

Pawn Stars

LATERAL SOUND BIT

There are 10 types of people in this world, those who understand binary, and those who don't ...

If you get that truly awful joke, then you'll probably understand the idea behind the process that this pedal is based upon: if not, then it pretty much makes no difference, as it doesn't change the fact that the output of this pedal is one of the most unique and creative effects made in the last 10 years.

IN WITH THE NEW

From the time that the first recorded effect pedal screamed into our collective consciousness on the Stones' 'Satisfaction', it was less than a decade before most of the effects we know about today

were created. Chorus, tremolo, fuzz, delay, phase, the list goes on. In recent years nearly all new effects have been a theme and variation of the aforementioned. But how many truly new effects can you name that came about in the last 10 years?

The funny thing about this effect is that even though its name implies it, it isn't actually digital. The entire process is done in an analogue realm. Confused? Don't be. The Bit Mangler is in fact a sample rate reduction simulator which uses analogue technology to mimic the sound of reducing the sample rate to give you digital distortion. The idea is that if increasing the bits – i.e. from 8 bit to 16 bit and 24 bit

– gives you more information and ultimately a more accurate guitar tone, then reducing them gives you less information and can produce an effect that makes the guitar sound less of an instrument, more of a *Star Wars* prop from the original '70s episode four. It's digital distortion on purpose and the sound is way out there. It's hard to describe, but imagine what it would be like to hear Stephen Hawking rocking out and you'll start to get the picture.

Now the Bit Mangler is by no means the first ever bit-crushing effect – there are plenty out there – but what this pedal does that is so cool is that it allows you to use a seemingly unusable effect in some really practical ways. You have a blend control, so once you have completely mashed your sound you can blend it in to your direct signal. You can then add different modulations, including a random modulation setting, to the effect that really takes the process to a new level, and from out of what would seem complete chaos, inspiring sounds emerge.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I PAY?

You can buy these new for £240 from Mansons Guitars in Exeter, which may seem a lot for something you may step on once or maybe twice a night, but for

those looking for new sounds, for a new catalogue of craziness, it really is worth a serious look. Remember, it's the pioneers of guitar tone who were looking for new sounds who gave us the tones we so love today, and after all, isn't the exploration of what's possible on the guitar our job? **GB**



THE AUTHOR



Dan Steinhardt has a 200Gb hard drive instead of a brain, where he stores endless effects and electronics knowledge. He's the main man at TheGigRig Ltd (www.thegigrig.com) and we're honoured to have him contributing to the magazine.