceivable to stretch and wash the sounds together to create a sonic atmosphere. With this soundscape in the background, I can add different musical phrases on top to add dimension.

Adding my voice

Recently I have been experimenting with adding my voice into the pedal board to create distant background melodies and harmonies to compliment the instrumental work. At the moment I achieve this by adding a Behringer XENYX Q502 mini-mixer into the signal chain on the left channel of the BigSky. I add my voice once the musical foundations are set and I can make changes to the BigSky to accommodate the effects I want to use as background vocals.