TONE REPTEMBER 16TH, 2016 REPORTOR WEEKLY

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NOW PLAY THIS POWERED BY EFFECTS DATABASE







3

1 BOSS ANNOUNCES ITS NEWEST MULTI-EFFECT, THE GT-1

The GT-1 is the latest in Boss's line of super-versatile multi-effects unit, made for the gigging musician who doesn't want to lug around a pedalboard and wants studio-quality effects without the hassle. The GT-1 contains several amp modelers as well as a bevy of effects, and new effects can be downloaded to the pedal by connecting to the Tone Central portal.

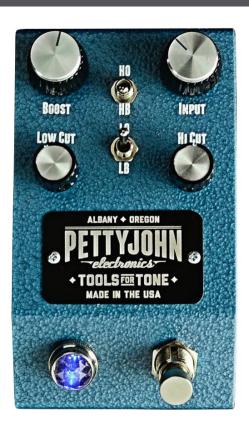
2 FRIDAY CLUB DOESN'T HOLD BACK WITH THE PD100

Mr. Black's Friday Club line strikes again, this time with the PD100, an inspiring, wide-ranging powerful overdrive that invokes a certain multi-colored British amplifier's drive. Three controls adorn the PD100: Master, Overdrive and Treble, with a large enough range on the Overdrive knob to make a club member out of anyone.

SMALLSOUND/BIGSOUND ANNOUNCES THE SUPER-LIMITED PRETTY YEARS

The Pretty Years from Smallsound/ Bigsound is an ultra-limited subminiature tube based distortion and fuzz pedal with a whole quiver of options. Everything from switchable tube options to biasing and a two-band EQ is present, for a dirt pedal that truly does it all from dirty boost to allout destruction. Several gain, clipping and mixing options are available.

8 NOW PLAY THIS // Buzzworthy Gear



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4 PETTYJOHN GETS ELEVATED WITH THE LIFT

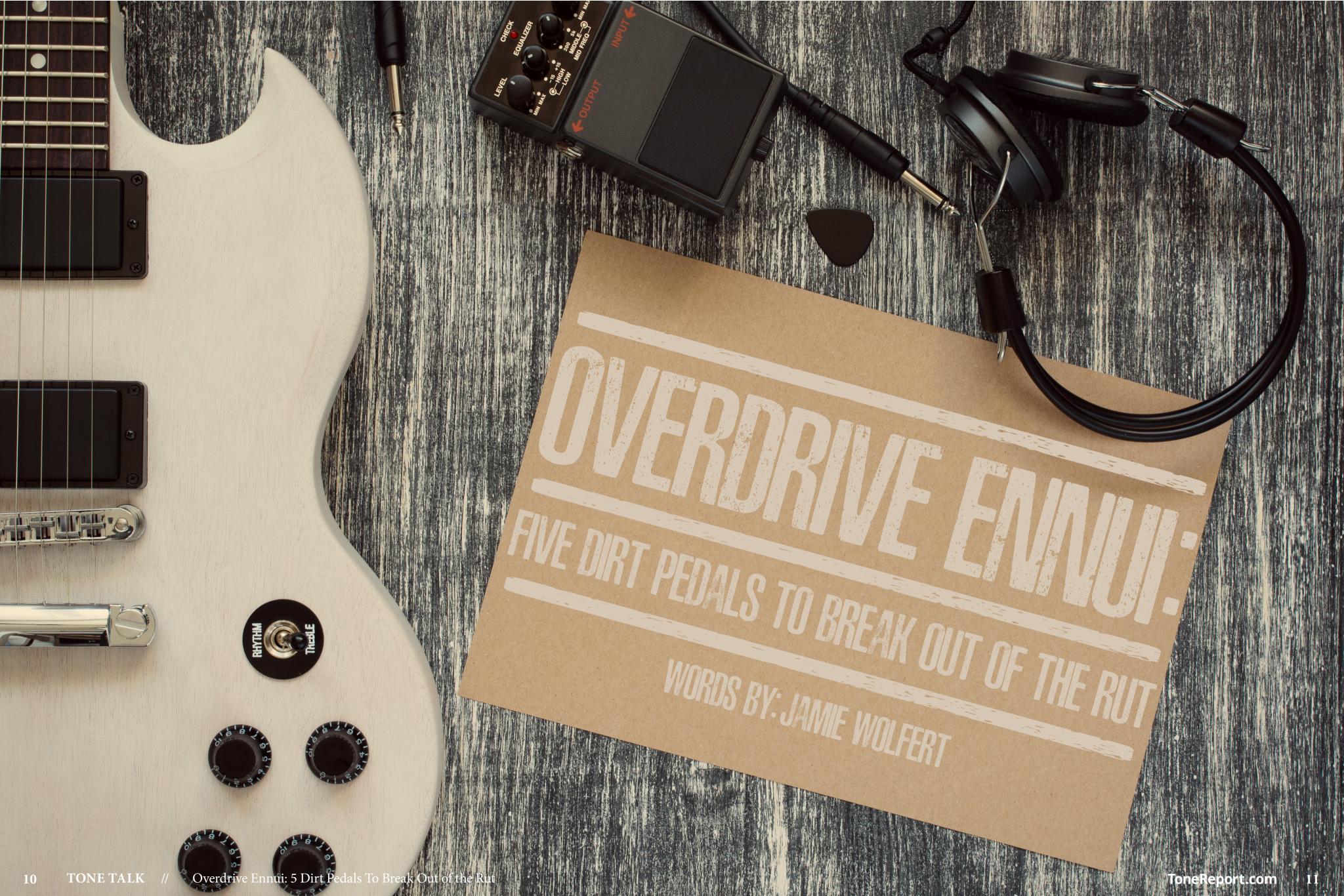
Pettyjohn Electronics has returned with a new pedal in its Foundry Series line, the Lift. The Lift is a studio-grade boost and buffer that will elevate your tone to a whole new level. Several controls can be applied to the buffer, even when the pedal itself is off, including the input gain control, which raises the gain level within the pedal for a sparkling alwayson kick.

5 ELECTRO-HARMONIX EXPANDS ITS SPACE WITH THE BASS CLONE

Electro-Harmonix has adapted its Small Clone to work with bass guitar, and the result is nothing short of spectacular. The new Bass Clone goes far beyond the original one-knob pedal by adding individual Bass and Treble controls, along with an X-Over knob which cuts bass for a tighter low end that won't flub out as you dig in.

6 HOTONE UPS THE ANTE WITH THE CAB

Hotone's CAB provides a high-quality multiple cabinet simulator in the tiniest of form factors. Two knobs, High and Low, attenuate the virtual cabinet's frequencies, tightening up the low end and presence. A three-way toggle selects the cab type, from the stout 1x12 to the monstrous 4x12. The volume knob on the back provides the amount of air pushed by the cab.



t one time or another all electric guitarists will be affected by what I like to call "overdrive ennui." If you've been playing for awhile and have had more than a few overdrives on your board over the years, then you will know the feeling well. You plug in, flip the standby switch on the amp and fire up your pedalboard, but the tones just don't seem to be happening like they used to. You stomp on your old favorite OD, the very foundation of your sound for the past several years, and instead of the familiar swell of exhilaration and inspiration that normally accompany this act, you just feel weary and creatively deflated. You keep trying, but the spark just isn't there anymore. You put down the guitar, grab a bag of potato chips and the TV remote and proceed to waste the once-precious remaining days of your life with mindless entertainment and salty snacks. You die alone and your body is found by your mail carrier several weeks later.

Okay, I'll admit that's probably an overly dramatized representation of OD ennui, but that is indeed what it feels like. In reality, what you would most likely do after putting down the guitar is pull up Google, whip out your trusty old credit card, and go pedal shopping like a good American (maybe you would even watch some PGS videos). The problem is, at some point you come to realize that a lot of overdrives sound pretty much alike. Often they're either so "transparent" that they lack any discernible musical character, or they just sound squashed and honky like all the other Tube Screamers. Some pedals even combine these two bland sets of sonic characteristics into a single box for the ultimate "blah" overdrive that's both too big and has too damn many switches. I know it sounds like I'm complaining, but honestly this situation doesn't really cause me much woe. It seems like a natural state of affairs actually, simply an outgrowth of a healthy, booming stompbox industry. So what if we have too many overdrives to choose from and a lot of them sound alike. Things could be worse, right?

Things aren't too bad, I suppose, but it can still be challenging to find an overdrive that really has its own thing going on, but without going too far out into left field. You want a unique character, but you don't want something that completely takes over your rig, imposing itself conspicuously on your sound in an unnatural way, and you probably want to maintain a strong sense of natural dynamics and amp-like response. After all, that's really what a good overdrive is all about, right? It becomes one with the amp, helping it sound like itself, only more so, and gives it a broader, more lively tonal range than it came with from the factory. This is the ideal most of us strive for, but if you've been feeling listless and uninspired about your current overdrive situation, then it may be time to mix things up and try something a little different. Here are a handful of our favorite overdrives for busting a bad case of OD ennui.

THORPYFX GUNSHOT

The crew here at Tone Report Weekly immediately was gobsmacked by Thorpy's initial offering to the world of dirty guitar tones, the Gunshot, and we've been equally knocked out by every other pedal the company has released since. ThorpyFX pedals are impeccably and smartly constructed, and though each has familiar elements, the circuits and sounds are thoroughly original, uniquely voiced, and endlessly inspirational. The Gunshot blurs lines between overdrive and distortion, doing low-gain and transparent just as well as it does high gain aggression. It can swing between ballsy crunch and smooth, sweet violin-like tones without a hiccup, and it seems to work equally well no matter what guitar is jacked in the front or what amp it's pushing on the opposite end. We really can't say enough good things about ThorpyFX, and the Gunshot is a top pick for players that want an overdrive that is at once classic and completely unique.

Overdrive Ennui: 5 Dirt Pedals To Break Out of the Rut



DOD LOOKING GLASS OVERDRIVE

DOD's grand re-entrance into the pedal game has proven nothing short of spectacular, with a steady stream of releases that cover both timeless DOD classics and brand new pedals, often born of collaborations with inventive young builders. One of the most promising of these stompboxes is the DOD Looking Glass Overdrive, which the company has created in collaboration with Christopher Venter of Shoe Pedals, a boutique company known for circuits that are unique, musical, and provide all of the functions with none of the cheap gimmicks. The Looking Glass carries on in this tradition, with an overall character that transparency leans towards when the High-Low toggle is in the Low position, transforming into a growling, richly saturated gain monster when the switch is flipped the other direction. This pedal does it all, and at under 150 bucks is an incredible bargain.



BEARFOOT FX SILVER BEE OVERDRIVE

The amp-in-a-box phenomenon has been a true breath of fresh air for the dirt pedal world, offering amp-inspired tonal unique colors that are a most welcome deviation from Tube Screamer variants. Marshall and Fenderinspired circuits dominate, of course, but recent times have seen a handful of amp-inspired OD's that replicate the tones of lesser-known classic amplifiers. One of the newest and freshest of these is the Bearfoot FX Silver Bee. The Silver Bee takes the amp-in-a-box concept to the next level by replicating the tones of two lesser known and somewhat overlooked amps, the Silvertones and the Silverface-era Fenders, in one pedal. Even better, you can mix and match and blend the characteristics of these amps at will using the Silver Bee's Snarl and Spit knobs, for some genuinely unique and colorful tonal blends that are sure to inspire you to pick up the guitar and not put it down again for a long time.



DWARFCRAFT DEVICES INTERNET

Dwarfcraft Wisconsin's own Devices is legendary among fuzz and noise enthusiasts for its inventive approach and super fun tools of sonic destruction. What it is not known for is overdrive, which is a shame, because Dwarfcraft's Internet OD is one of the coolest foundation dirt boxes around. Obviously the Eau Claire dwarves put some special effort into designing something unique for their first and (so far, I think) only overdrive pedal. The Internet responds really well to subtle variations in the guitar's volume knob, enabling it to transition very smoothly from complex, glassy low-gain tones to massive, hairy crunch, and every stop in between. Its character is fatter, wilder, and looser than your garden variety OD, and it's definitely the kind of pedal that a player could build a signature sound around. Also, the graphics are cool and the knobs have funny names. And it's called The Internet. Get one!



DARKGLASS ELECTRONICS VINTAGE MICROTUBES

Overdrive Ennui: 5 Dirt Pedals To Break Out of the Rut

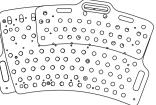
The basic concept behind an overdrive pedal is to mimic the sound and response of a tube amp pushed into breakup. The first ODs approached this mimicry in a more general way, while modern designs often attempt to mimic specific makes and models. In the end, it's always a tube amp that's being aped. Deviating from this concept is where the Darkglass Electronics Vintage Microtubes makes its mark. The Microtubes does emulate tube amp drive, but it takes equal inspiration from the grit and organic compression of old reel-to-reel tape machines, which are an integral part of nearly every famous guitar tone of our time, a fact that is often overlooked by tone chasers. This distinctive approach to dirt lends the Darkglass Vintage Microtubes a singular grime and punch that few other stompboxes can touch.



Wet Wintage Wintage Microtubes

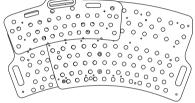


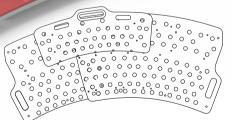
No sticky velcro mess 6061 Aluminum strong and light Easy to reach the back row Follows the arc of your foot Patents Pending Lifetime Warranty

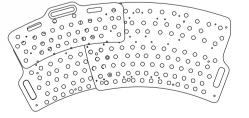














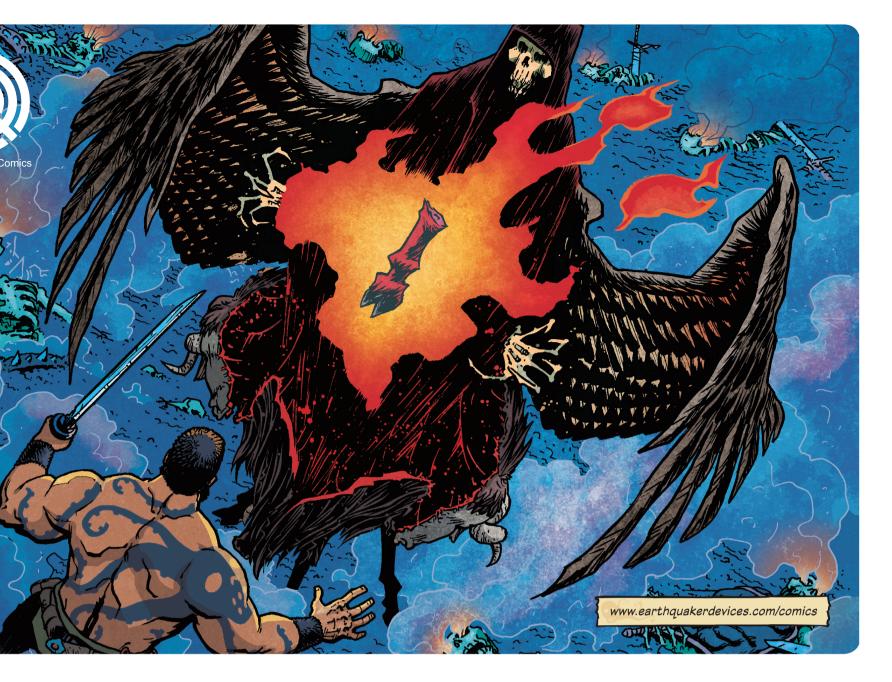




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Cloven Hoof Fuzz

The Cloven Hoof is an extension of our popular Hoof fuzz, only more... cloven. We kept the clarity of the Hoof along with the wide range of dirt tones and redesigned everything around it. The Cloven Hoof delivers a grittier, more bass heavy tone with more crunch that can not be achieved with the standard Hoof. We did away with the germanium transistors and replaced them with 4 specially selected silicon transistors for higher gains, cleaner cleans and improved temperature stability.

The fuzz control has four times the range of the regular Hoof, it will go from completely clean to an all out fuzz fury with more grind at the top end of the dial. The tone control has been refined to allow a more even sweep with enough mids to handle all the additional low end. The shift control still boosts or cuts the mids and there is still a TON of output on tap.

The Cloven Hoof is the perfect solution for those of you who always wished the Hoof had more.

PORTAIL OF A SERIAL AXESSINGER ACONVERSATION WITH MARK GEMINITHWAITE

WORDS BY FLETCHER STEWART

20

INTERVIEW // Portrait of a Serial Axe Slinger: A Conversation with Mark Gemini Thwaite

ARK GEMINI THWAITE—OR MGT, AS HE IS SOMETIMES KNOWN has a story that plays out like sonic saga. There are very few

has a story that plays out like a sonic saga. There are very few guitarists who remain as relentlessly prolific and vital as MGT. His tonal travels traverse decades, genres, borders and styles. MGT is a proper British guitar hero having recorded, toured and written with the likes of (in no particular order) The Mission, Tricky, Roger Daltrey, Peter Murphy, Mob Research, Ricky Warwick, Al Jourgensen, Gary Numan, Spear of Destiny, Primitive Race, Revolting Cocks, Theatre of Hate and many, many more.

MGT possesses the rare fortitude and ability to dive into vastly different projects head-on and then walk the knife-edge between servicing the song and standing out without breaking a sweat. He can be understated, experimental, explosive and classically rocking all within the same tune. However, this is not a generic prescription session guitarist we are speaking with today. Mark Thwaite scrawls his stylistic sonic signatures all over every track. Speaking of signatures, Mark has just announced the release of both his own signature pedal (Pro Tone Pedals MGT Chorus) and axe (Schecter MGT Signature Solo-II) in the wake of his aptly entitled first solo album Volumes. Let's crank up the conversation.

FLETCH: Mark, thank you for your time and tones... Let's kick off the

interview with your signature guitar from Schecter Guitar Research. You are known for being a long-standing Les Paul player. What sets your upcoming Mark Thwaite Solo-II apart from a more traditional Gibson LP?

MGT: I've been playing Schecters as part of my studio and touring rig since 2008, they are fantastic guitars, the build quality is very impressive, and there have been massive improvements in their models in recent years. I did have a Solo-6 built to my specs back in 2010 but that was just for me. metallic blue finish, gold hardware, Bigsby, mirror pickguard etc. But what really got me onboard for an MGT model was the new Solo-II that Schecter put out this year. I've always been a long time Les Paul aficionado, and when I took out one of the Solo-II's on my recent tour with Ricky Warwick and the Fighting Hearts, I told Schecter how impressed I was with it, and they suggested the signature model which is a morphing of my specs featured on my old Solo-6 and the new model. So this time I went for the ultraviolet top, which flip-flops between blue and purple depending on light and angle, which is a new finish they started using in the last year. I also requested a natural colored back, neck and sides, just like the vintage Gibson Goldtops. The choice of the stained red mahogany is a great contrast to the top. I stuck with my gold hardware and this time opted for a full B7 Bigsby, in the past Schecter has usually stuck a B5 on

its solid-bodies but I've always preferred the Neil Young Old Black Jimmy Page retro look and vibe of a full B7. We paired that with a Roller TonePros bridge.

I kept my gold mirrored pickguard idea I started with my Solo-6—I'd been sticking mirrored pickguards on my Les Pauls since the '90s and it's my homage to the mighty Phil Lynott of Thin Lizzy, although now I'm guitarist for Ricky Warwick (who now fronts the reformed Thin Lizzy) that seems to be more than a coincidence.

I have an endorsement with Seymour Duncan so I selected a JB (SH-4B) bridge and an Alnico Pro II neck configuration, both coil tapping . . . I toured with Tool and Tricky back in 2001 and Adam Jones told me he used a similar configuration in his Les Paul Silverburst, I did the same on my own '79 Silverburst the following year, so this seemed like a great idea to revive for my own signature model. The MGT signature Solo-II is topped off with a Graph Tech XL Ivory Tusq nut, an MGT embossed truss rod cover unique to my model, a rosewood fretboard (my choice over an ivory board due to its warmer tone) and aged crème double binding throughout, just like my old LP customs.

FLETCH: You also have an exciting new signature edition stompbox in the works. Some of our readers will remember your late-great-bandmate Paul Raven's Dirty Chorus from Pro Tone a few years back. It looks to be a distortion, chorus and pitch vibrato, all in one pedal. I missed it the first time around, so I am really glad you are resurrecting and perfecting this circuit. What is different about the spec? I imagine Raven's first version was designed with bass in mind?

MGT: Yes, the original Raven Dirty Chorus that debuted back in 2007 had an additional "Caw" switch which was specific to bass guitar frequencies, it acted as a low-end cut. Paul Raven had a big hand in the original model specs and artwork design, and both pedals have Drive, Depth and Rate knobs, and both have the "Chop" switch which introduces an awesome wacky chop effect to the chorus, hard to describe really . . . the components and hand wiring were upgraded on the new MGT model. I asked Pro Tone to include the Raven graphic on the pedal design, which is our own homage to the great man himself, who sadly passed back in October 2007.

FLETCH: While we are on the subject of pedals, your board is fairly substantial. I imagine you need to paint with a wide palette of tonal colors given the amount of vastly different projects you are working on at any given time. Does your board change much for different projects? Do you have any staple diet stompers, or are you a swapper?





MGT: It varies depending on the band and the tones and textures I need to create. My most recent tour was with Ricky Warwick, and included most of his latest solo album—a hard rocking punky affair—and also songs by Ricky's "other" band, Black Star Riders and also his old band The Almighty. I didn't need loads going on and wanted to pack light, rather than bring my usual USS Enterprise two tier pedalboard and rack effects, so I kept it simple with a Seymour Duncan 805 overdrive for the leads, a Strymon El Capistan for analog sounding tap delays, and picked up an Eventide H9 standard which is pretty much my secret weapon, it has so many multi effects in that tiny footprint. And a tuner of course. But when I tour with Gary Numan or Peter Murphy, or my old band The Mission, I need to be able to create soundscapes and want as many multi effects as possible—I'm a huge fan of guitarists like Robert Fripp and Andy Summers who are heavily into effects and so I'll have a core of my old trusty DigiTech GSP1101 rack unit which has 100 presets I have tweaked and created, with programmed delays, modulation, pitch shifting, reverbs, and more. That sits on my amp and is last in my signal chain. I prefer to use FX inline so no loop send for me. The DigiTech has a nice mix option that lets me blend in the effected signal much like a loop vibe. I also usually always have my old DigiTech XP-100 on my board, which masquerades as a Whammy pedal but

Portrait of a Serial Axe Slinger: A Conversation with Mark Gemini Thwaite

also does modulation—some great detune sounds—also wah, volume, and the like. [I've] been using it since the late '90s.

I found my MXR Carbon Copy to be indispensable on the Mr. Moonlight Bauhaus tour with Peter Murphy last year, I will throw it on solos and various spots all the time to create a swirling atmosphere. One of my other go to pedals is my old '80s MIJ Boss BF-2, which I have set to a dive bombing effect, made famous by Prince, who is one of my heroes and a big influence. Funnily enough, many of the BF-2's out there don't do the same thing as mine, not even many of the other MIJ BF-2s. I guess they suppressed the pedals ability to feedback on itself, which was exactly what I use it for to create a crescendo during a solo or section of a song. I have a couple that do it, one as a backup, both have serial numbers less than 100 apart.

When I toured with Tricky he wouldn't use a set list and would call the songs depending on whatever mood he was in, more like a DJ vibe—reading the audience—and some of his songs were in drop tuning which required a guitar change, so I started using a line selector in the '90s to let me quickly switch guitars, two or three would be plugged in and all live, just had to turn the volume up. I continued this with Peter Murphy on recent tours, as some songs required an electric 12-string, the next song I'd play my Schecter Corsair hollowbody, the next a Les Paul, and so on. He would get impatient if a song change took too long. I use a Lehle 3 at 1 line switcher nowadays, It's a technique for quick guitar changes I've gotten used to. Also, it makes for a quick change when I break a string, which can happen as I'm a bit of a heavy player who digs in—just got to remind my techs to keep the volumes rolled down or they all start humming and feeding back on stage.

So there will usually be a core of footpedals on a board and the DigiTech rack unit, which sits back on my amps, and then some pedals will swap out over the years, such as the overdrives or Tube Screamers, or [my] choice of footpedal delays. the Strymon was a more recent acquisition, as was the Mesa Toneburst which is great on a cleaner channel as a crunch boost. Pro Tone recently gave me some of its current range including the Dead Horse Overdrive which I was very impressed with and plan to incorporate on my board for the next tour.

FLETCH: You have worked with many different iconic artists in many different times and places. Let's take three randomly: Tricky, Peter Murphy and Gary Numan. These could not be more different, yet you just integrate and make it work. How do you approach these scenarios going in? Do you have a specific strategic game plan, or do you just follow the instinct and chemistry of the band? It must

take nerves of steel.

MGT: Getting the Tricky gig was surreal. I was aware of him of course and I had his first album Maxinquaye which pretty much set a blueprint for trip hop, but you wouldn't call it a guitar album at all ("Black Steel" being the one exception) so when I got a call in 1998 to go audition for Tricky's band, they say Tricky wanted a guitarist who could "play like Anthrax" so I was baffled . . . I went along to the audition as I admired his work and I wasn't in a touring band at that time, my old band The Mission had split up in 1996, and it turned out that Scott Ian from Anthrax had recorded guitar riffs on half of the Angels with Dirty Faces album, which came out that year and they wanted a new guitarist to be able to handle the riffage as well as the trip hop stuff. I got offered the gig, I recall Tricky being mildly impressed with my goth rock credentials as a member of The Mission. He has real eclectic taste in music, and grew up on Siouxsie and The Specials as well as dub, reggae and rap, he would blast Janes Addiction and Tool on the tour bus, so he liked the tones and alternative rock dynamic I bought to the live thing. The hardest thing was there was never a set for any of the shows, we all went in blind, but it never got boring.

With Gary Numan that was more straight-forward, I'd been a friend of his since the '90s—Gary and his lovely wife Gemma would come to Mission shows and we'd hang with them backstage,



and I became part of their inner circle of friends in the London area back then. I'd also been a fan of Tubeway Army since Are Friends Electric hit number one in the UK back in 1979 and I worked out how to play it on my Bontempi organ. [It's] ironic that over 30 years later I'd be playing the song live with the man himself. Gary's back catalogue is more based on synths than guitar—although he did write a lot of those classic Numan songs on guitar or bass and then transpose to synth—so nowadays the guitar doubles up the synth chords in an industrial metal approach. For me it was fairly straight forward. I was filling in for NIN guitarist Robin Finck, who had been drafted back into Nine Inch Nails, but luckily he was available for the

last show of the tour so I got to jam with Robin on six songs, which was great. He's a brilliant guitarist.

With Peter Murphy his material is also very broad, ranging from 12-string acoustic intimacy to full-blown pop rock to angst indie and metal. So, the variety of tones and sounds I'd developed as Tricky's guitarist over the years certainly came in handy with Peter. As did my goth rock leanings with The Mission, of course.

The hardest thing with Peter was handling the old Bauhaus catalogue, he avoided playing any of it for many years, I don't think he felt previous guitarists had played the parts correctly enough, or gotten the spirit of Daniel Ash's

unique approach. I was a big Bauhaus fan in my youth, so when I learned Ash's riffs I approached it with reverence and attention to detail. Peter later told me I was "the best since Danny," high praise indeed. But I always felt nervous playing the Bauhaus material, we did a whole set of it on the 2013 Mr. Moonlight tour ... I felt all the trainspotters out there and Danny himself—would be calling me out for not playing it right.

FLETCH: Like your career, your new solo album Volumes is a vast and varied tapestry of tones with a cavalcade of characters involved, yet somehow there is continuity and narrative flow throughout. Did you write each song with each individual singer in mind as it went, or did you already have a structure intact to inform his or her performance?

MGT: Well the idea started as simply recording a few songs with my friends on vocals, and self-releasing via iTunes. I'd always hated my singing voice, I saw myself more as the "Jimmy Page" of the band, writing the music, creating the atmosphere, and leaving the vocals and lyrics to the singers.

Many of the demos actually dated back several years and were floating around in my archive of unused demo ideas. I'd usually record intro-verse-chorus guitar sequences, adding my own drums, bass, sometimes synths. I did also write some brand new ideas for Volumes last year, not only recording all of the music for

the ABBA cover myself—Rik Carter of The Mission also added some keys—but also re-recording a new version of "Seconds" by Human League for Saffron of Republica to sing to.

I also wrote the new music for "Drive and Forget" that Ricky Warick sang on, also the three songs with Miles Hunt of The Wonder Stuff were all recent compositions. And I had already gotten Raymond Watts to sing on "Coming Clean," as we had previously been working on a PIG album together in 2013, although musically "Coming Clean" owes more of a debt to Killing Joke than PIG. Raymond was kind enough to let me include it on my solo album, and also gave his blessing to let me use some of my compositions I'd used on the PIG album with some of the other singers, as Raymond wasn't planning to release it at that stage.

As it was all long distance, with the only vocalist living in LA being Ricky Warwick, it was a case of file sharing over the Internet. I'd send my completed fully realized demos with verse-chorus-middle ideas with drums and bass to each singer, usually sending one or two demos to each person, then wait and see which one they would respond to. They would sing their vocals usually in their home studios, as all you need is a microphone and music software nowadays. they would then send vocal files to me and I'd mix them in . . . I mixed the entire album in my home studio, all except the ABBA cover

managed to sneak in a bit of guitar on **"I WAS A BIG BAUHAUS** one of those as well! Only those guys FAN IN MY YOUTH, SO know which one. FLETCH: As well as being a multi-**WHEN I LEARNED** instrumentalist, you are a savvy mixer, programmer and arranger—a man of ASH'S RIFFS I many hats. Did you have a home **APPROACHED IT WITH** studio before the digital revolution? It must be both incredibly rewarding and **REVERENCE AND** very challenging to play all these roles simultaneously. **ATTENTION TO DETAIL. MGT:** Well "home studio" for me was PETER LATER TOLD ME always my computer, and my trust I WAS "THE BEST SINCE DANNY," HIGH **PRAISE INDEED.**"

Tascam four-track Portastudio before that. Many of my mates in The Mission had "proper" outboard gear and used Logic Audio or Pro Tools. I could never be bothered with spending loads of money on studio gear, it just didn't appeal to me at the time, so I would stick with my Tascam Portastudio for many years for demo purposes. but in 1999 I picked up a copy of Logic Audio for my PC—both Andy Cousin and Rik Carter were already using it in their home studios – and I started to slowly

which Ville and I both agreed to have Tim Palmer mix that one as it was the single. Tim had previously mixed Mob Research and Ville's band HIM. Ricky was the only singer to record his vocals in my home studio. We also recorded a spirited acoustic rendition of "Wrathchild" by Iron Maiden for his Stairwell Troubadour album in my studio around the same time, plus four acoustic versions of new BSR songs for their Killer Instinct bonus album. I

learn how to use it, asking them both questions along the way. years would pass and I would use Logic to record demos for The Mission and later for Peter Murphy, I guess my confidence and experience grew and some of my demos would end up in some form on the albums, whether it was a guitar track or solo where the demo was better than the final studio version, or even some drum programming.

I also started doing some remixes for friends, starting with The Mission and later for Revolting Cocks, and Prong and PWEI. these heralded the first time my demos became commercially released product. I recorded most of



the Holy City Zoo album in my home studio in Los Angeles with Paul Raven, with singer Kory Clarke sending me vocal files from New York. I think the Mob Research album in 2009 was the first commercially released album I pretty much recorded the entirety of in my home studio, and mixed a lot of it . . . Tim Palmer mixed a few tracks which was great, I couldn't afford him for the whole album. then came Primitive Race, which again I composed several tracks of the music on that album, and I think I ended up mixing around seven of the album tracks in my home studio, and it was the collaborative nature of Primitive Race—which again was file sharing with

a bunch of singers around the world giving me the confidence and inspiration to finally record and release a "solo" album, recording and mixing the whole thing in my home studio, with some of my friends handling the vocal duties.

FLETCH: Speaking of collaborations, we have a mutual friend in Mont Sherar: a legendary '80s alternative DJ, photographer, filmmaker and designer of your new album cover. Mont is about to release the definitive photo-art book on Killing Joke, Twilight of the Mortals. This book will be released on Pete Webb's unique PC Press—a seriously cutting edge London-based publisher and label. I am humbled to mention that myself, Rahman Boloch and John Robb from Louder Than War and The Membranes are all contributing writers. We heard some of your tasty Mob Research ascending octave riffage in the teaser video Mont released, but there is more to the story of your involvement in this project... Can you reveal anything more at this stage? I do know that we can say it involves all members of Killing Joke individually and vinyl.

MGT: Yes, I'd known both Mont and Killing Joke drummer Big Paul Ferguson for a few years, and Mont suggested that he get me to collaborate on some of Paul's solo tracks which will appear on a limited edition vinyl that comes with a deluxe book package. Each member of the band contributed a solo song—or spoken word in the case of vocalist Jaz Coleman—and I added bass, guitars and synths to Paul's song, which started off as a strident drum groove, some tribal percussion and a spoken word vocal... it sounds massive! Mont suggested I do some drum breakdowns on my version as well, which came out really cool.

FLETCH: Finally, Mark, you are about to embark on a big UK and European tour with Ricky Warwick and the Fighting Hearts. Can you tell us a little



bit about the back-story of this band and maybe that special backline?

MGT: Well I've known Ricky for years, we first met back in Camden Town UK around 2003 or 2004 when Billy Morrison's band Stimulator were playing a gig there, and Billy got myself, Ricky, Billy Duffy of The Cult and Chris McCormack of 3 Colours Red to all get up and take turns playing on various punk covers. Ricky moved to LA shortly after and then so did I in 2005, and we kept in touch. Ricky had previously fronted The Almighty who were a great British punk-metal band and once they split he was solo for a while, then he was invited by legend Scott Gorham to join the reformed Thin Lizzy for a tour a few years ago, in place of the legendary singer Phil Lynott, who passed away back in the '80s.

Ricky has toured fronting Thin Lizzy over

the past few years, they then mutated into Black Star Riders and they have released some top-10 albums in the UK. Ricky also recorded a solo album two years ago and asked me to record some lead guitars on it, and some of his other friends including Richard Fortus of Guns n' Roses, Joe Elliott of Def Leppard, Ginger of The Wildhearts, Billy Morrison of the Billy Idol band, Andy Cairns of Therapy? and many more. Fighting Hearts drummer Gary Sullivan drummed on the whole album, and Black Star Riders bassist Robbie Crane played bass on a few, so when Ricky got it signed to Nuclear Blast, a tour was booked, and he asked us all to be his live band The Fighting Hearts . . . the cool thing about the backline is we got to play through some of Thin Lizzy's gear! As we rehearsed in the same place as both Lizzy and Motorhead—benefits of knowing the singer!





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GORGOTTEN ARTIST SERIES

To say digital pedals have come a long way would be an understatement. Technology has finally caught up to tone, and guitarists who once turned up their noses at all things non-analog have embraced all manner of digital stompboxes and use them nightly in their rig. Inquiries such as those questioning a pedal's analog componentry have been replaced with "Does it have tap tempo and presets?" But this has not always been the case. About a decade ago, DigiTech, no stranger to collaborations, developed the Supernatural Ambient Reverb with PGS and soon unveiled the Artist Series, featuring signature pedals with modeling technology paying tribute to legendary guitarists Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Brian May, as well as heavy metal maestros Scott Ian of Anthrax and Disturbed's Dan Donegan. The series was short-lived, and whether that was because of a lack of interest, or subpar tone, is hard to say. Regardless of the reason for its demise, the Artist Series stands as a curious monument in tone history that deserves to be explored. Let's journey into the past and see what they were all about.

WORDS BY: SAM HILL

BRIAN MAY RED SPECIAL

Aimed at capturing the signature tone of May's Tri-Sonic pickups in conjunction with a treble booster and Vox AC30 amplifier, the Red Special came in expression pedal form and featured seven different modes, named after Queen songs: "Keep Yourself Alive," "Bohemian Rhapsody," "Tie Your Mother Down," "We Will Rock You/Champions," "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," "Brighton Rock Solo" (live), and "Deacy Tone/A Winter's Tale." The pedal featured an integrated treble booster and a Guitar knob which was designed to compensate for the output of various guitar pickups. It also featured a mixer output that could be used as a stereo output, and if that's not enough, it came in an embroidered bag with a British sixpence, May's preferred plectrum. If you're a die-hard Queen or Brian May fan, this pedal is a must-have.

OUT1 (AMP)

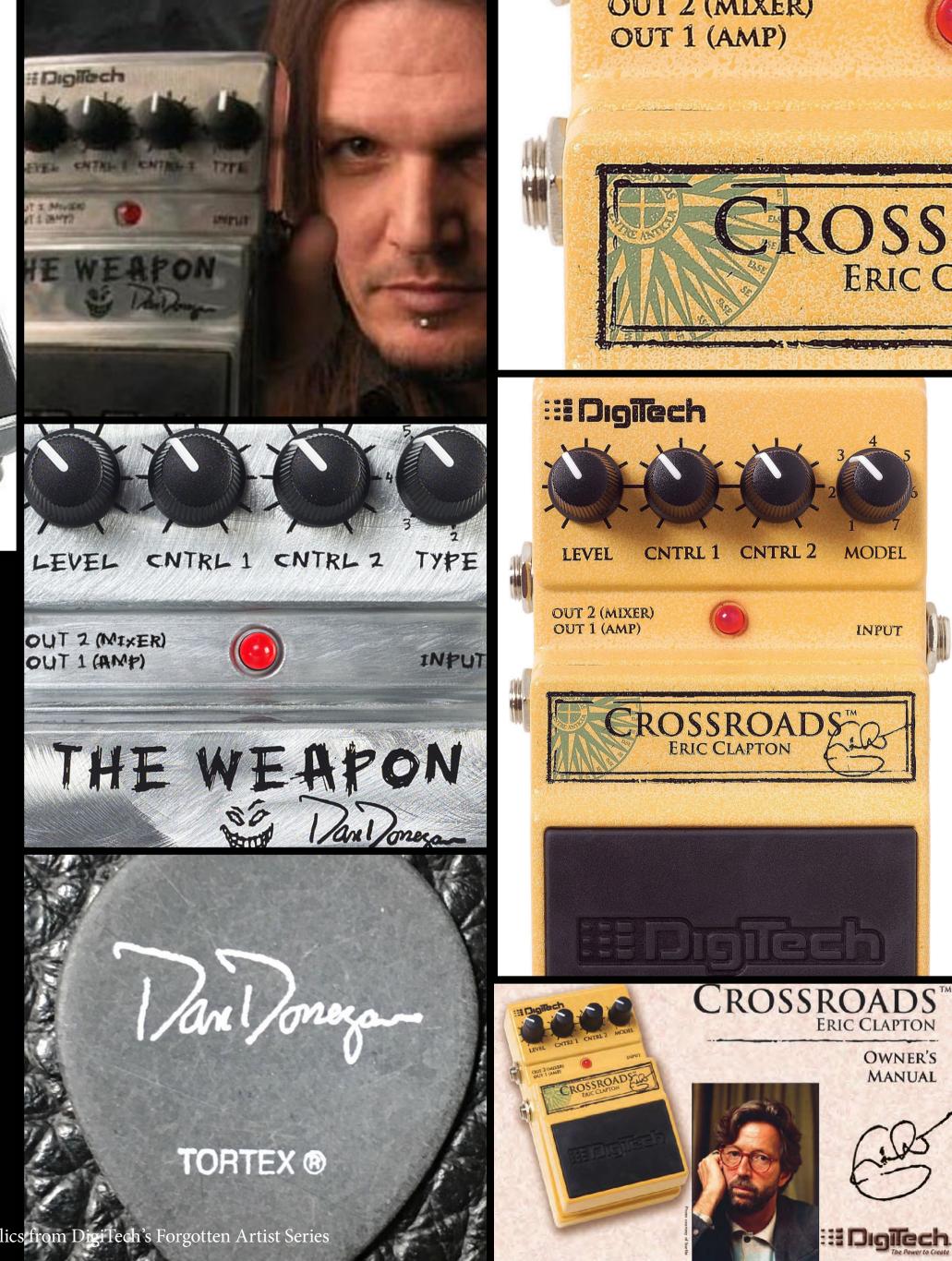






DAN DONEGAN THE WEAPON

We've all been there—you're at a gig, stomping on your pedals, and you get to that one song where you need metal distortion and a sitar sound. What pedal could possibly deliver such disparate tones, you ask? The Weapon. Dan Donegan wanted to recreate his crushing studio tones live, so he enlisted the help of DigiTech to capture the sound of "Mistress" and "Stupify," to name a couple. It features distortion, Whammy effects, autowah, the previously mentioned sitar simulation with built-in reverb, and more. Packing a lot of sound into a standard stompbox size, The Weapon will guarantee you are down with the sickness. If you love Disturbed, frightening your grandmother when you play guitar, or both, The Weapon belongs in your arsenal of chaos.



INPUT



ROSSROAE ERIC CLAPTON

ERIC CLAPTON CROSSROADS

Stratocaster? Check. Glasses? Check. Hawaiian shirt? Check. Clapton's hands? Nope. But don't despair, my friend, because the Crossroads pedal can fill in the gap and help you get as close to Slowhand as you'll ever be. Seven is the magic number with the artist series, and like May's Red Special, Clapton's Crossroads features seven distinctive tones named after his compositions: "Badge," "Crossroads" (two versions: Wheels of Fire and Live at the Fillmore), "Sunshine of Your Love," "Lay Down Sally," and two versions of "Layla" (Unplugged and Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs). Even if you're not a Clapton aficionado, you may find the acoustic simulation useful to have at your disposal. The only way to out-Clapton Clapton is by having multiple versions of "Crossroads" and "Layla" ready to rock with the turn of a knob, and the Crossroads pedal will deliver those tones with ease. Grab your axe, turn up your amp, and head down to the crossroads (the bluesy one, not the rehab center).

JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

Few guitarists inspired the masses to pick up and play like James Marshall Hendrix. Although his time in the spotlight was brief, he is regarded by many to be the greatest of guitar players. His legendary body of work is fueled by his legendary tones, and DigiTech sought to honor him with the Jimi Hendrix Experience. The JHE seems to have been the most popular pedal from the Artist Series, and for good reason—DigiTech worked alongside Eddie Kramer, the recording engineer at Electric Ladyland Studio, using the original masters of particular tunes to conjure up Jimi's psychedelic sounds. They include: "All Along the Watchtower," "Purple Haze," "Foxey Lady," "Little Wing," "Star Spangled Banner," "Voodoo Child," and "The Wind Cries Mary." Like the Red Special, it comes in expression pedal form, with three concentric control knobs and a mode knob, allowing for a vast array of Jimi's tones. If you want to sound like Jimi but you don't want to fork over tons of cash to assemble an authentic replica rig, see if you can get your hands on the Experience.















SCOTT IAN BLACK-13

You love Anthrax. You love to thrash. You love pentagrams. Well, my friend, the Black-13 is right up your alley. Scott lan's signature pedal from the Artist Series features a variety of distortion tones from the underworld. If you love chugging out power rhythms, pumping out heavy riffs, and shredding like the apocalypse will occur at any moment, Black-13 was made for you. Sure, you could go the Metal Zone route. But does the Metal Zone have a menacing pentagram graphic? Exactly. Even if you're not a huge Anthrax or Scott Ian fan, the Black-13 provides some tones off the beaten path if you play heavy music and are looking for something different.

ToneReport.com

The Artist Series was an early and admirable attempt to capture the signature sounds of several varied and distinctive artists. Even though the line did not continue, it pioneered the way for other signature pedals, and stands as evidence of DigiTech's continuous desire to innovate in the realm of guitar gear. The trail that was blazed continues today, and it can be seen in pedals such as the TC Electronic Dreamscape designed for John Petrucci or the bevy of JHS pedals designed for a variety of guitar slingers.

This begs the question: Will DigiTech ever reboot the artist series? The company has been churning out some incredible pedals the past few years, giving us such gems as the Polara reverb, Obscura Altered Delay, the new Nautilus chorus-flanger, and more. You have to wonder if there aren't some

players out there who'd like to design their own signature pedal featuring the latest and greatest digital tone technology. If you could design your own signature pedal, what sounds would it have? What features would you include?

Although these pedals are no longer in production, most of them can be found online in marketplaces such as Reverb.com and eBay, or you may find one scouring your local Craigslist.

Signature pedals, like signature guitars, have their roots in a specific artist's sound, but that doesn't mean you can't take that influence and go in another direction with it. If you're a fan Jimi, Scott, Dan, Eric, or Brian, or you just want a quirky bunch of pedals to add to your collection, make it a point to check out the Artist Series.



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Quality is mandatory in everything we do. From our wide selection of handcrafted pickups, such as the Saturday Night Special humbuckers, to the USA-made Forza Overdrive and Killing Floor High Gain Boost pedals, every detail is important. It's what brings the power and value to what we create, and the endless possibilities for you to discover.

The 1x12 cab could be the perfectly balanced speaker cabinet. Think of all the legendary amp combos that come in 1x12 form: Fender Tweed Deluxe, Fender Deluxe Reverb, Vox AC15, et al. They are perfectly optimized tone machines, portable enough to take to most venues without too much trouble, and they provide enough projection for nearly any gig. If you're using a head and cab setup, choosing an efficient 1x12 speaker that matches up well with your amp can help you find the tone in your head without lugging an epic KISSstyle boatload of Marshall 4x12s around. Some cab companies, such Port City Amplification, make ported cabs, allowing you to get the most out of a compact setup. You don't have to have a huge rig to sound awesome, and a solid 1x12 setup could be what you've been looking for all along.

TONE TALK // Perfect Harmony: Choosing the Right Speaker Cabinet 46

commaaker cab options available today.

Perfect Harmony:

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SPEAKER CABINET

WORDS BY:

sam hill

Speaker cabinets, as much as the amplifiers and speakers

themselves, can have a tremendous effect on your overall tone.

Let's say you enjoy a full, rich guitar tone with plenty of volume.

You use a Fender Hot Rod Deville with two 12-inch speakers.

That is what you base your sound around, and you have become

accustomed to it. Now imagine bypassing the Deville's internal

speakers and running it through a 1x8 mini cab. The sound will be

drastically different. That's not to say it will be bad; it could be just

right if you are trying to achieve a more lo-fi tone. But generally

speaking, you're going to lose some volume, frequency response,

and perhaps most crucial of all, it's going to feel different. That's

why it's important to familiarize yourself with various cab options.

The more comfortable you are with various speaker combinations,

the more likely you are to get your signature sound—or very

close to it—regardless of the rig. Let's take a look at some of the

Onx X Twelve





Two X Twelve

If you seek more volume, power, and projection than a 1×12 can provide, the 2x12 is another classic configuration that delivers the goods. Not too much, but not too little, you have enough volume to bring down the house, but you can still finesse all of those sweet notes out of your guitar and hear all of the articulation and detail. Depending on what speakers you have, a 2x12 cab can power a behemoth of an amp such as a Hiwatt Custom 100 with no problem. It can also bring new depth and dimension to your lower wattage head. Running a five-watt, tube-driven head through a pair of 12-inch speakers yields great semi-cleans and glorious, roaring overdrive. Once you've put your lunchbox head through a 2x12, you may have a hard time going back to smaller cabs. Bypass the internal speaker in your Fender Champ, run it through a 2x12, use your volume knob, and enjoy the dozens of compliments on your tone you'll receive after the show.

Four X Twelve

For those about to rock, we salute you. If you love kicking ass and going full blast, the 4x12 is for you. Sure, it may be impractical for most modern gigs - the guitar heroes of yesteryear used them because PA technology wasn't near as effective as it is today. But we all know how incredibly satisfying it is to plug your favorite guitar into a 50-watt Plexi running through a 4x12 and dime it. Your whole body will vibrate, the windows will rattle, and your neighbors will only come to your barbecue to make passive aggressive comments about how loud you are. It may sterilize you and every mammal within 200 yards, but that's the price of rock 'n' roll, baby. Like the 2x12, the beastly 4x12 cab can transform a humble, low wattage amp into a gnarly rawk machine. I once played a Z. Vex Nano head through a 4x12 cab and I didn't stop smiling for days.





The 2x10 cab occupies a similar amount of space as a 1x12, but yields a punchier, focused tone. You'll get a bit of a wider spread since there is a pair of speakers instead of a single one, and it will be lighter than a 2x12 cab while still giving you the twin speaker sound. Many manufacturers make ten-inch versions of their most popular speakers, such as the Celestion Greenback and Gold, so you can downsize your rig a bit without losing your core tone. Ideally, a speaker cab will match the venue and the gig. If you're playing to a sold-out amphitheater, you're much more likely to get away with using a 4x12 or full stack. If you're playing in a small club and you bring that same monstrous cab, you aren't going to be able to use it to its full potential. The 2x10 is a great alternative to bigger cabs because it still gives you some dimension without taking over the entire stage.

One X Ten

Perhaps the punchiest speaker cab of all on this list, the 1x10 will hit you square in between the eyes and offer no apology. While probably more common in combo form as opposed to a head and cab setup, a 1x10 can be a great option if you're using a small head such as the Orange Mirco Terror or Epiphone Valve Jr. It gives amps enough room to breathe, yet maintains the small stature and easy setup, which is probably a big reason why you went small in the first place. Or, if you want a different sound from your larger amp, plug it into the mini cab and see what you can come up with. You won't get the full, lush sound that your favorite 2x12 produces, but you may come up with another tone entirely that is a champion in its own right.



Perfect Harmony: Choosing the Right Speaker Cabinet TONE TALK //

48



One X Ffiteen

While 15-inch speakers may be more common for bass or pedal steel players, they certainly have their place in guitar rigs too. For example, Supro recently reissued the Thunderbolt combo amplifier, which features a 15-inch speaker. A 15 sounds huge, especially in comparison to 10s. If you enjoy having loud stage volume (never mind what the sound guy thinks), a 15 will get you all of the raucous, raw, bombastic tone you can handle. It could even come in handy if you double on bass guitar or like to use sub-octave effects in conjunction with massive distortion and fuzz. The mammoth speaker can handle anything you throw at it and will turn it into a pleasing tone. If you do decide to use a setup with 15 inch speakers, please consider naming your band Thor's Lullaby, even if you don't exclusively play Nordic black metal.

Many guitarists have multiples of gear.

Several overdrive pedals, a selection of guitars, a few amps so it stands to reason that one would have multiple speaker cabinet options to use for various occasions on stage and in the studio. Why limit yourself to just one? If you've solely focused on one of the aforementioned cabinet sizes, try something new; you may be pleasantly surprised. There's no need to get rid of your trusty 2x12 cab with Vintage 30s, but you may fall in love with a more mobile 1x10 cab with the right amplifier. As always, experiment to find out what you like best, and keep on rocking in the free world.





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GEAR REVIEW

CATALINBREAD CSIDMAN

REVIEW BY **YOEL KREISLER** STREET PRICE **\$199.99**



Calling all experimenters, innovators, mad scientists and various other creative types. You have a new favorite pedal (whether you know it or not). The kind folks at Catalinbread have unleashed "yet another" delay pedal. For those keeping score at home, that makes five delay pedals active in Catalinbread's current lineup. But this one isn't just another delay pedal. It's not emulating a vintage tape echo unit, an analog BBD delay, or even some prototypical digital delay. Nope, it's here to emulate the worst aspect of early portable compact disc players by takes your

precious little guitar signal and applying the random glitches and skips that dismantled your favorite tunes every time you hit a bump or even took a corner too fast. It even has a clever little name that pays homage to the original portable CD player— CSIDMAN.

It might be spelled strangely, but this sweet little pedal is pronounced "Discman." And once you plug in and experiment with the Cuts and Latch controls, you'll be skipping and glitching in real time. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

At the heart of the CSIDMAN is a pristine

digital delay pedal. The echoes it creates are highfidelity and as close as possible to the signal you are feeding into the pedal. Looking at the face of the CSIDMAN, you'll see familiarly labelled controls for Time, Mix, and Feed. These are the "normal" controls. Time controls the length of the delay, from no delay up to 725 milliseconds. Feed controls the number of repeats; it is somewhat interdependent of other knob settings, but in most of my testing, you start to get into runaway oscillation between noon and 2 o'clock. Unlike many delay pedals, the CSIDMAN allows you to blend between a full dry signal and a full wet signal (no input signal, only delay signal). This comes in handy when trying to mimic the glitches and skips of a Discman but without any echoes . . . More on this later.

Finally, the settings that set the CSIDMAN apart from other delay pedals are Latch and Cuts. Latch determines how much glitch and stutter is applied to your signal. When set fully clockwise, you just get an endless repeat of whatever part of your signal the CSIDMAN latched onto. This control is also what allows you to control the sanity (for lack of a better word) of the pedal. When the Latch control is set fully counter clockwise, the CSIDMAN behaves like your run of the mill digital delay pedal, serving up clean and unassuming repeats. Your bandmates will never know the freaked out digital beast lurking within. Cuts determines the speed or size of the glitches and stutters—short and fast skips or longer stutters.

Digging into the CSIDMAN, it takes some time to learn how it works and how to fit it into one's style and technique. For me, it was fitting that the CSIDMAN arrived just as I was digging into the Netflix original Stranger Things. The soundtrack to Stranger Things is all '80s synth and horror film sound effects. Pairing the weirdness of CSIDMAN with some dark minor chord arpeggios and some long modulated plate reverb helped me create some creeped-out soundscapes and kept me checking over my shoulder for the (spoiler alert) Demogorgon!

The CSIDMAN can also find itself at home with any instrument and even in the studio. I had the luck of possessing it at the same time as the Cusack Pedal Cracker, and it's downright crazy on vocals. But I had equally great experiences applying it to bass and keys.

WHAT WE LIKE

The CSIDMAN is unlike any other delay pedal out there. It's weird, it's crazy, and it's wholly original. It will inspire you to play things you'd never imagined and can add a surprising (dangerous?) level of uncertainty to any musical passage.

CONCERNS

The random nature of the CSIDMAN makes recreating the same phrase twice pretty difficult. As such, I had a hard time building rhythmic parts that utilized the full scope of the pedal. I was able to get somewhat consistent results with very short Time settings paired with very high Latch and Cuts settings.

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GEAR REVIEW

SEYMOUR DUNCAN KILLING FLOOR

REVIEW BY **DAVID A. EVANS** STREET PRICE **\$159.00**



TUND

I knew today was gonna be a tough one when I saw I'd run out of scotch by 10AM. Or maybe it was the John Doe we found in the alleyway an hour before. Let's say he was gonna have a real hard time waking up. That tends to happen when you've been put to sleep. I was hot on the case, and determined to get to the bottom of this one. My main suspect: the Killing Floor high gain boost by Seymour Duncan.

Maybe it was the pedal's silhouette of a smoking gun that tipped me off. Or maybe it was the blood-red housing. Let's just say that the Killing Floor will stand out on anyone's pedalboard the way a guilty man stands out in a lineup.

I knew a few things about the Killing Floor from the get-go. One: it's a really a simple and stylish pedal. Two: it features three controls: a foot switch, a "chicken head" gain level knob, and a small, threeway toggle switch for selecting EQ options. Three: it provides up to 34db of boost, enough to overdrive any amp.

I had just this much to go off, so I had to tease a little more info from the Killing Floor itself. Let me tell you, he was a real tough nut to crack. Sure, I clicked the footswitch on and off, on and off, all the while hoping against hope that I might hear just the slightest difference between boost and dry. (The Killing Floor outputs the signal at unity when the boost knob is set to zero.) But like a pro who knows just which dock to throw a hot pistol from, the Killing Floor eluded my best efforts to pin the crime of tone-suck on him. I was stumped, and didn't know where to turn.

So I did a little research. According to Seymour Duncan, the Killing Floor's JFET-and-op-amp circuit was designed to highlight so-called lower order harmonics. To less theoretically-inclined guitarists, this means that the Killing Floor provides a very "musical" boost. Once I learned this, I started to think that maybe the Killing Floor wasn't just your average hired gun, out to knock off some poor schmoe. Maybe the Killing Floor had his own agenda. But why?

So I went back to get a little more info from the Killing Floor, info about tone and EQ. I discovered a few things. One: the EQ toggle's middle position is probably about as close to a "neutral" or flat EQ as the pedal can be. Two: in the High Boost mode, the Killing Floor added a definite, but pleasingly subtle airiness to my guitar's clean tone. When I overdrove my amplifier using the Killing Floor, the resulting tone became crisp and chimey. Three: in the High Cut mode, I cut a bit of my guitar's hum in the hum-bucking or second switch position (the combination being the neck and middle pickup). The

result was subtle, but even subtle differences ultimately contribute to one's own sound. I hate to say it, but I came away liking the Killing Floor more than before.

But there was one last thing that bothered me. Like Seymour Duncan's other pedals, the Killing Floor offers easy access to its battery compartment via a plastic battery-compartment door. As much as I love this convenience, I wish that Seymour Duncan opted for a metal rather than a plastic battery compartment door. Maybe it's me, but plastic battery doors seem as flimsy as a hasty alibi. But apart from this minor issue, the Killing Floor is the epitome of durability.

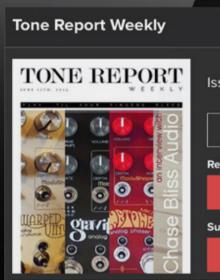
It seems to me the Killing Floor is really guilty of only one thing: great tone. Yeah, there's the thing with the plastic battery door, but that doesn't bug me so much as the thought that I didn't quite get him this time. My best theory is that our John Doe's real name is Bad Tone and that the Killing Floor couldn't bear to have him around. But I'll let you decide.

WHAT WE LIKE

Simple, intuitive controls and a very musical boost which adds sparkle or removes a bit of hum.

CONCERNS

I wish Seymour Duncan opted for a metal rather than a plastic battery compartment door.





- 5 Pawn Shop Scores: Overdrives
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The Ins and Outs of Playing In Stereo



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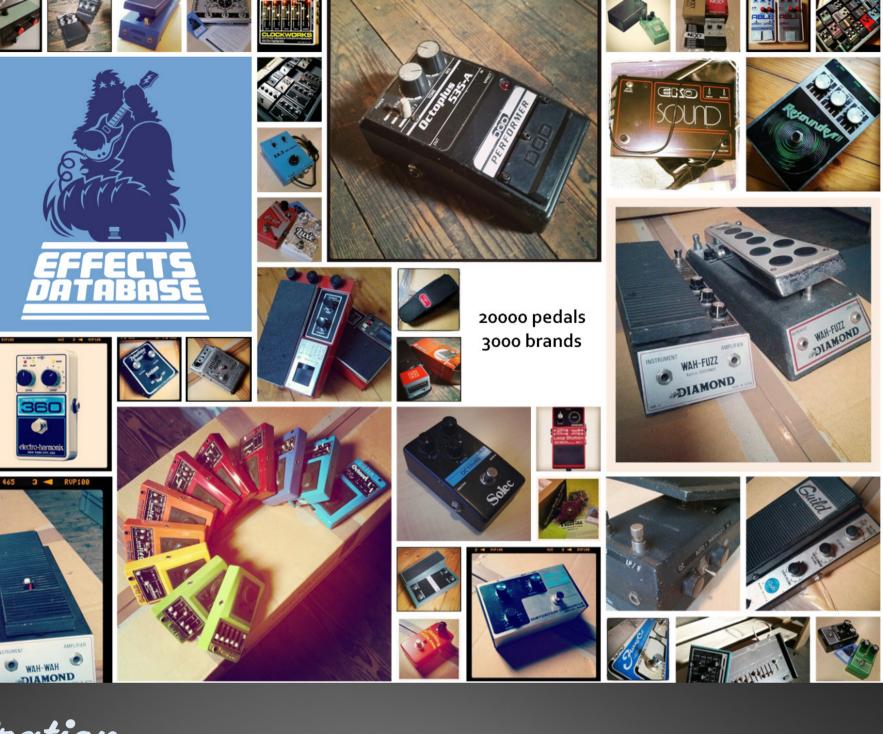


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TimeLine. It's not a delay pedal. It's an inspiration machine.

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EGEAR REVIEW

LUNASTONE WISE GUY

REVIEW BY DAVID A. EVANS STREET PRICE **\$249.00**



Apparently, there's a new guy who's been hanging around the bar lately. He calls himself the Wise Guy, and he's made by Lunastone of Denmark. He's not gonna tell you where you'll find Jimmy Hoffa. He's not gonna tell you who ordered the hit on JFK. He's not a rat. Maybe most interesting of all is the fact that he'll deliver the gamut of trueto-life, tube-like overdrive tones—but you gotta approach him the right way.

Lunastone's Wise Guy pedal offers a bit more than meets the eye. Underneath its hard-as-nails, marinarared housing is a special circuit. Although the

circuit takes inspiration from the JRC4558D opamp, Lunastone totally redesigned the circuit for its own purposes. So, instead of the typical clipping diodes which some pedals use to produce distortion, the Wise Guy relies instead upon "cascading gain stages" in the way that a genuine tube amplifier would. Essentially, the Wise Guy's circuitry more accurately mimics the circuitry of a real tube amp. The result: an extremely tube-like overdrive, complete with fantastic breakup, rich harmonics, and signature equalization. Most people will never

know the difference between the tone of a Wise Guy and a tube amp.

By the way, did I mention that the housing is tough as tough can be? It's not gonna crack, even during the harshest RICO indictment. Like I said, the Wise Guy's not a rat.

There is one way to get the Wise Guy to flip on you but I don't mean he'll go to the Feds. No way. He's more like a gentleman who knows when it's best to be subtle and best to be, how shall I say, a little "forceful." Switching between overdrive circuits one and two requires a mere flip of the Wise Guy's ultra-cool

toggle switch.

Anyhow, the Wise Guy's first overdrive circuit produces a restrained, mid-heavy distortion that's best for when you need to straighten up a guy just a little. Maybe he fell behind on his payments a week, or maybe he's just not showing the proper respect—nothing too serious. Circuit one's distortion is great for a bit of bluesy crunch or for a bit of color. On the high end you'll get some nice breakup and some good sustain, but it's not gonna be a full-out rocker. There's no need for that here. The Wise Guy knows when to hold back. It's how he's gotten this far in life.

But if you flip his toggle to circuit two-oh boy, watch out. You flip the Wise Guy's toggle to circuit two when you know there's a rat. Not only is the second circuit's distortion louder, it's also going to provide more sustain; you flip the Wise Guy's toggle and you're probably gonna end up at the bottom of a river.

Despite the Wise Guy's

emphasis on mids, I'd say that he delivers a "darker" overdrive in each of its circuits, especially when the Tone knob is set to noon. It's a distinct, classic tone that reminds me of my Vox amp when I push the tubes pretty hard. It's not honky, but it is a bit compressed and more focused in the mid-range than other pedals. Turning up the Tone adds a bit of air to the overall sound, but it's not going to become hissy or shrill. No way. He always tells a good story in dulcet tones.

The Wise Guy also features a helpful Boost circuit, which adds up to an additional 15 decibels to the signal. To be sure, the Wise Guy is already a fairly loud pedal, even without the boost. But he's not gonna go around leaking static and noise about the operation. No way.

So, that's the lowdown on the Wise Guy. I recommend him, but only if you're not a rat.

WHAT WE LIKE

Exceptionally tube-like distortion; a useful Boost circuit; two overdrive circuits; it's not a rat.

CONCERNS

My only concern is for you, my friend. You'd better not be a rat. And if you are, you'd better stay away from the Wise Guy, or else you'll disappear.







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GEAR REVIEW

HUDSON ELECTRONICS BROADCAST

REVIEW BY **FLETCHER STEWART** STREET PRICE **\$285.00**



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Transformers. The way they overload is squidgy, dynamic and delicious. Guitar pedals rarely employ them due to cost, enclosure size and any number of factors, but there has been a recent defiance of this unwritten law of late. My favorite so far is definitely the Hudson Electronics Broadcast. This transformercoupled, discrete class-A germanium preamp is based on the old mic preamps of yesteryear, but it absolutely excels at making everything sound fatter, furrier and just

. . . better at pretty much all settings.

If I seem like I 've already given my opinion and the rest of the review is just gong to be clap-chap, by all means stop reading now and go get one, but there is so much more to this pedal than just the simple always-on favorite booster role, which it does better than anything else since the Xotic EP Booster. There is an infinite cosmos of clean boosting, grit-chimegrime and rubberized gluey fuzztone to explore in those three big knobs and single switch. Also, the Broadcast is built up here on the North Sea coastline, a stone's throw from Scarborough, UK, where I reside. I am

well-chuffed to review this big bugger, so let's pull some pints and plug up loves.

CHIME AND SNAP TO RAGGED FLAP

The left-brain of the Broadcast is engaged with the big switch clicked westward. In this position, and jacked into a valve amp on the edge of breakup, one can pull some Small Faces. I couldn't help but rip into "My Minds Eye," seeing chords that bling and bloom in that slightly blownout '60s fashion. Edging up the Gain Trim and Level to just past noon revealed a tone that was beefy, Keefy and dynamically crunchy.

From here I plugged in my trusty—but never rusty—all-aluminum EGC Standard Series Two. This took the tone straight into the Chicago grindhouse of '90s true alternative. Think Duane Denison-style snap-and-grab riffs with that impossible mix of high fidelity chord content garnished with grit and snarl. This pedal nails that to the factory floor, yet somehow never sounds harsh like other pedals have done when I attempted to mimic those tones. Like the concept suggests, the gain taper of Trim and Level is incremental and smooth; the more it is turned up, the better it sounds. Let's flip over to the right brain of the Broadcast and Hyde this Jekyll.

Clicking over to the High Gain side is physically satisfying with that big chunky switch. I must mention that I like the size and space of this unit. I don't have a massive crowded board and like to be able to micro-manage with my feet sometimes. Plus it just has that big unit, big knobs, big

sound appeal of vintage fuzz units. Tactile tone tweaking is the name of the game. The gain is proper firing now and the appropriately red knob is attenuating the flames. The Level and Trim's ranges are so expertly finetuned that nothing is ever out of usable order, yet can still get deliciously unruly. In moderate settings of High Gain, the tone was raw and emotional. I rammed it into a '80s Alesis Midiverb II with some rainy grainy Bloom reverb and launched into a rough and ready tone storm not unlike Greg Sage's Wipers tone on The Circle. Pushing the Trim and Level to the higher limits revealed the ragged gloriousness of Neil Young's Zuma-era lead tone. The highs became squidgy and interesting inter-harmonically, while the lows remained huge, open and slightly chaotic in a good way—think Billy Gibbons's tone on recent ZZ Top records. If the flub got out of hand, all I had to do was turn up the Low Cut. This pedal has everything we need and nothing we don't.

WHAT WE LIKE

Flawless build. Flawless tones. Flawless Victory.

CONCERNS

None. I want two.

TONE REPORT

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