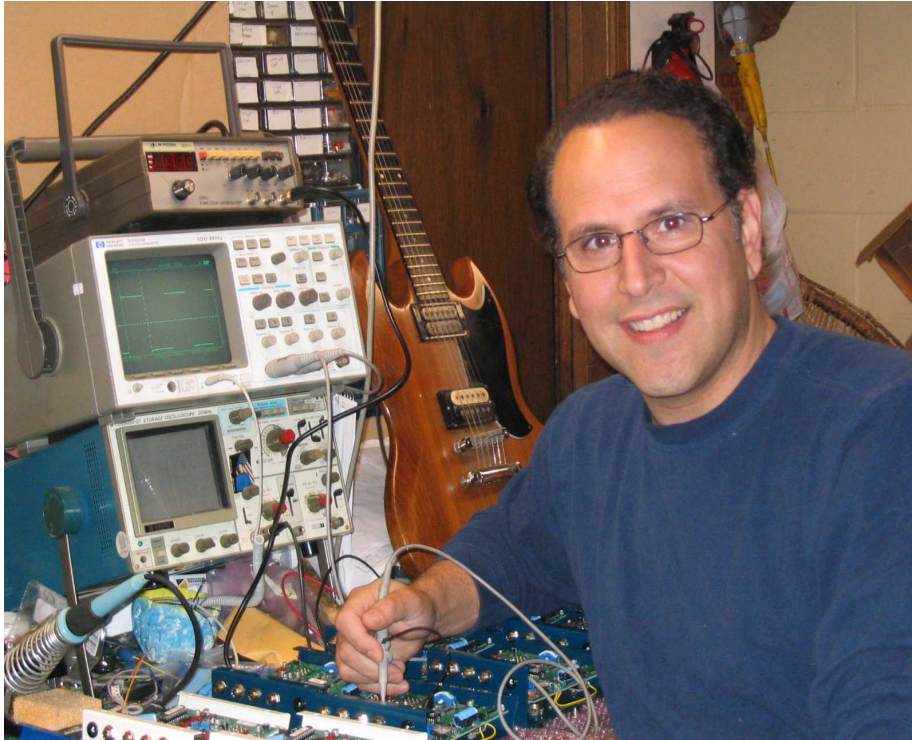


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Feature Interview

Dave Sestito from DLS Effects



Interview

MGS - First off welcome Dave Sestito owner of DLS effects to musicgearsource. Youve been a supporter of our site from the beginning, we appreciate it and its great to finally do an interview.

DLS - Thanks Tony, our pleasure. Musicgearsource is a great site and a great resource for musicians.

MGS - How did you get started into the effects business?

DLS - Like I said in our company profile, it all started around 1998 when my young daughter playing guitar wanted a distortion box (thanks a lot Korn). I said sure that would be fun, and I proceeded to make her one. It forced me to dust off my old gear and play a bit. Then I got to thinking, why not design an echo unit? After all my EH Memory man did not work well and I thought I could make a better one. After spending 8 months on my fist delay design, I scrapped it in frustration because it did not meet my expectations. I can remember being in the basement on Christmas morning trying to get the effect over the hump and when it did not happen, I threw the whole thing in the trash... true story. It was so close, but not good enough. Being completely stubborn, I came up with a totally new design approach and 5 months later... wow it sounded great! Digital power combined with analog circuitry never sounded warmer and with no

noise. That delay was the Echomaster delay. Then I designed the Ultra Chorus which had similar design basics and it came out beautiful sounding. Those two effects allowed me to launch DLS Effects in the year 2000

MGS - Can you give us a history of DLS and how you got to where you are today?

DLS – It's been a long road, but we stayed the course and never sacrificed quality in sound or construction in any way. That's always what DLS Effects has been about. We sent Musictoyz an Echomaster delay and an Ultra Chorus back in 2000 and Teddy loved them. Musictoyz was our 1st large customer and today we have over 20 dealers world wide and growing. After more and more musicians got to try our effects, dealers started contacting us to carry DLS products (we do very little advertising). I designed the Chorus~Vib in 2002 to fill the need for a great sounding, but versatile chorus at a price point more musicians could afford. That gave us a boost in volume and a greater presence in the market. Also, Brad from Aerosmith put the Chorus~Vib on his pedalboard right away. After many requests for a Tap Tempo delay, we designed the EchoTAP delay which is a wonderful sounding delay and is our #1 selling product. We recently came out with the RotoSIM as well which is doing quite well. We design an effect per year, and we have a great product scheduled to be designed this fall. So to sum it up, the business started out slow (we thought we would have sales galore right away but it does not happen like that). However, as more musicians used our products, our business has almost doubled year after year. Also, more professional, well known musicians are using DLS Effects world wide.

MGS - For our readers that are not familiar with the DLS line can you give us a brief overview of the effects?

DLS – First of all, all of our effects keep the instrument analog signal analog, and we blend in the processed effect sound with it. That allows the instrument to remain sounding as is.

EchoTAP: the EchoTAP is a dual delay, one side is a tap tempo delay with it's own echo volume, and the other side is a panel settable delay with it's own echo volume. The tap tempo just needs at least 2 taps and it learns the tempo you want the echoes to be (it's so easy and so addicting). The tone control can be adjusted to make clear echo replications or VERY tape delay sounding echoes. This delay is very warm sounding and has a delay form 50ms to 3 seconds. Hookup can be mono in/out, mono in/stereo out, or stereo in/out.

The Chorus~Vib is a warm analog sounding chorus with 7 positions of Delay to tighten or widen the chorusing. People find it strange that we talk about delay with chorus, but delay is a huge part of it along with modulation. With our Chorus you can easily dial any type of chorus sound you want from pristine, TC style, to milky CE-2 sounds. The Blend allows the musician to dial in the amount of chorus they want from heavy to very subtle. The Chorus~Vib accommodates mono in/out or mono in/stereo out.

RotoSIM: The RotoSIM is a rotating speaker effect. The musician can adjust Slow Speed, Fast Speed, Tweeter level, Bass rotor level, Ramp time, Overdrive, blend, bass lag, tweeter intensity, and input and output volumes for channel A and channel B. There is also an Expression pedal input so the musician can control the speeds and

ramp of the effect. Whoo, that's a mouth full. Anyway, you get the picture. The RotoSIM accommodates mono in/out or mono in/stereo out.

MGS - Walk me through a typical day at DLS. What aspects of the business do you handle?

DLS – This is a labor of love, but it's still a ton of work and long hours at times. A typical day will be to get up, grab a cup of java, and get our employee's going on whatever line of products that needs to be built. After that I check for emails and enter dealer orders. Then I will order parts if necessary and contact suppliers to make sure raw materials are coming in on time. After that I begin any final testing that needs to be done. I insist on final testing our effects, because I will not trust anyone else's ear in this matter. I handle research and development for all new products from the electronics all the way to the enclosure, paint color, silk legend, and packaging design.

MGS - Ive seen alot of big names using your gear. We interviewed Brad Whitfords guitar tech and Brad was using your pedals on the last Aerosmith tour. Its got to be cool getting calls from those guys.

DLS – Yes, more and more top musicians are discovering and using DLS Effects. Aerosmith has been using our EchoTAP delay and Chorus~Vib for years. Greg Howard is Brad Whitfords's guitar tech and really likes our products (thanks Greg). Greg is a seasoned tech and a great guy. I was invited to see Aerosmith back stage last year and Green Day recently. Other musicians such as Greg Howe, Deano George, Zane Carney (guitarist for Jesse McCartney), Glenn Pierce (Michael Smith guitarist) and Carlos Santana have also been using our products. We recently Air shipped an EchoTAP to Seal to be used on his new CD. There are some top names over seas using our products as well.

MGS - I just saw something about Santana using your new Rotosim. Very cool. Did you get to talk with him?

DLS - Yes, Carlos Santana got 2 RotoSIMs (probably one for each pedal board, but I'm not sure). We also heard he used the EhcoTAP at the last Namm show in January 2005. We often get contacted by the guitar techs or dealers, but sometimes get to speak with the musicians directly.

MGS - Speaking of the Rotosim, please tell us all about it. What do you feel sets it apart from other Leslie sims?

DLS – In short, the RotoSIM allows the musician to dial in the type of rotary speaker sound they want. As you can see from the several paragraphs before, the RotoSIM is VERY versatile. What we found through the beta testing is that everyone's definition of a rotary speaker effect is a little different. The RotoSIM is small, quiet, does NOT loose your instruments natural sound, and is extremely tweekable... oh yea, it sounds VERY warm and rich as well. We actually sold out of the 1st production lot in 2-1/2 months.

Besides the US eating them up, Japan, Norway, and Italy have embraced the RotoSIM for guitar and keyboard.

MGS - If you could get your stuff into anyone's pedalboard, who would it be and why?

DLS – This is easy, I would love to have Alex Lifeson of Rush, David Gilmore of Pink Floyd, and the Edge of U2 to use our effects. Why? Because our effects can sound even better than the sound these guys have now from their rigs. DLS Effects can get all these sounds, but even deeper and richer sounding.

MGS - Whats the biggest challenge staying ahead in the guitar effects business?

DLS – There are soooo many companies making guitar pedals these days. There are some good ones and some not so good ones. However, there will always be a market for the high quality boutique effects like DLS Effects.

At a lot of bigger effect companies, the engineers don't even play... that's just not right because they don't know a decent sound from a great one! We are Engineers that are also musicians so we KNOW what sounds good and what doesn't.

A big challenge is listening to what musicians want and keep innovating; keep changing for the better. Another challenge is to maintain the highest quality as the business grows while keeping costs under control. We insist on keeping the highest quality effects at a reasonable price. Managing time is always a big challenge as the business grows.

MGS – What's your guitar and amp of choice? What guitars and amps do you use to test the pedals out with?

DLS – I am actually a Marshall kind of guy, but like many other amps as well. We use Marshall, Fender Twin reverb, and a Peavey to test on. For guitars we use a Gibson SG, Fender Strat and a Hamer Flying V.

MGS - I know the Rotosim has been the main goal in the recent past and now its out. Anything new in the works or plans?

DLS - Yes, our next design for 2006 will be to re-design the Ultra Chorus. This is one of the warmest sounding chorus units in the world. It will be a dual channel chorus unit with a multitude of input/output options.

MGS - Anything you'd like to mention to the pedal nuts before i let you go?

DLS – Yes, I would like to thank all the musicians out there for using guitar effects to get unique sounds and make music beyond the imaginable. You guys have demanded what you want and we at DLS Effects make every attempt to deliver what you want. You tell it straight good or bad and it's our job to listen and make adjustments along the way. Thank you all! We at DLS Effects want to treat every customer like an upscale musician, because this is how we would expect to be treated. We have taken pains

taking hours in Research and Development to bring musicians the type of effects we would personally be proud to have on our pedal boards. Our effects are ALL about the quality in sound and construction at a reasonable price. This is NOT all about money to us. We really want everyone who uses a DLS Effects products to like them as much as we do and for a win-win situation.

MGS - Dave thank you so much for your time and support of musicgearsources.

DLS – Our pleasure Tony. Musicgearsources does musicians a great service and we are honored to be apart of it.