

# Delay vs Reverb Cheat Sheet

## DELAY VS REVERB

- Some things need a sense of space, and sound 'dry' without it
  - Lead vocals, for example
  - But not bass guitar or kick (main exceptions)
- So, if it *needs* a small sense of space, you use reverb and delay to do this
- Do you want something to sound close, or far away?
  - Close = delay
  - Far = reverb
- This is also how you create depth in a mix - by using various degrees of space

## DELAY

- Stereo Delay
  - Slapback, low feedback (0-10%)
  - Different times on left and right (50-200ms)
- Mono Delay
  - Timed mono delay
  - Can have higher feedback if desired (0-30%)
  - Whole note (crotchet) or minim
  - Time manually if you want it to stand out more
- Plate Reverb
  - Really short decay time
  - For stereo width and sweetness, not noticeable reverb
- Reverb Throw
  - Long decay time
  - Can cut all the highs and boost the lows for a deep 'sub reverb throw'
  - Use as a spot effect (automate the send on the lead vocal buss)

## REVERB

- Keep it short
  - Long decay times can quickly add mess to your mix
  - Keep it under 2 seconds
  - Adjust the decay time to the tempo of the track
    - Faster track = faster decay time
    - Doesn't need to be exact, just take the tempo into account

- Keep it simple
  - I prefer to use just one stereo room reverb on an effect buss
  - Send instruments to this buss by varying amounts to create a sense of depth
  - More reverb = further away
  - Less reverb = close

## ADDITIONAL TIPS

### Keep It Subtle

Only use effects if they compliment the vocals. Don't just use effects for the sake of it (or to show off).

**Dial in the effect until you can just about *hear* it. Then, dial it back a bit until you can only *feel* it.**

### Spice Up Your Reverbs and Delays

**Sidechain compression** - This will help to prevent the reverb/delay from getting in the way of the vocal and give it some more definition.

**Direct compression** - Apply heavy compression before or after reverb/delay.

**Add a reverb after your delay** - Using subtle reverb on your delay aux can mellow out the delay and make it a bit less aggressive and harsh.

**Automate the delay time and feedback** - Try using a 1/4 delay in the verse with 0-10% feedback, but then change to a 1/2 note delay in the chorus with more feedback.

**Automate the effect sends** - Enhance your choruses by having more subtle reverb/delay in the verses (by dropping the send level).

**Always apply EQ to your reverb/delay aux** - Cut the lows with a HPF, cut the mud, cut the frequencies that are being boosted in the vocal, try cutting or boosting the highs.

**Use several aux channels with slightly different sounds** - Setting up several aux channels with different reverbs/delays allows you to easily automate between them.

**Use a flanger on your reverb** - Adding a subtle flanger effect to your reverb can make it less noticeable.

**Pre-emptive reverb** - Pre-emptive reverb can enhance haunting, mysterious vocals.

## Effect Throws

Effect throws are simply effects that only occur on single words or phrases. This can add interest; enhance the emotion; make certain words stick out from the rest; and exaggerate the feel and vibe of a vocal (for example, making it more haunting or more epic).

**Delay throws** - The last word of a phrase is sent to a minim, crotchet or quaver note delay.

**Reverb Throws** - Send the vocal to a loud large room reverb for a single word or phrase.

**Reverb Swells** - By volume automating the reverb aux itself, you can create swells that lead into the next phrase or section.

**Sub Reverb Throws** - Send the vocal to an aux channel with a really long reverb (5 seconds plus), cut everything above 100Hz with a HPF and boost at 30Hz.

**High Feedback Delay Throws** - Send single words to a delay with a short delay time ( $\frac{1}{4}$  note/80ms or less) and high feedback (50%+) for a haunting effect.

**Breathe Throws** - Try moving all of the breaths in a verse or section to their own track. Send this new 'Breath Track' to the large room reverb and a  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  or whole note delay.