

Eventide H7600

Not quite top of Eventide's range but this latest processor is powerful enough and clever enough to set some standards for the competition. **GEORGE SHILLING** believes he has found the natural successor to the glorious H3000.



THIS NEW HARMONIZER is not quite Eventide's top-of-the-range model as that honour goes to the H8000FW — an 8-channel unit featuring 5.1 presets — but the H7600 is now the top stereo unit in the range, replacing the DSP7000 series. Apart from a different finish on the front, there are few visible differences between the old and the new. The main improvements are more processing power, an even larger selection of presets and algorithms, and, thankfully, a good search facility so you can find them.

Back in the 1980s, before the DAW changed everything, the H3000 caught the attention of many as a terrific source of unusual effects processes. It sounded different and modern, with great spangly and sparkly stereo effects, and an interface that, although it followed the 80's 'DX7' trend of data entry rather than knob-per-function, was remarkably easy to get to grips with. However, although the succeeding models from the DSP4000 onwards added further functions and features, they lacked the elegance of operation of the original H3000 range.

Here are the essentials: analogue inputs and outputs are of course provided on XLR, but usefully the inputs are on combi sockets allowing jack input too. The DSP models were popular with professional guitarists (there are presets created by Steve Vai and Joe Satriani), so perhaps that's why the jack inputs are remarkably clean and tolerant of even low-level signals from instrument outputs. Digital connections come as AES-EBU, SPDIF, along with Word clock I-O. MIDI In, Out and Thru together with two assignable pedal control jack inputs, plus a Relay jack. There is a traditional Serial connector for computer connection, plus a socket for the connection of an Eve/Net remote control — originally devised for the Orville model.

If you are of a mind to fiddle (*We are George, we are! Ed*), Vsigfile is a free PC editor (download from eventide.com; there is a Mac version in Beta available at wholecheese.com) for configuring Algorithms from the 230+ Modules. This is surely for serious boffins/sound designers only — with more than 1,000 presets onboard and each one a unique algorithm there is plenty to be going on with.

The case is typical Eventide untreated steel, with a few expansion blanking plates. The manual is a hefty ring-bound affair that implies you'll be taking a college course to learn how to use the thing. Thankfully, it's not so difficult. The controls are mostly familiar to users of previous models — the four softkeys, cursor keys, the keypad and Knob are all just the same,



the display is as clear as ever (brightness/contrast is adjustable), and there is a useful Tap tempo button at the top. The PCMCIA memory card slot allows you to take your favourite programs with you.

Booting takes about 30 seconds. The OS has been subtly rejigged to be more helpful than previous models. The main list view shows program number (starting with bank number), a descriptive name, number of I-O channels, a '96' if the program can be loaded when running at 88.1 or 96kHz (many can), and a coded indication of the type of effects blocks used.

For example, R, D, E means that Reverb, Delay and EQ (or Filter) blocks were used in the program. You can therefore filter the list to show all programs that include a particular module. You can also list programs by source type, i.e. the intended program material to be processed, such as Guitar, Vocals, Drums, etc. Programs are already sequenced into 85 categorised banks — the Presets section of the manual is useful for browsing. And every program includes a useful Info parameter where there is a text description and/or operational hints.

There are, generously, 1,099 programs to wade through. As well as all the crazy, gimmicky effects you expect, there are plenty of subtler and more useable programs. The pitch shifting is excellent of course; Ultra-Shifter convincingly preserves formants, and works diatonically. There is also a 174-second sampler onboard. All manner of vibrant delay and modulation presets are provided as expected, but effects such as compression and EQ are also comprehensively covered. There's even mild distortion and tube emulation implemented.

The more unusual presets are created by combining different modules in clever ways. There is plenty of stuff you'd never have imagined, such as a program to make a voice crack like a teenager, and Traffic Report that filters the voice and adds helicopter sound effects. All sorts of ambiences, distortions and degradations are provided for production. For musical applications it is easy to find what you are looking for, thanks to the List by Effect or Source criteria, whether you need an insert process or a send/return effect.

Reverb programs are exceptionally rich and smooth

sounding, and with 455 programs including a reverb module there are plenty to choose from. Some H3000 favourites are included, and TC, Lexicon and AMS programs are emulated. There is immense processing power within the unit, and with a rock-solid operating system and the possibility of comprehensive MIDI and pedal control, the H7600 makes a flexible and reliable device for stage and live use.

In a DAW you can have any number of plug-ins and the possibility of employing many multiples of each type, yet one H7600 (UK£2995 + VAT) probably costs more than your DAW's host computer and looks 80s enough to be fashionable again. The H7600 is still relevant. It simply sounds stunning, refined, glowing and always useful. Through some very clever and tasteful programming of the presets, and some high quality digital building blocks, there is an air of quality that is hard to achieve from plug-ins alone.

Eventide has been in digital processing for longer than most competitors, and its no-nonsense approach is to be applauded. Eventide offers free software updates, has a friendly customer service policy, and a charmingly amateurish website. I am pleased the H designation has returned — operation seems more elegant and friendly than the DSP models. At last, here is the true successor to the H3000. ■

PROS

Best (stereo) Harmonizer yet; more than 1,000 presets; easier to find relevant presets; sounds classy, stunning, rich, vibrant... and useful!

CONS

Expensive

EXTRAS



The Anthology II plug-in bundle for TDM offers 15 plug-ins with six new plug-ins. The E-Channel channel strip includes a gate, compressor/limiter with sidechain, and five bands of 48-bit double precision parametric equalisation. Ultra-Channel offers a more comprehensive channel strip and has a gate, de-esser, Omnipressor compressor/limiter with sidechain, five bands of parametric EQ, stereo delays, and the Harmonizer micropitch shifter.

The EQ65 Filter Set recreates the sound and function of a vintage analogue filter set while equalising capabilities are expanded with the EQ45 parametric, which includes high and low cut 12dB/octave filters and four bands.

Mic phase alignment is made easier with the new Precision Time Align plug-in while Quadravox features four voices of diatonic Harmonizer pitch shifting.

The other plug-ins in the bundle are H910, H949, Instant Phaser, Instant Flanger, Omnipressor, Eventide Reverb, Octavox, H3000 Band Delays and H3000 Factory.

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