



£110



AT A GLANCE

TYPE:

Overdrive

CONTROLS:

Level, Tone, Gain, Mode, Flexi-Switch

SOCKETS:

Input, output, power

BYPASS:

True bypass

POWER:

9v, mains only

CONTACT: Earthquaker Devices,
www.earthquakerdevices.com



EARTHQUAKER DEVICES PLUMES

Can an overdrive pedal make the ground move?

As the backbone of pretty much every pedalboard, a decent overdrive is essential. But with this comes options, and there's a seemingly endless number of clones, copies and derivatives when it comes to getting gritty. Earthquaker Devices, however, is known for being anything but derivative – a company intent on helping you cook up a sonic banquet so experimental, it'll have Heston Blumenthal reaching for his palate cleanser.

Imagine our surprise, then, when confronted by the Plumes: Earthquaker's take on a meat-and-potatoes overdrive. More to the point, it's relatively affordable compared to many 'boutique' overdrives.

So what's to get excited about? The Plumes features three clipping modes: symmetrical LED clipping, no-diode op-amp clipping and asymmetrical silicone diode clipping on modes one, two and three respectively. In tonal terms, this translates to three different purposes. The first is the most gritty, offering more gain and an abrasive edge that isn't far off distortion territory.

The heavy drive is the most amp-in-a-box of the three modes, great for alternative/indie-style sounds where you're looking for enough bite to stop sounding polite without losing your clarity.

Flipping to the neck humbucker for some lead gives our soloing a retro, woolier sound with an almost fuzz-like quality.

Switch to the second diode-clipping mode (mode three), and things become a little tamer. This side of the pedal resembles the Tube Screamer-style overdrive the closest of the three, and to our ears there's a more open, dynamic quality to it. This will be the mode that blues-ers reach for when they want an extra kick to their leads.

Finally, there's the second mode. With the switch set to the middle position, the pedal is purely pushing the op-amp to

create gain, setting the Plumes up as a transparent overdrive/boost. This mode still imparts some grit to your sound, but by pushing your amp harder it allows your signal to take on more of the amp's drive sound and character, but without the need for such high volume levels to achieve it.

Overall, the Plumes is hard to fault, giving us the best of three OD concepts. For around £100, it's a hugely versatile overdrive from one of the most revered pedal brands out there.

Stuart Williams

A HUGELY VERSATILE PEDAL THAT'S HARD TO FAULT

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★