

Tape OP GEAR REVIEWS



Radial Engineering *EXTC-Stereo Effects Reamper*

This new box from Radial has saved my bacon. I've become a bit of an effects pedal hoarder, with a desktop pedalboard rig that has grown to an unwieldy size and become somewhat of a staple for me in sound design and mixing. Most of these pedals run through a 6-channel loop switcher, allowing me to control the signal path with a basic bypass for each pedal. For I/O into my patchbay, I used my Radial JCR Studio Reamper to patch balanced input signal directly into the loop switcher and the output of the loop switcher feeding back to the patchbay.

This setup worked fine to create a simple effect send, but was challenging for certain pedals in that I had no immediate way to attenuate the signal fed into the effects loop other than to turn down the send from my DAW. For my setup, this made analog gain staging a little bit of a guessing game at times. Plus, I had no options to wet/dry blend the signals other than within the DAW, which worked for most applications but was a bit of a bummer when I simply wanted to play something live and direct into the effects chain.

However, the change that finally "broke" my setup was the introduction of a stereo effects pedal into the pedal chain. The Radial JCR worked perfectly fine to send a mono dry signal, but I didn't have an elegant method to get a stereo instrument-level signal back into a balanced patchbay. Enter the *EXTC-Stereo*, with balanced line-level stereo XLR I/O, send and receive signal gain pots, a wet/dry blend, and even an effects loop bypass. The *EXTC-Stereo* is a powered device, unlike the passive JCR – and for me, this meant finding a little extra wall wart real estate – but other than that, swapping it with the JCR was pretty straightforward. Now my loop switcher feeds into a stereo pedal at the end of the chain, which then goes back into the *EXTC-Stereo's* balanced inputs. Auditioning effects is so much easier now, with direct tactile control over my send and receive gain in the analog domain. Moreover, having the option of receiving stereo signal back to the patchbay has unlocked so much mix potential with stereo pedals, such as my Hologram Electronics Microcosm. As an effects pedal interface, the *EXTC-Stereo* is 100% perfect, but it could be used as a stereo re-amp as well, feeding two amps at once with a dry signal from your mix, so I don't have to mourn the "loss" of the JCR (which has been returned to its proper rotation in the studio as an on-call re-amp). Overall, the *EXTC-Stereo* is one of those trusty studio utilities that you invest in and wonder why the hell you waited so long to do so. (\$425 MSRP; radialeng.com)

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