Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **stilwel** » 02 Aug 2013, 17:15

Hey guys! Long-time lurker, first-time poster.

I've been listening to a lot of The Cult lately and started thinking a Boss Flanger might be a nice addition to my pedal rig.

It seems like the BF-3 can cover the same sonic territory as the BF-2 with the added bonus of the Gate mode. I also like that it is a PSA supply pedal.
Is there any benefit of the BF-2 over the bF-3 other than being more "vintage"? Which I don't really care about.

Back in the mid 90's, when I really wanted to be Dave Navarro, I was running an all-Boss board with PSM-5, SD-1, BD-2, PN-2, CE-2, OC-2 and DD-2 into a Marshall full-stack.

Here's my current Boss "collection" so far:
SD-1
FZ-3
SL-20
DD-20

stilwel

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Pepe** » 02 Aug 2013, 18:05

Welcome to the forum!

I prefer the BF-3 over the BF-2! I kept the newer model. It sounds very much the same in Normal mode, but it has overall expanded control range. The stereo features and the gate and momentary modes are great! This is a really cool follow-up model.

Pepe

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **nathanscribe** » 02 Aug 2013, 18:18

Well I'm going to disagree with Pepe here, and say I didn't think the BF-3 I tried sounded as nice as my old MIJ BF-2 But then I like the rougher edge of BBD units, the BF-3 was just too plain and predictable for me. It does have more flexibility though, so it's your choice really.

There are so many flangers to choose from it's ridiculous, and they each have their own colouring. In my own

humble experience, the best choice for any one is whatever fits with their gear and their workflow and their sonic mindset - and that, sadly for the wallet, comes from trying as many as possible... welcome to SBZ Forum

nathanscribe

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Guga Ramone** » 02 Aug 2013, 23:19

I really like to turn the Res and the Manual controls all the way down and keep the other two in the middle to get a chorus sound from the BF-2. Is it possible to get the same sounds from the BF-3?

Guga Ramone

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Dirk** » 03 Aug 2013, 08:44

It probably can. That is such an awesome chorus sound, I use it all the time.
It's also great when run in front of distortion for a classic 80's guitar sound á la Ozzy's "Bark at the Moon", his then guitar player Jake E. Lee also used a BF-2 in a similar fashion.

Dirk

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **WhereBoysFearToTread** » 03 Aug 2013, 12:21

I´ve got the HF-2 and I like it.
very clearsounding.

WhereBoysFearToTread

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Johnnyseven** » 06 Aug 2013, 12:34

The HF-2 is a great pedal, my favourite flanger.

Does anyone know if the BF3 has more clean headroom than the BF2. My BF2 seems to sound a bit muddy when running a dirt pedal into it.

Johnnyseven

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **visserman** » 06 Aug 2013, 13:40

Hmmm, all good points.

Generally speaking BF-2 is dirtier than the the BF-3. I also like BF-3 for Gate and other things. Not used for a while but I like it.
Yes BF-2 sounds fuller, better, it is older so.....Try a Electro Harmonix Flanger.Eh which one? Well a lot of their older pedals do have Flanger, Vibrato and Chorus all wrapped up in them. Okay, enough about older pedals.

And yes, the HF-2 does have the sound of the BF-2 as well. Does it really sound lighter? Mmm a tiny bit, but both of them can sound very similar.

If you only knew the BF-3 I think you would not be disappointed. If you check out a first version BF-2 you will be like "Gosh these things sound full"

Yes there is a difference between which version of the BF-2 you get. The last ones sound very watery, not as full, but maybe good for that light chorus sound?

Overal you cannot go wrong with whatever Boss flanger you will get.
We have much choice today, true, and I still think nothing beats older Electro Harmonix pedals.

visserman

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **stilwel** » 06 Aug 2013, 14:55

Thanks for the input guys.

I'm definitely wanting a Boss Flanger...not interested in EHX, they are too big.

The BF-3 intrigues me due to the gate mode, which I think I would actually use.
Does the Tap Tempo feature only control the gate tempo, or also the flange rate?

thanks again!
J

stilwel

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Dirk** » 06 Aug 2013, 15:04

> *Johnnyseven wrote:*
> *My BF2 seems to sound a bit muddy when running a dirt pedal into it.*

Try it the other way round, with a dirt pedal *after* the flanger.
This "old school" approach brightens things up considerably, it also works well with chorus and phaser pedals, I always use them in front of my distortion.

Dirk

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Pepe** » 06 Aug 2013, 15:31

> *stilwel wrote:*
> *The BF-3 intrigues me due to the gate mode, which I think I would actually use.*
> *Does the Tap Tempo feature only control the gate tempo, or also the flange rate?*

The tap tempo controls the overall flanger speed. In Gate mode it behaves a bit strange, though (at least in my opinion). If you tap in quarters, you don't get quarters. It gives you 32nds. You are forced to tap each time at the beginning of a bar to sync it with your rhythm if you want to have eights. Read it in the manual at page 13: http://media.rolandus.com/manuals/BF-3_OM.pdf. This mode sounds great!

> *Dirk wrote:*
> *Try it the other way round, with a dirt pedal after the flanger.*
> *This "old school" approach brightens things up considerably, it also works well with chorus and phaser pedals, I always use them in front of my distortion.*

Dirk: with bass or with an electric guitar? I can understand why you like it more as a bass player. But with electric guitar I prefer it the other way round.

Pepe

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Dirk** » 07 Aug 2013, 09:02

Oh, no with guitar I meant, but I'd probably also set it up like that if I were to use it with the bass.
That gives a less extreme sound. Same thing with a wah, that sounds completely different for or after dirt.

Dirk

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Pepe** » 07 Aug 2013, 09:14

The problem with wah pedals is that it doesn't sound good with *every* dirt pedal after it. For example most (or maybe just some?) fuzz pedals suck big time if you put a wah in front of them. There are some distortions and overdrives in my collection that work great with wah in front. Some simply don't. The same goes to modulation pedals. I have yet to test everything I've got against each other, but overall I still prefer the "common" way of putting my modulation after dirt.

Pepe

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **stilwel** » 13 Aug 2013, 14:12

Update: I ended up scoring what appears to be an extremely clean BF-3 Flanger for $47 shipped.

It will be here tomorrow...can't wait to try it out!

stilwel

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Pepe** » 13 Aug 2013, 16:28

You won't be disappointed!

And I can only recommend to try out the suggested settings in the user's manual - especially the stereo effects. You'll see that the Gate/Pan mode can work as a mild tremolo with a dummy cable!

Pepe

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **stilwel** » 15 Aug 2013, 02:04

I couldn't help myself....

I ended up scoring a BF-2 for $29 shipped today. So now I can compare them back to back.

stilwel

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **DB Cooper** » 15 Aug 2013, 02:16

Nice score! I have two BF-2 and one BF-3...I would like to cut down to one flanger, but I simply cannot decide between the BF-2 and BF-3...

DB Cooper

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Guga Ramone** » 15 Aug 2013, 02:45

> *stilwel wrote:*
> *I ended up scoring a BF-2 for $29 shipped today. So now I can compare them back to back.*

Please, make a video of this! And also, if it's not asking much, try this setting on both:

Res: Zero
Manual: Zero
Depth: 11 o'clock
Rate: 1 o'clock

This is my favorite setting on a BF-2 to get a chorus sound. I wonder if it will sound as good on a BF-3...

Cheers!

Guga Ramone

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **charmonder** » 15 Aug 2013, 16:39

Interesting, I never knew the "gate" was a tremolo effect, I had assumed it was like a noise gate.

Is the stereo mode like a CE-5 dry/wet output or is more of a DC-2/3 style left/right output?

charmonder

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Laurie** » 15 Aug 2013, 21:55

Internally within the BF-3 (hidden from the user) the circuit has two inputs - Input A and Input B.

The circuit sends the mono input signal to "Input A" and a 180 degree out of phase version of the mono input signal to "Input B".

The digital processing then does it's thing and spits out Output A and Output B as a stereo pair.

What the exact relationship of Output A and Output B is to the incoming mono signal is anybody's guess - it's all controlled by software.

Laurie

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **charmonder** » 15 Aug 2013, 22:37

Good info! Sounds like a lot of fun, I love stereo effects, I'm going to pick one up just to see what it can do. (especially nice if it might be possible to simply spit a mono signal into separate outputs for phase normal and phase reverse!)

charmonder

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **nathanscribe** » 15 Aug 2013, 22:43

> *DB Cooper wrote:*
> *I would like to cut down to on flanger, but I simply cannot decide between the BF-2 and BF-3...*

There's no shame in having two My own pedal cull has left me with the EHX Deluxe Electric Mistress and Solec FL-351 (one of those generic 80s rebrands, but it sounds great). I sometimes toy with the idea of grabbing another BF-2 again, but common sense has so far prevailed. Personally that's my favourite of the Boss flangers, even the nicely flexible RBF-10 microrack - it's got the deepest flange point of all of them, the BF-2b and HF-2 are quite similar in that they both flanger higher up (plus the 2b has a high-pass filter on the flanged signal), and the RBF is higher still but doesn't always sound it because of the multiple ways you can dial in feedback and blend polarity.

nathanscribe

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Pepe** » 16 Aug 2013, 07:34

I think you need to try a BF-1, Nathan! If it sounds only half as good as the flanger circuit in my KORG Trident (synthesizer) with the same (Reticon) chip, then it's absolutely lovely! Ask Mully!

Pepe

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 16 Aug 2013, 10:28

One of the nice parts to this forum is being reminded of a "closet classic" that you have stored away somewhere .

Good to pull off and dust down my early knob style BF-2 and have a play, and whilst I tend towards the more heavily effected thick sounds ala a Leslie I did try and coax that 80s chorus tone as discussed here. Nice, and like all good pedals it inspires a few new licks and riffs

I was also unaware of the differences between a BF-2A and B - is it that noticeable?

Incidentally my inspiration for purchasing a BF-2 was that it was/is a feature of British Indie rock guitarist Graham Coxon`s guitar rig, particularly in his Blur days, alongside the equally fantastic VB-2, both quite prominent. If only I could snag the latter! (Perhaps jamming a cloned VB-2 circuit into an old BF-2 case...hmmmm)

Here`s a nice example of Grahams`s unfussy melodic solo-ing with the BF-2 - at about 1:50..

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xU5D0aTzfio

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **stilwel** » 16 Aug 2013, 14:29

Take a look at the Behringer UV300 which is an inexpensive knockoff of the VB-2.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeEzLHsEp3M

[Image]

stilwel

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **charmonder** » 16 Aug 2013, 16:19

> fuzzbuzzfuzz wrote:
> *Here`s a nice example of Grahams`s unfussy melodic solo-ing with the BF-2 - at about 1:50..*
> *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xU5D0aTzfio*

I really like the flanger tone in the solo! nice warm sounding effect.

charmonder

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **nathanscribe** » 16 Aug 2013, 19:39

> *fuzzbuzzfuzz wrote:*
> *I was also unaware of the differences between a BF-2A and B - is it that noticeable?*

It's not a case of A or B really, just that the BF-2b is aimed at bass players (like all the other brown bass pedals). The differences technically are that the -2b has a shorter basic flange time, which means the frequencies it emphasises are higher up the spectrum than the BF-2, and it sounds 'tighter'. It's very similar to the HF-2 in that regard. The other difference is that its wet signal path includes a high-pass filter to cut off the bottom end of the flange sound before it's mixed back with the dry. I suppose this was meant to keep the bass frequencies clear while the harmonics came through more strongly effected.

I've used all the Boss flangers except the BF-1. They all sound different. Personally I like the BF-2 the most. Between the BF-2, BF-2b, HF-2 and RBF-10, the BF-2 is the one that best nails the 'long clattery drainpipe' sound you get on early Coceatu Twins, Cure, etc - it goes the deepest of all those. If you want tighter, higher flange, try the -2b for something slightly subtler and the HF-2 for something slightly more prominent. If you want something really versatile, try the RBF-10 microrack. It covers more ground than the -2b and HF, with a similar basic tone but with broader possibilities and an even tighter, higher sweep available.

nathanscribe

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Monotremata** » 23 Aug 2013, 09:06

> *Dirk wrote:*
> *Try it the other way round, with a dirt pedal after the flanger.*
> *This "old school" approach brightens things up considerably, it also works well with chorus and phaser pedals, I always use them in front of my distortion.*

What he said. I learned here a couple months back when I got my MIJ BF-2 that you really cant hit it with too hot of a signal or it distorts the BBD in a nasty way.
The GFS hot rail clone in my Tele was way too hot (~15k) and would make it crunch everytime I played it. Turn on the HM-2 that was in front of it and the flanger was totally worthless heh. I moved the BF-2 in front of the dirt and it helped a little but it wasnt until I got rid of the humbucker Tele and went to a Classic 60s Tele (with a 'vintage' 60s single coil) before I could play it without distorting it.

Ive never heard a BF-3 that I was aware of, but if youre looking for that She Sells Sanctuary type of watery chorus, the BF-2 is what you need to get. I had been going through chorus pedals for awhile and couldnt get it right. My jaw dropped when I plugged in my BF-2 for the first time and I went 'THERE IT IS!!!'..

Monotremata

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **stilwel** » 23 Aug 2013, 14:30

Yep, that is exactly the sound I am going for.

Thanks for the tips.

My BF2 was delayed in shipment. Should be here today.

stilwel

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **BearBoy** » 23 Aug 2013, 19:24

> *nathanscribe wrote:*
> *It's not a case of A or B really, just that the BF-2b is aimed at bass players (like all the other brown bass pedals). The differences technically are that the -2b has a shorter basic flange time, which means the frequencies it emphasises are higher up the spectrum than the BF-2, and it sounds 'tighter'. It's very similar to the HF-2 in that regard. The other difference is that its wet signal path includes a high-pass filter to cut off the bottom end of the flange sound before it's mixed back with the dry. I suppose this was meant to keep the bass frequencies clear while the harmonics came through more strongly effected.*

Does anyone know if the BF-3 does something similar if you use the bass input?

BearBoy

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **stilwel** » 26 Aug 2013, 20:55

My BF-2 finally arrived today...long overdue. I won't get a chance to compare it vs. the BF-3 until this weekend.

stilwel

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Dirk** » 27 Aug 2013, 16:45

Congrats, those are great pedals.

Dirk

Re: Boss Flangers: BF-2 vs. BF-3

by **Buzzard** » 08 Sep 2013, 19:30

The BF-3 has SO MANY interesting sounds, however, I consider it more of a fun toy than a musical instrument. The STEREO outputs are really cool though, if you need stereo, or play bass, this is the one to get.

The BF-2 has the classical "jet flanging" sound that I love.

For even heavier Classical flanging use the RBF-10

My absolute favorite is the HF-2

Buzzard