

# Lexicon MX300 | £299

Stunning Lexicon effects at an affordable price, plus DAW integration too. **Karl Foster** calls the ambience



ON THE DVD

## WHAT IS IT?

Stereo reverb/  
effects processor

## CONTACT

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 16 editable reverbs, plus mod/delay effects
- 2 DAW automation facilitation
- 3 Max 48kHz, 24-bit performance

**L**exicon is a name that looms large in pro-audio circles. Its excellent signal-processing units range far and wide in high-end studios and sound-support systems. Of late, the company has been addressing the needs of project-studio developers with the MX200 and MX400 effectors, offering classic reverb sounds (plus other treatments), in a box that can be controlled from a DAW.

Whether on Mac or Windows PC, the devices can be automated from within the sequencing environment either by VST or Audio Units protocols. A good idea because reverb in particular can be pretty aggressive with system resources. So what better way to unload your processor than by deploying a dedicated hardware solution?

Well, there's now another option in the Lexicon range. It's the 'difficult middle child' by the name of MX300, a 19-inch rackmount, multi-effects device packing a good proportion of the MX400's functionality, but retailing at a smidgen less than £300. Lifting it out of the box, it's clear that Lexicon's reputation for build quality is wholly intact. Solid, metal construction with positive-feeling knobs and buttons inspire confidence, as do the balanced XLR/TRS analogue audio I/Os for hum-negating cable runs.

Mains is via a C14 inlet (kettle lead), so there's no wall-wart or trailing adaptor to contend with, and on the right we've a USB port for computer connection. There's also a footswitch jack socket, so performers might want to consider the MX300 a quality ambient insert, and MIDI In/Thru further enhance control possibilities.

## Digital I/O

Surprisingly, digital I/O is via RCA phono S/PDIF – no optical option – so, as you'd expect, this makes for a max digital sampling rate of 48kHz at 24-bit, which is quite adequate for most tracking applications. The widest

(quoted) frequency response is from 10Hz to 22kHz, so whales and bats be wary. But what really matters is how the MX300 sounds and how easy it is to use. There are no concerns to report on either criteria. You can run the unit as a stand-alone device, relying on the front panel's well-laid-out buttons and rotaries. The info from the main LCD screen, and its underlying paging system, is simple to grasp and you've multiple parameter knobs with which to edit settings – a whole lot more intuitive than some manufacturers' 'one-knob-and-button-control-everything' approach. There are 99 presets, with room for another 99 user-devised settings, and creating them is a breeze.

From Plate Reverb to Arena, there's an avalanche of ambience to be had, plus distinct delays (a tap-tempo button features), chorus, phase, rotary, vibrato and pitch-shift. The MX300 can even be applied to dynamics processing thanks to DBX compressor and de-esser facilities. The dual-processor design makes for a healthy variety of configurations. Dual-mono is an option for bumping different effects to separate channels, as are Parallel Dual Stereo and Cascade – this latter by which Effect 1 feeds straight into Effect 2 in stereo.

## A DAW-able

The MX300 slots quite happily into a sequencing environment thanks to a USB link to the DAW.

What you can't do is route the audio signal directly to it digitally for on-the-fly processing, as you'd expect from a co-processor. That said, there's still the option to use S/PDIF if you want to keep the signal in the

digital domain. But what you can do is edit the presets via bundled MX-Edit software, which is much easier than working from the front panel.

It means that the MX300 can be controlled via the sequencer for automation of its various parameters. Not only does it free the system of resource-hogging reverb/

effects processing (although you'll need a means of routing the audio to and from the device, such as a hardware mixer), it also offers unlimited program settings. So if the 99 user presets aren't enough for you in stand-alone mode, then you can use your Mac or PC to expand horizons infinitely.



