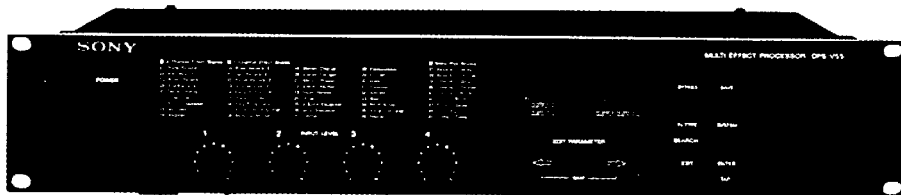


# PRO AUDIO REVIEW

SECTION  
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## Sony DPS-V55 Multi-Effects Processor

by Jan Stevens



**T**he Sony DPS-V55 is a four-channel multi-

effects processor that's easy to use, is smooth sounding and is loaded with great features. Sony commissioned a handful of top recording engineers to create presets for the V55. These custom presets as well as others found inside the V55 represent a wide palette of exciting effect colors.

Tweaking parameters is a cinch. To add icing to the cake, Sony has set the V55 up for surround sound. For mixing a film or TV show requiring surround sound there are great presets to use either as is or as a bouncing-off place for custom surround creations.

Sony targeted the V55 primarily toward project studios, composers and desktop applications. With a retail price of \$550 it easily fits the budget of most project studios. After playing with the machine and using it on a few projects, I found it could be used in any large commercial studio as well.

### Features

The V55 is a four-channel multi-effects box that allows four discrete channels of processing in various configurations. The unit contains three groups of effect algorithms: four-channel, two-channel and mono pair. There are 45 available effect algo-

### At a Glance

#### Applications:

Project studios, composers and musicians

#### Key Features:

Four channels; three groups of effects algorithms; 45 available effect algorithms; informative LCD display

#### Price:

\$550

gorithms on the V55 and these algorithms are divided into three groups. Group one (1 through 9) are the four-channel surround effects. This kind of processing uses the entire processing power of the unit. Group two (10 through 36) are the stereo effects, such as reverbs and delays. Group three algorithms (37 through 45) are split algorithms and, within a pair (two channels), are actually parallel processing.

Any group two effect and any group

three effect can be run within the same preset. Each program can contain

two 2-channel effects, two mono-pair effects or one 2-channel effect and one mono-pair effect. It can be used as a two-in/four-out reverb or effects processor for doing surround sound algorithms.

The V55 can also be split up and used as two side-by-side processors that could do two versions of stereo anything. Examples of this setup would be a reverb on one side and a stereo delay on the other or it could be a vocoder on one side and a compressor, EQ, sampler or vocal cancel on the other.

There are 36 algorithms that cover a variety of effects that can be used in this type of stereo side-by-side setup. These effects could be run completely in parallel; a stereo effect can be running out of channel one and

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two and the same or different one can be running out of channel three and four.

Another option is to set it up internally so the effects feed each other. For example, the channel one ingoing to a

stereo chorus outputting to channels one and two and the channel two ingoing to a reverb also coming out of channels one and two.

The unit's custom presets, surround sound features and friendly user interface make the V55 a great addition to any studio.

The V55 offers a number of combinations for this kind of processing, like reverb and pitch or chorus and pitch or delay and pitch, etc. These run parallel but output a stereo signal from the same pair of outs. Channels one and two can be running a stereo reverb, and channels three and four can be running a pitch with chorus or a pitch with reverb or whatever the available configurations are.

There is also a stereo compressor and a stereo EQ algorithm in this combination. This provides the possibility of doing four channels of EQ or four channels of compression or stereo compression with EQ. To simplify, the V55 can be used as four separate units or two true stereo units, depending on the effect algorithms being used. There are 200 factory presets and 200 user memory locations.

The V55 is based on Sony's high end reverb, the DPS-V77. The V77 lists for about \$1,800 and the V55 for about \$550. The V55 uses the same DSP rate, the same processing chip and 20-bit converters as the V77. Sony cut the cost of the V55 by slightly limiting the ability to tweak some of the effect parameters. **Sony has striven to keep the sonic quality of the V55 the same as the more expensive V77, and that choice makes perfect sense.**

### In use

Besides being good marketing, **the V55 is extremely easy to operate and to use for editing with.** I used the V55 to mix a 1930s jazz CD and a television show. The other two engineers I worked with on these projects commented on how easy the V55 was to get into and to adjust the parameters. One engineer said he tends to shy away from most multi-effects boxes due to their complexity and convoluted menus. **All agreed that the V55 was the most user-friendly multi-effects box they'd encountered. Any user, regardless of their experience, can get great sounds out of the V55 with the twist of a knob.**

**The presets created by top engineers are great and very usable. Having the presets authored by these people is almost like having them help you engineer your session. I found the custom programs a great addition to the V55. All of the presets provide great sounds immediately, regardless of your engineering experience.**

Getting around the V55 is easy because of the effect algorithm chart printed on the face of the unit. It's easy to look at the chart and see exactly what algorithms are available. The LCD displays which algorithm is working on which pair.

A slash in the display indicates parallel processing and an arrow indicates a serial patch (one effect directly into another). The V55 comes with a large parameter wheel that is velocity-sensitive and gets to any preset fast. The unit also comes with a preset search mode. This useful utility calls up presets with the effects types that have been chosen. If you're looking for a specific effect, this utility saves time.

It's hard to get lost inside of the V55 because the menu layout is simple. The V55 comes with a tap function for setting delays, timed panning and triggering sam-

ples. A preset librarian, which will allow anyone with a computer to download new presets off Sony's Web site via MIDI System Exclusive is now under development. This guarantees to keep the unit fresh. In addition, the V55 is switchable between +4 and -10 dB.

Sound is subjective and this of course applies when it comes to effects processors. The V55 does not have the effects parameter flexibility of more elaborate processors, and it might not sound quite as good as the best multi-thousand dollar unit. But it is amazing that Sony put so many features and the good sonics into a \$550 package.

### Summary

**If a cost-effective, powerful good sounding tool for mixing and music production is desired, then check out the Sony V55. For a second effects box that's really four-in-one, the V55 is a sure shot.**

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