

ROUND-UP

MXR pedals

MXR packs the effects into this new duo of compact pedals

Words Trevor Curwen **Photography** Neil Godwin

It's been a little while since we've seen any new MXR pedals and now two come along at once. Both adhere to the same shape and size that MXR pioneered way back in the 1970s with the likes of the Dyna Comp and Phase 90, so in the case of the M251 FOD Drive the battery access is old style by removing

the four-screw baseplate. The M305 Tremolo pedal replaces the discontinued M159 Tremolo model, which launched in 2008 and ran at 18 volts, necessitating the use of two batteries or another arrangement. This new iteration runs more conveniently from a single nine volts power source.



MXR

M305 Tremolo £169

This tremolo can run in mono or stereo and features six different trem types, scrolled through by pushing the Gain knob. There are standard Speed and Depth controls and that Gain knob can not only compensate for the perceived volume drop that the effect can engender but can also give you a boost to drive an amp a little harder. One tremolo type, called MXR, recreates the pulsing of the previous M159's sine wave trem, plus, still in the vintage amp-style, you get the softer flavoured Bias and Opto types. Revo is an optical tremolo with a reversed waveform for a slightly harder edged attack, something that finds its full expression in the square wave trem's choppy on/off effects. Finally, there's the increasingly popular Harmonic tremolo that recreates the phasey sound of a rarer type of vintage amp trem.

A very cool envelope mode allows tremolo speed to be determined by the intensity of your playing, put to great effect with a trem that slows right down as a chord fades out. Other performance options include connection of a tap tempo footswitch or expression pedal, which is able to blend between two settings to incorporate all three of the front-panel knobs. **G**

VERDICT A pretty comprehensive set of tremolo sounds in a compact footprint with plenty of performance options



MXR

M251 FOD £185

MXR's Dookie Drive pedal was based on the rig of modified Marshalls that Billie Joe Armstrong used on Green Day's third album. It had the basic aim of putting the sound of two amp stacks in a single housing with options for blending the two – and that's exactly what the new FOD Drive is designed to do, albeit with no artist affiliation and the option of a toggle-switched midrange boost, plus a scoop and a flat setting.

A Blend knob sets the mix between the two sounds. To the right is the High Gain channel, with Gain controlled by a the front-panel knob while to the left is the Crunch Gain channel with internal set-and-forget trimmers for its gain and volume if you want to deviate from the factory settings. Both sides have the flavour of a nicely cranked stack and each individually has a range of useful tones whether you're looking for rhythmic graunch or saturated leads.

It's the combinations, though, that give the pedal its signature voicing and these are where you can dial in really rich tones that combine saturation and sustain with an extra edge of clarity from the Crunch side. Tailored EQ and extra boost from the Output knob add to the options. **G**

VERDICT Layering two different overdrive flavours in one pedal is an inspired idea and this does it seamlessly

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: Taiwan

TYPE: Tremolo pedal

FEATURES: Selectable True or buffered bypass, 6 tremolo styles (MXR, Bias, Opto, Revo, Square, Harmonic), mono or stereo output, external tap tempo, envelope mode, expression pedal control

CONTROLS: Speed, Depth, Gain (push to cycle through tremolo types), CTR switch, internal stereo/mono switch, Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input (TRS), standard output (TRS), CTR

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied) 190mA

DIMENSIONS: 64 (w) x 110 (d) x 47mm (h)

Guitarist
CHOICE

9/10

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Overdrive pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Output, Blend, Gain, Tone, Scoop switch, internal Crunch Gain trimmer, internal Crunch Volume trimmer, Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied) 11mA

DIMENSIONS: 64 (w) x 110 (d) x 47mm (h)

8/10

