Tremolo Shootout fun.

by fuzzbuzzfuzz » 28 Oct 2016, 02:04

So in the past few weeks I've been experimenting with expanding my pedal board (mini) with some extra modulation and sound effect options - possibly to mount on a 2nd optional board with the second to form a "V" formation at my feet. This has meant some evaluations of particular effects. First up was Tremolo. Always been a big fan of a deep pulsing, Creedence-esque trem up to a "How soon is now" Smiths vibe.

The contenders from the collection

- BOSS TR-2
- BOSS PN-2
- Colorsound Tremolo
- Danelectro Tuna Melt
- Voodoo Labs Tremolo
- Jim Dunlop TVP-1 (Treadle type)
- Unknown brand - pos EHX Pulsar original modded?
- Malekko Omicron Series Tremolo
- Guyatone FLIP Tube Tremolo

Phew....quite a range!

It became quickly apparent that there's essentially 2 main criteria/requirements, the Practical and the Tone.

Practical - no volume drop / LED on/off/ LED pulse light / small(ish) footprint / light weight /solid build / true bypass / psu requirements

Tone - a deep pulse/musical throb / hard and soft adjustable / limited loss of high end at extreme settings.

and the winner is.....<drumroll>...the PN-2!

(at least so far!). It simply has more pluses than negatives compared to the pack as far as I could hear, great pulse / retains a sparkle at strong depth settings / rate light flashes clearly, very solid build, workable footprint size, and is the only stereo in and out pedal here which may prove very handy.

In terms of overall tone its just under the Colorsound and TVP-1 which are beautifully pulsey and muscial, and the PN-2 is about level with the 2nd place overall contender the Voodoo Labs sound wise. That has an authentic vintage pulse, control over the shape/volume, but lacks the rate LED, stereo jacks, and has a slight low end loss at high settings. The FLIP is very clear (at 12v) but somehow lacks that musical intense throb that I like. A very strong box though. The only demerits of the PN-2 are the lack of true bypass (but the buffer might be very beneficial given how may TB pedals I have in line), and the rate sweet spot is very concentrated in the last third of the dial.

I`m also considering the madness of using two PN-2`s

What a great pedal

What`s everyone else experience of Trems? Any favorites? I have to admit that the trusty TR-2 does a pretty sterling job especially when paired with reverb.

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **charmonder** » 28 Oct 2016, 02:36

yeah the PN-2 rules! it is not tubey not vintagey, it is just plain triangle and plain square wave tremolo rate and depth so simple I wonder why more brands can't deliver a similar product. I like the TR-2 as well but the PN-2 gives you both the chop as well as vibe

> *the rate sweet spot is very concentrated in the last third of the dial.*

yeah the sweep of the rate knob only makes any sense if you use it in triangle panning mode with wide amps.

charmonder

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 29 Oct 2016, 04:26

It also has that instant 90s indie sound

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **Mark123** » 29 Oct 2016, 10:59

Nice review. I am very happy with my TR-2 with monte allums mod.

adjustable volume is perfect. And very silent. Does everything I want but I like gentle tremolo.
Had the PN-2 very nice as well, in stereo especially. I found it a bit noisy.
Recently bought the t-rex tremolo. Sounds very good, especially in "vibrato" mode, I guess that refers to a fender type tremolo, but it suffers from volume drop even through it has a level knob and is supposed to boost volume. Well it does but not enough. Strange. Sell soon.
Had an Exar tremolo as well, buy that if you like wicked pulsating trem! Not for me.

Mark123

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 31 Oct 2016, 02:27

Ah yes. The TR-2 is a nice unit. It was my first "upgrade" after the Tuna Melt (fiddly on off/toeing/bad buffer) and I remember getting it well. Through a Blues Jr with reverb it was bliss. I think mine was a later issue as it didn't suffer so much with volume drop off. What does the Monte Allums mod do? Is it simply volume correction.

As per the shoot out I found Trems in particular easier to narrow down.

The Colorsound, and "no brand" are both strong throbby pulse bliss but have significant drop-out, might be nice for clean parts where you can cut vol/gain and add trem but not overall that practical.

I love the pulse when it seems to modulate in a pattern, almost a melody or step filter like. The cheaper or "standard" trems and it seems optical are more to my mind an on/off type basic sound, the Tuna Melt, the Malekko, The Mooer, the Hotone and the TR-2.

I havn`t tried the TREX, curious!

Another almost buy was the Catlinbread sophomore, the earlier version in the nano type case. Great chops and wave forms. I also would have bought a Lovepedal over the Malekko for a mini if the former wasn't so expensive. That had the wave form control on top.

Anyway, all good!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **sclitheroe** » 31 Oct 2016, 18:50

I love me some tremolo!

I currently have three trem pedals:
- TR-2
- Catalinbread Valcoder (the current 4 knob version)
- Catalinbread Antichthon (fuzz trem)

The Antichthon is just fun - go and see what it does on Youtube, but for me, what I love the best about it is how the trem ducks out when the guitar's output is high, and comes in as the notes decay. You can have a note or chord dissolve into throbby trem, or with the rate set high, it sounds like the note is falling apart into oblivion. It's also generally a pretty great sounding dirt pedal, which is a huge upside. And you can make dolphin or bird noises if that is your thing.

The Valcoder sounds _great_ - I don't know if its because its all discrete, and not using IC's for timing or voltage swing, but its got the "musical" swing going to its tremolo, that I think is what FuzzBuzzFuzz is referring to. It feels, and sounds as a chord fades out, like its breathing - it's very subtle, but the feel is wonderful. I guess its just the slightest bit imprecise, and the timing of the trem changes subtly based on the input signal - that's my guess why it feels that way.

The TR-2, on the other hand, is a precision trem. It goes at the rate and depth and waveform you set it at, without fail.

Here's my dilemma:

I love the Valcoder, it's a real pleasure to play, but it's essentially a hard chop trem, and the depth control only goes so far down before it drops out completely (at which point the pedal is a Valco-voiced extremely mild overdrive), so for some trem use, it's not that handy. The TR-2, on the other hand, can be set very, very subtle, to give that tiny bit of "movement" which can sound nice without dominating the presentation of the notes.

Would it be wrong to have essentially three trems on my pedalboard? One is a dirt pedal, so I can ignore that one, but I'm starting to think the Valcoder and TR-2 might be able to co-exist without it seeming ridiculous, considering they do opposite ends of the spectrum (soft and shallow, vs. choppy and in your face) well.

sclitheroe

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **Mark123** » 31 Oct 2016, 22:56

@fuzzbuzz The Monte Allums modded TR-2 has an added volume knob which works great. Also supposed to be less noisy. My stock version wasn't noisy but this one certainly is dead silent.

Mark123

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 01 Nov 2016, 06:50

> *sclitheroe wrote:*
> *I love me some tremolo!*
>
> *I currently have three trem pedals:*
> *- TR-2*
> *- Catalinbread Valcoder (the current 4 knob version)*
> *- Catalinbread Antichthon (fuzz trem)*
>
> *The Antichthon is just fun - go and see what it does on Youtube, but for me, what I love the best about it is how the trem ducks out when the guitar's output is high, and comes in as the notes decay. You can have a note or chord dissolve into throbby trem, or with the rate set high, it sounds like the note is falling apart into oblivion. It's also generally a pretty great sounding dirt pedal, which is a huge upside. And you can make dolphin or bird noises if that is your thing.*
>
> *The Valcoder sounds _great_ - I don't know if its because its all discrete, and not using IC's for timing or voltage swing, but its got the "musical" swing going to its tremolo, that I think is what FuzzBuzzFuzz is referring to. It feels, and sounds as a chord fades out, like its breathing - it's very subtle, but the feel is wonderful. I guess its just the slightest bit imprecise, and the timing of the trem changes subtly based on the input signal - that's my guess why it feels that way.*
>
> *The TR-2, on the other hand, is a precision trem. It goes at the rate and depth and waveform you set it at, without fail.*
>
> *Here's my dilemma:*
>
> *I love the Valcoder, it's a real pleasure to play, but it's essentially a hard chop trem, and the depth control only goes so far down before it drops out completely (at which point the pedal is a Valco-voiced extremely mild overdrive), so for some trem use, it's not that handy. The TR-2, on the other hand, can be set very, very subtle, to give that tiny bit of "movement" which can sound nice without dominating the presentation of the notes.*
>
> *Would it be wrong to have essentially three trems on my pedalboard? One is a dirt pedal, so I can ignore that one , but I'm starting to think the Valcoder and TR-2 might be able to co-exist without it seeming ridiculous, considering they do opposite ends of the spectrum (soft and shallow, vs. choppy and in your face) well.*

Ah - seems we are very much on the same page Trem wise!!

Indeed that musical variable pulse-y space-y thing is the bees knees, blippy sonic goodness

And no you`re not mad. I had the same conundrum. Space wise it was the Malekko, a simple nice/pleasent TR-2 type trem. Perfect? No - great for always on background shimmer but frankly a bit unadventurous, I wanted that hard cut and throb sometimes....so...

I think two is the way to go, particularly if its unlikely you`d adjust one pedal midway in the dark on stage just to achieve two sounds right?

I WILL check out those two you mentioned. Catlinbread stuff is very solid and unique to boot.

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 01 Nov 2016, 06:52

oh and "before dirt"/"after dirt"? I`m tempted by two phasers for that very reason, for a "cake and eat it" scenario!! Lol

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **sclitheroe** » 01 Nov 2016, 15:24

It's not just that I could adjust the pedal for the two different extremes of trem goodness - it's that the Valcoder literally can't go that shallow/gentle. It's modelled after old Valco amps, and I guess they didn't either.

It's very good at what it does though!

sclitheroe

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 04 Nov 2016, 07:23

Ah right, yes.

I suppose a two switch "all rounder" would be the order of the day, but that's not so common. A clever DIY build would be two in the same box, say a choppy fast and a warm subtle slow.

I just saw the earlier version of the Dunlop two switch Trem/pan cheap, so close to pulling that trigger, even if just to test. 😀

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **dogload** » 07 Nov 2016, 15:46

I have to agree that the PN-2 is the best tremolo pedal I have tried. It isn't the most versatile and I do wish it would go just a *little* faster at the top, but nothing does that choppy on-off-on-off as well as it does.

When I first got one when they came out in the early 90's, there wasn't really any other available pedal, as far as I was aware, and I tried every music shop in my home town before I hit London, and then I still had to try virtually every shop that I knew to get one. So I suppose it is to me the definitive tremolo sound, in the same way that I only like the Ibanez BC-9 chorus and the MXR Phase 100 is my benchmark phaser.

I sold my original PN-2s about 8 years ago when I wasn't playing live and almost immediately afterwards joined a band! So I had to spend a lot of time (and lots of money!) trying to get the trem sound I wanted without having to resort to buying a ridiculously pricey PN-2.

Eventually I found a *very* cheap (35 quid!), boxed, almost new PN-2 and I could relax. I've since snapped up a couple more as 'spares'.

As far as placement goes, I like mine in a loop on an LS-2 running in parallel with the sound from my dirt, pich-shifting and wah, and coming after EH Superego > Fender Phaser > PN-2 > Nux Modcore (for vibe and Leslie) > Mooer Eleclady (Electric Mistress flanger clone) > EH Stereo Memory Man w/ Hazarai. These then go into a Boss DD-6 for loops, a Strymon El Capistan and Boss FRV-1.

The above setup gives great results whilst not losing the actual guitar sound. TIP: If you want a mad psychedelic noise, a slow deep phase from the Fender into a moderate speed, full-depth square-wave trem on the PN-2 into a delay can induce dark visions!

dogload

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **charmonder** » 07 Nov 2016, 19:25

> *dogload wrote:*
> *TIP: If you want a mad psychedelic noise, a slow deep phase from the Fender into a moderate speed, full-depth square-wave trem on the PN-2 into a delay can induce dark visions!*

Agreed! I don't know that particular phaser but the combination in general, is like the sonic equivalent of closing your eyes in front of a strobe light.

charmonder

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **Pepe** » 08 Nov 2016, 01:44

Anyone ever checked out the police siren sounds the PN-2 is capable to produce if you connect one of the outputs with the other channel's input? Sounds funny!

Pepe

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 08 Nov 2016, 02:13

I hadn`t but I will now!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 08 Nov 2016, 02:15

> *dogload wrote:*
> *I have to agree that the PN-2 is the best tremolo pedal I have tried. It isn't the most versatile and I do wish it would go just a* little *faster at the top, but nothing does that choppy on-off-on-off as well as it does.*
>
> *When I first got one when they came out in the early 90's, there wasn't really any other available pedal, as far as I was aware, and I tried every music shop in my home town before I hit London, and then I still had to try virtually every shop that I knew to get one. So I suppose it is to me the definitive tremolo sound, in the same way that I only like the Ibanez BC-9 chorus and the MXR Phase 100 is my benchmark phaser.*
>
> *I sold my original PN-2s about 8 years ago when I wasn't playing live and almost immediately afterwards joined a band! So I had to spend a lot of time (and lots of money!) trying to get the trem sound I wanted without having to resort to buying a ridiculously pricey PN-2.*
>
> *Eventually I found a* very *cheap (35 quid!), boxed, almost new PN-2 and I could relax. I've since snapped up a couple more as 'spares'.*
>
> *As far as placement goes, I like mine in a loop on an LS-2 running in parallel with the sound from my dirt, pich-shifting and wah, and coming after EH Superego > Fender Phaser > PN-2 > Nux Modcore (for vibe and Leslie) > Mooer Eleclady (Electric Mistress flanger clone) > EH Stereo Memory Man w/ Hazarai. These then go into a Boss DD-6 for loops, a Strymon El Capistan and Boss FRV-1.*
>
> *The above setup gives great results whilst not losing the actual guitar sound. TIP: If you want a mad psychedelic noise, a slow deep phase from the Fender into a moderate speed, full-depth square-wave trem on the PN-2 into a delay can induce dark visions!*

Ah yes a loop for the FX, I was pondering exactly that to maintain a nice overdriven tone. Good thinking. I think I may need a diagram to work out your loops though, sounds cool nethertheless!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **Franzoni** » 08 Nov 2016, 12:42

Used the amp tremolo in my Musicman amp for years...the effect is pretty trippy and a lot more choppy/in your face compared to many pedals or the likes of Fender and and some of the British amp makers but you can get an almost univibe thing going on it you mess around with the rate and depth settings.....some of the later RD models had a built in 'Phasor' which was also a great effect you can hear it on some of the older 70's and 80's country tunes..... i'm also a big fan of players like John Fogerty and the older sounds of tremolo and rotary speakers but amps like most old Marshalls and many modern channel switching amps like my little Laney combo don't have tremolo built in anymore so i bought a TR-2 which i used for a long time...

There days i use the one in the GT-8 for the tremolo effect and other sounds and the Yamaha magicstomp on my smaller pedalboard which is also very usable for tremolo along with my RT-20 for leslie..... i've also found the Tremolo effects in the line 6 XT pro that i have to be very good also....

Franzoni

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 09 Nov 2016, 05:12

Tremolo benchmarks?

John Fogerty - YES!
Bo Diddley
Johnny Greenwood

and...

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **Franzoni** » 09 Nov 2016, 22:32

Johnny Marr

Ry Cooder

James Calvin Wilsey (used to be with Chris Isaak) known more for echo/reverb though but a bit of tremolo now and again...

Franzoni

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **sclitheroe** » 19 Nov 2016, 02:32

Anyone here run trem into their dirt, instead of the more conventional dirt into trem? If so, why? Do you like it?

sclitheroe

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 19 Nov 2016, 05:21

I do...sometimes. I've been playing about recently and trying to decide. I think for the mellow side of things I`d prefer it as per traditional - last. But for a stutter/chop I want my OD tone to remain in tact. If the Trem is last it tends to kill the gain. I think!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **albumgatefold** » 22 Dec 2016, 22:31

Did you ever entertain using the DOD Vibro Thang pedal?
The printed logo Vibrato/Phasor.
It's definitely different. I've used it to get some really cool mellow vibes.
I've got a PN-2 on board as well I was trying to reduce my pedals and just go with the PN-2 only but it cannot replicate the mellow vibe-ness of the Vibro Thang.
Ch-ch-ch-cheers

albumgatefold

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 29 Dec 2016, 08:24

Hey you know I have it sitting on my cupboard top. I loved all the different settings it can do - and I noticed with a tad less voltage it became darker but rather vintage. I must give it another run. My ears are on a rest at the moment but once they're dandy I'll DOD

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **visserman** » 30 Dec 2016, 12:47

Mmm so many posts about the TR2 and PN2, does anyone know this one here?:

http://mirosol.kapsi.fi/wp-content/uplo ... remolo.jpg

They have the vibe of a vintage trem, they actually do sound like one I feel.

So many trems out there and so many can sound so similar. It is like a clean amp sound, yes there is clean, but then there is detail and which amp does have that? Maybe similar with tremolo?

visserman

Re: Tremolo Shootout fun.

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 12 Jan 2017, 07:09

Very cool old school Trem. I think I read that it was rather good, but that`s from memory.

fuzzbuzzfuzz