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PAWN STARS

THE OTHER FLANGER YOU SIMPLY MUST HAVE IN YOUR COLLECTION, AND A HUGE PART OF EVH'S FABLED TONE

Last issue we looked at probably the greatest phaser of all time, the script-logo Phase 90 from MXR. After all of the emails I received asking about other great MXR pedals of that era, I simply had to bring this puppy out of retirement for us all to bask in its tripped-out psychedelic glory.

MXR INNOVATIONS

This is an original MXR flanger from 1979, as used by EVH and Randy Rhoads, a pair of names that have in turn earned this pedal the reputation as possibly the greatest rock flanger of all time. In a sonic shootout of all my ridiculous collection of flangers, the MXR and the EH Electric Mistress certainly stand out as having some special quality that's difficult to put your finger on. The MXR in particular produces frequencies that sound warm and huge, yet still manage to cut through even the heaviest of mixes. This is amazing not only because this flanger is knocking on for being 30 years old, but also because it was designed to be a budget, mass-produced effect.

VINTAGE V NEW

As we all now know, MXR changed hands in 1978 and changed its logo, too, from the script typeface to this block style. So why is this particular example so collectable? Well, by the time the takeover was complete, the design of this pedal was already finished. This is the first flanger MXR produced and as such is very sought after. All of the new circuit designs used an on/off LED indicator, so if it's a block-logo pedal that doesn't have an LED, it's pretty much identical to a script version, as they were still using the stock of old circuit boards well into '79. But what does all this mean? Er, everything and absolutely nothing! Who cares when it was made or what logo it uses? As a musician, this shouldn't be your criteria for deciding to buy one of these things. You need to use your ears and see if it delivers the sound that turns you on.

What it does deliver are tones that are instantly recognisable if you're an EVH or Randy Rhoads fan. When I first heard 'Unchained' by Van Halen, I thought, 'So that's what a flanger sounds like', and in that sense it's not that other manufacturers' offerings are better or worse, but certainly this is the flanger that triggers that emotion for many of us. It's this trigger that keeps pushing the prices of these effects through the roof.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I PAY?

For an original example in this condition you can expect to pay £100, but that's only if you can find one. If you can't, do not fear, as the reissue of this pedal is excellent. MXR has kept as close to the original design as possible, including using a bucket-brigade delay device, which is one important secret to its authentic and exceptional tone. GB



THE AUTHOR

DAN'S THE MAN



Dan Steinhardt has a 200Gb hard drive instead of a brain, where he stores endless FX and electronics knowledge. Boss man of Epix UK – www.thegigrig.com – we're honoured to have him contributing to the mag. Don't miss next month's issue, when he'll interview wah legend Del Casher and Roger Mayer!