Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **Johnnyseven** » 14 Jun 2013, 13:14

I read lots of bad reviews of the FZ-5, i'm guessing that someone on here must have one and can report if they are as bad as people say they are?

Johnnyseven

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 14 Jun 2013, 15:05

The ProGuitarShop vid had me so close to buying one Saw an Aus band use the Mastro setting, cut through well, sounded fairly good. In short probably covers a few bases if your not after a connoisseurs tone and love the BOSS simplicity/durabilty.

Anyway - anyone?

(When its cheap it will join the FZ-3 and FZ-2)

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **Laurie** » 14 Jun 2013, 15:07

Yes. Horrible. If it's free, no problem. More than $10 avoid.

Laurie

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **sclitheroe** » 14 Jun 2013, 18:05

It's just misunderstood

It's not fuzz face, it's not a Maestro, and it's not an Octavia. It's a BOSS dirt pedal that sounds sort of like those family of pedals through an amp (that's the conclusion I've come to - it doesn't emulate the effect, it emulates the tone of those pedals when used through an amp).

Do not acquire a FZ-5 to obtain any of the three classic fuzzes listed above - it's an FZ-5, and it's its own beast. You could build your tone around what the FZ-5 does, but then you wouldn't be building your tone around the FF, Maestro, or Octavia. And like many BOSS digital distortions, its not a great tone to begin with, especially when compared against the pedals it claims to emulate.

One area where I think the FZ-5 is potentially useful is with solid state amps - most fuzz pedals sound pretty dreadful through a JC-120, and worse through smaller solid state amps (trust me..), whereas the FZ-5 is much more plug and play to get something (something...) resembling fuzz out of one.

The PGS video is tempting, but if one video demonstrates that they are masters at getting great tone out of any pedal, and shouldn't be taken at face value, the FZ-5 demo is it.

Here's another FZ-5 demo, for what its worth, that also casts the pedal in good light:

http://www.youtube.com/v/YgkyftWaOtA

That guy has a soft spot for the FZ-5 because he got it at a cool guitar shop on his honeymoon - similarly, I have a soft spot for the FZ-5 because when I was just starting to get into pedals, it was the pedal that let me see what fuzz was all about (for a beginner to get three fuzz effects in one package, it's a useful tool), and decide that yes, fuzz was the kind of distortion I was after, and build out the collection from there with classic pedals that do the effect the classic way.

I'm convinced that in todays music environment, someone is going to use a FZ-5 as a lo-fi, scratchy, glitchy, post-modern digital fuzz in a grunge revival movement spawned out of depths of some condemned backwater village, and the FZ-5 will emerge as "the sound" in its own right, and then we can stop bagging on it for what it can never be (which is a faithful reproduction of something we already have). All we need is the next Jack White, Mudhoney, or Trent Reznor to give the pedal a chance to be itself.

-Scott

sclitheroe

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **Laurie** » 14 Jun 2013, 18:19

Some good points, very well presented. I still reckon it sounds like crap

Laurie

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **sclitheroe** » 14 Jun 2013, 18:35

Yes, it does! And that's why I predict it'll one day be worth something - you'd be hard pressed to find a nicer looking, better built box of uh..that tone, than the Boss FZ-5. One day, one day it will rise up and conquer all. Probably right after the last tube burns out, but it's coming I tell you.

20 years hence, we'll be complaining that our FZ-5r (reissue) doesn't sound the same, since it's MDP emulating COSM, and scrounging for old FZ-5's at garage sales.

And with that, I have to get going - my morning pass from the institution is expiring and I don't want to miss lunch.

sclitheroe

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **Disco Stu** » 18 Jun 2013, 04:32

Owned a very nice-looking specimen for a little while a fortnight or two ago.

Purchased it in a lot of pedals from a local on Craiglist.

Really could not squeeze any decent sounds out of it, at least none that appealed to me. We parted with no regrets. The fellow who ebaned it was happy to acquire it.

Disco Stu

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 19 Jun 2013, 14:21

For heavily layered - reverb soaked, fuzz noise it`ll be fine. May also benefit from stacking. Not a peach but (almost) all pedals have their uses. Glasvegas guitarist has a racks worth of gear for a big washy noise, FZ-5 present. Still if it was me...I`d drop a cheap fuzz face kit inside and surprise everybody

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **sclitheroe** » 19 Jun 2013, 15:59

What specific beefs do people have with the FZ-5?

The ones that I can come up with are:
1. It doesn't clean up like a good fuzz should (although arguably lots of good fuzzes don't - cf. the Big Muff)
2. It's a bit flat sounding harmonically (I think that what I'm describing) compared to a real Fuzz Face - I think you can hear that in the PGS demo for example.

When people bag on the FZ-5, are they generally saying "it's not as good as fuzz X/Y/Z", or are they saying it's a bad fuzz period?

-Scott

sclitheroe

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **Laurie** » 19 Jun 2013, 17:52

There is something about the "tonality". Seems to be just a poor spectrum for dirt or something.

Laurie

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **visserman** » 30 Jun 2013, 14:22

Hello Scott, a bit late in this thread.
Thanks for the video, I love the video, the intro, the playing, how it is done, heh the guy is Dutch, can't knock a fellow Dutchman.

Laurie, I thought you use to like the FZ-5. When Goran posted his first comments on this pedal a few years ago you also mentioned it was ok, just do not expect the real thing. I guess, since you have acquired more vintage fuzzes you can't help feeling the Boss one is not even near.

I like what I hear, but it is also about the video: Playing single notes over chords to give you a song idea.
Can't help feeling what I hear is so close to the FZ-2 minus the Octavia sound.

I do like how Jan Jaap (the guy of the video) puts the FZ-5 into its place in history, with giving you the overview of sounds of various fuzzes used over the years.
Yeah, the FZ-5 is probably at its best for lo-fi ideas.

visserman

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 23 Mar 2014, 13:29

I`m sat here, white noise in my headphones/ears - a used but mint (haha - its a sign!) FZ-5 at my feet along with its all-analog predecessor the FZ-3.

Had spare floaty cash from a trade almost in my pocket today and saw the FZ-5 and thought, well for whats its worth it can join the FZ-2 and the FZ-3 on the shelf in FBF BOSS homage land. In situ plugged into a little 15w Marshall solid state amp and sat it alongside a Roger Mayer Classic Fuzz (at a more pricey $128) . A/B'd them for a good half hour or so. Loved the general tone of the RMCF but it was a bit shrill in a narrow EQ band and limited, maybe if it were cheaper. The FZ-5 - *at the time* - seemed to suit the Marshall well, cover a lot of bases and get the general tone of a FF/M/Octavia down well. So far so good....

Now at home, running through the dummy box load box and blues Jr, hmm now I see it - bit of a rough weird overall tonality, the FF setting now seems like a simple heavy drive, the Octavia a bit lifeless, and the Maestro super shrill...where`s the tone knob!!

so a bit a strange one, no worse than any drive tone ever emitted from a ME-6 and the like, but not super tasty. Certainly needs a bit of wooly Marshall amp drive post to give it more of a "real" tonality.

So far - hmm 6/10?

For another 2p I don`t particulary think either the FZ-3 or FZ-2 sound very natural either!

Oh and I want a RM Classic Fuzz for the collection now , bizarrely it had zero noise when you took your hands away from the strings, whilst the FZ-5 is quite a noise fest with the gain cranked.

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **Pepe** » 23 Mar 2014, 14:17

So it seems like the FZ-5 can sound quite good, depending through which amp you're playing it. And sound terrible with others.

Yeah, the FZ-2 doesn't sound natural at all. But, man, what a lovely sound it has! Fuzz I produces a thick and lively lead sound, while Fuzz II is kind of nasal, but brutal as hell. I love it so much!

Pepe

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 24 Mar 2014, 13:14

Haha - you're right Pepe, FZ-2 is brutal.

Giving the FZ-5 and FZ-3 another whirl just now, bit of reverb on, crank the fuzz level, not bad. I think the FZ-5 will certainly do well Marshall-ed up in gigs, at least it won`t spit out on me.

...however I picked up a new contender today in the BOSS "fuzz" realm, 4 knobs and she`s black!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **Pepe** » 24 Mar 2014, 13:53

HM-2?

Pepe

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 26 Mar 2014, 08:18

BINGO!

Love it, some great tones inside this little gem, and not pricy .

At the moment I seem to have developed a hankering for a sort of fuzz>wah (fuzzwah) fuzz tone (ala my WF-10 Ibanez or other fuzz wahs), the HM-2 nails it. And if you run the standard 9v adaptor (not the ACA) it gets a bit more splatty/loose. What a great pedal, my favorite BOSS "fuzz" so far, finally a fuzz can take residence in a BCB-6!

Curious to try a lower voltage/variable voltage adpator and take it down to 6/7v to extract more fuzz potential, lovely

Any favored settings btw?

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Boss FZ-5, are they really that bad?

by **Pepe** » 26 Mar 2014, 08:24

So you didn't try an HM-2 before? For me it's a 5/5 stars BOSS pedal! 😎

We have already discussed our favourite settings here: Ugly little duck #2 - your favourite HM-2 settings

Pepe