Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Joske_Turbo** » 28 Mar 2016, 17:54

Hi folks

Currently I play in a frequently gigging band, so I've been thinking about my pedalboard with convenience in mind. Right now I use the amp overdrive of my Blackstar HT 20 with the gain relatively low (9 o clock), a sound I like a lot. The problem is that it's not quite practical, I use a patchbay, multicable and footswitch because most of my pedals go in the fx loop.
So I thought I could look for a good overdrive to replace the amp od. It would be less hassle with only one cable going from board to amp instead of three, and it would open up more pedalboard space. (1 od pedal versus footswitch and patchbay).

So any thoughts on a good low/medium gain overdrive? Doesn't necessarilly have to be Boss.
I tried a Fulltone OCD once and liked it, but a cheaper alternative would be nice.
As far as Boss goes, I think the BD-2, OD-2r or SD-2 would best fill my needs. Any thoughts on those pedals?

Joske_Turbo

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Pepe** » 28 Mar 2016, 18:26

I won't talk about the OD-2R again. It's all over the forum what I think of it.
Maybe you want to try out a ProCo RAT or Turbo RAT? It is able to produce very nice overdriven sounds with low gain settings.

Pepe

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Joske_Turbo** » 28 Mar 2016, 18:36

Thanks for the reply Pepe!
Yes I know you're a big OD-2r fan, I sure want to try one out because of your enthousiasm!
The Rat is a pedal I didn't think of yet, and I have the Rat of my bandmate currently at my home so I'll sure give it a try

Joske_Turbo

Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Mark123** » 29 Mar 2016, 16:23

Rat is great indeed at low gain. Cheap alternative is the Ibanez Fat Cat, one of my favorites. typically 40 eur. Footswitches on the Ibanez pedals are not always reliable, so you'd need to check that if you buy one.
OD-2r is a fine drive as well but to me it's nothing special. Hard to get as well. Just sold mine 2 days ago. OD-2s are all over the place but it has little volume so if you play with gain below 9-10 o'clock or so (cant remember) you don't reach unity volume.
But why not buy an OD-3?; it has lots of volume and if you don't care about vintageness this current Boss OD is probably your best bet. It's an extremely good overdrive that will take you from low to fairly high gain.
It's often viewed as an improved BD-2 that sounds good all through the gain knob (BD-2 is not so great above 12 o'clock). BD-2 is pefect for low gain stuff and very pick sensitive.
My personal favorite is the SD-2 with two drive pedals in one as you know. I find the low gain and the high gain mode very usable. Not everybody likes the low gain by the way. Downside is you would need a footswitch to switch between them. If you dont mind about the high gain i wouldnt bother and just get an OD-3.
.. Just my view of course. Good luck finding the right one.

Mark123

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **zentropa** » 29 Mar 2016, 19:04

It's been a while since I played an OCD but I'm thinking the BD-2 or OD-3 would be the closest.

BD-2's depend heavily upon what type of pickups you use. Works great with single coils or low output alnico II humbuckers but anything hotter will generally force it into "fizz" mode... where it will give a full clip at all times and sounds rather weak IMO.

OD-3's have a lot of boost feel but are eq'd a bit odd and don't really have that hard "mechanical" edge that people often look for from this role (e.g. tubescreamer). They do have good cutting power and loads of headroom. In regards to gain potential I would put this ahead of the BD-2 but below the SD-1.

I'm a big fan of OD-2/OD-2r as well. They really do a plexi tone well. The OD-2 is a bit more articulate than the 2r, but the 2r has nearly twice the volume. The only thing I don't like a lot about these is that they don't really add any "oomph" to the signal but you will get a tonal change.

The SD-1 or OD-1 may also work in this role. They can have some drive bleed issues but are a solid generic-ish overdrive. In the role you are describing you would probably be able to keep the drive set to 1 o'clock or below which would probably minimize the bleed. JRC4558DD OD-1's (the majority of them are this type) will basically sound like an SD-1 without a tone knob. JRC4558D or other op amp OD-1's are closer to a tubescreamer but with asymmetrical clipping.

The SD-2's crunch channel is a bit harsh and you'll lose a lot of EQ flexibility by having to dial the tone way back (e.g. 8-9 o'clock or lower). It is very bitey and has good cutting power but it isn't quite as smooth or warm as most other overdrives. IMO the SD-2's lead channel is its strong point but it has a LOT of gain.

A random oddball suggestion if you happen to have an MD-2 laying around to try it with the drive set to off or almost off (and boost set low). It will have a similar type of pick sensitive breakup to an BD-2 but with a crunchier edge.

zentropa

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Joske_Turbo** » 29 Mar 2016, 19:21

Thanks for the reply's so far!

I only play with single coils so I think the BD-2 and OD-3 will be the ones to try.

Joske_Turbo

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **zentropa** » 29 Mar 2016, 19:51

Another random note but this is just personal preference...

I prefer using BD-2's with solid state preamps, e.g. vintage fender. They give a nice warm break in these situations.
I prefer using OD-3's with tube preamps. The OD-3 (along with OD-1 and SD-1) are sort of "chameleon" overdrives in that they will boost/break but do a good job of blending with the the tube amp's drive.

OD-2's and SD-2's tend to impart more of their own tone onto the amp.

zentropa

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Gasgano** » 29 Mar 2016, 20:36

Nobody cares for a little DN-2?
Its dynamics are wide. I haven't tried it with single coils, but it could be worth a try.

Otherwise BD-2 could be nice as well, and probably more available on the used market.

Gasgano

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Pieraga** » 29 Mar 2016, 21:04

Have you tried TubeScreamer?, 😀

Pieraga

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Pieraga** » 29 Mar 2016, 21:13

> *Gasgano wrote:*
> *Nobody cares for a little DN-2?*
> *Its dynamics are wide. I haven't tried it with single coils, but it could be worth a try.*
>
> *Otherwise BD-2 could be nice as well, and probably more available on the used market.*

I currently have a DN2, I used it for a while but I wasn't getting the organic overdrive that I was looking for, and one thing, I didn't appreciate the dynamic part, cleanup always suits me best, so I switched to TS or SD1, a BD2 would be great,, but that's just me,,

Pieraga

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Pepe** » 30 Mar 2016, 00:20

> *zentropa wrote:*
> *I'm a big fan of OD-2/OD-2r as well. They really do a plexi tone well. The OD-2 is a bit more articulate than the 2r, but the 2r has nearly twice the volume. The only thing I don't like a lot about these is that* ***they don't really add any "oomph" to the signal*** *but you will get a tonal change.*

And that's why I like the OD-2R so much. It doesn't want to mimick a Tube Screamer with its mid hump. And it doesn't add a bass boost. This is perfect for me, because I like running synths through it. And a synth bass that has already enough "oomph" sounds exactly how I want it through the OD-2R: distorted. Simply distorted. 😎

Pepe

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **sclitheroe** » 30 Mar 2016, 02:43

BD-2W ... gets you classic BD-2 tones, plus if you want some (but not all of the overbearing) oomph of the OD-3, flip it to custom mode.

It's a good half-way pedal between the BD-2 and the OD-3 (I cannot get past how much excess bass the OD-3 has, it's gross)

sclitheroe

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 30 Mar 2016, 13:06

What an excellent thread with very interesting info delved into.

I've recently being collecting some classics fur the very same idea - low to mid almost always on gain. So far:

Marshall Guvnor (big box, great EQ, very Marshall, can dial out fizz, yay!)
ProCo RAT LM308 (early USA - nice bite, bluesy at low gain, and crunch)
Klon Klone - push a preamp and it sings in an American bluesy semi compressed vibe)
DS-1 and SD-1 Japan - particular EQs involved but I like both.
Sobbat DB-1 (aka "The Edge" overdrive (or one off) - surprisingly ace, gritty, vintage clang at low gain, almost fuzz at full tilt), bought yesterday so early days yet.

Currently on the board is the Xotic SL drive. It's pretty good especially thick and authentic cranked through a solid state, but a bit fizzy on low gain.

Anyway if recommend to try any of these as they have been bringing a smile to my face over the past few weeks!

On with the thread!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Joske_Turbo** » 30 Mar 2016, 15:19

Thanks everyone, I sure have a lot of testing to do based on your recommendations!

I tested a Rat yesterday and I do like it, but it didn't blow me off my socks instantly. This weekend I can try an OD-3 of a bandmate, I'm curious to compare the two.
I'll let you all know if I ever decide which overdrive to buy

Joske_Turbo

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **The_Doc** » 30 Mar 2016, 16:28

I'd like to second Pepe's views on the OD-2R. It's a very natural sounding overdrive and easy to get some excellent low / medium gain tones out of. It doesn't sound over processed like some other overdrives.

The_Doc

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **zentropa** » 30 Mar 2016, 23:39

OD-2/2r's in general don't have a lot of compression. That can be both good or bad depending upon what you are going for (as is its lack of boost). The Turbo mode will take it into a DS-1ish level of gain, but the standard 2's volume issue makes it unusable if you are using medium to hot buckers (should be ok with single coils though). The 2R has plenty of headroom.

I would also second FBF's mention of the DS-1. If you get an ACA original chipset version they too can function as a low gain overdrive and are fairly articulate if you go with an MIJ model (the MIT ACA's have more dirt but less single note definition, although you can often get them for like $25).

zentropa

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Mark123** » 31 Mar 2016, 12:00

I personally prefer overdrives that don't alter the tone of the guitar/amp too much, and never have volume problems since i prefer unity volume on myy ss-amps. Stopped using the OD-3 because it has so much volume that the knob has to be dialled all the way back.

Currently on the board for low gain: Timmy overdive. Best drive in the world imo. And a bonus: all drive and dist pedals going into it sound fuller. Bit pricy but i got it cheap in a trade.
OCD for medium to high gain. It's extremely good.
Everything else on the board is Boss. I just think that for drive pedals there are better options.

Mark123

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Joske_Turbo** » 04 Apr 2016, 18:38

Okay I went to the music store today with a friend who needed some gear, and I couldn't resist to try out some pedals.
I tried the BD-2 and also the EHX East River Drive, which was so cheap I simply had to.
I didn't really like the BD-2, it's a good pedal but not the sound that I was looking for.
The East River Drive is essentially a Tube Screamer clone, and it's been a long time I tested a TS or something alike.
And I did like it very much, so I brought the EHX home for only €50 new!

Joske_Turbo

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **tunghaichuan** » 04 Apr 2016, 19:41

FWIW, I just scored a mint, boxed DS-1X from Guitar Center in the US. I was just playing through it this morning.

The surprising thing to me is that I actually liked the gain at about 9 o'clock. All the way up gives a searing distortion sound, but I think it actually sounds better with the gain backed off quite a bit. I usually like the gain all the way up. Since I use single coils, maxed out gain gives the guitar an extra kick.

tunghaichuan

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Mark123** » 04 Apr 2016, 20:24

> *Joske_Turbo wrote:*
> *Okay I went to the music store today with a friend who needed some gear, and I couldn't resist to try out some pedals.*
> *I tried the BD-2 and also the EHX East River Drive, which was so cheap I simply had to.*
> *I didn't really like the BD-2, it's a good pedal but not the sound that I was looking for.*
> *The East River Drive is essentially a Tube Screamer clone, and it's been a long time I tested a TS or something alike.*
> *And I did like it very much, so I brought the EHX home for only €50 new!*

Great!
BD-2 too "transparent"? You prefer the midhump of a TS I guess.
Also interested to hear what you thought of the OD-3.

Mark123

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Joske_Turbo** » 04 Apr 2016, 21:58

I thought the BD-2 sounded a little muddier/has less clarity in comparison with the East River Drive.
I haven't tested the OD-3 so far but I propably will soon, I'll let you know what I think about it!

Joske_Turbo

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **tunghaichuan** » 05 Apr 2016, 00:14

I like the OD-3 over the BD-2 for that very reason. I think the BD-2 is best as a clean boost.

tunghaichuan

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Starscream** » 08 May 2016, 19:04

Blues Driver? Sounds like right up your alley.

Starscream

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **visserman** » 12 May 2016, 10:58

So many good posts and views about the OD-3 and opinions about the BD-2.

I think OD-3 can be a bit like Tubescreamer: You step on it and the sound it there without too much tweaking. BD-2 may need a bit more attention, and also ---one day you really like it, next day you tweak and tweak and brightness is all you seem to find.....

Midhump from Tubescreamers?: Yes when you stop yourself and wonder what sound this is, but I also love the fact

you just kick it in and you get a boost and it sounds great, almost any time through whatever amp you use.

SD-2 is not really a moderate overdrive I think, also do not like the light crunch (used to love it until I found better pedals which can do similar sound---Dirty Dog!!!!) needs tweaking to get the right sound.

visserman

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Pepe** » 12 May 2016, 11:19

> *visserman wrote:*
> *used to love it until I found better pedals which can do similar sound---Dirty Dog!!!!*

Peavey Dirty Dog? I really like this one, too!

Pepe

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Joske_Turbo** » 12 May 2016, 11:21

I eventually ended up with an OD-3 on my board, it sounded way better than the East River Drive and the BD-2 for what I want to use it.

Joske_Turbo

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Mark123** » 12 May 2016, 15:11

Good to hear
Great pedal! As they say on TPDRI: if it weren't a Boss pedal and yellow and produced by a "boutique" maker it would go for boutique prices

Mark123

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **visserman** » 12 May 2016, 17:31

> *Pepe wrote:*
> *Peavey Dirty Dog? I really like this one, too!*

Pepe just curious about your views about OD-2: Do you know the OD-1? From what you mentioned before it seems that OD-1 does similar thing.

I do not know the OD-2, my feeling is both versions will be similar and it will be almost like the OD-1 tonewise with the addition of a tone control.

The Dirty Dog is a misunderstood pedal and not all that common and popular: Can do many things and does it well I feel. It can even give you a Fuzzface sound when you crank all the controls of the lead channel.

I know you did get a Dirty Dog through the pedal exchange. Did yours have a whistle tone as well?

visserman

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Mark123** » 12 May 2016, 21:25

SD-1 is generally seen as an OD-1 with tone control. OD-2 is a different beast. Has its own sound. I think the circuit is very different ..
Read 11gauges post in this thread.. http://www.tdpri.com/threads/boss-od-2- ... or.402101/

I like all of them, but the OD-1 in particular

Mark123

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **Pepe** » 12 May 2016, 22:33

> *visserman wrote:*
> *Pepe just curious about your views about OD-2: Do you know the OD-1? From what you mentioned before it seems that OD-1 does similar thing.*

I haven't had an OD-1 in all these years. I played one for a few minutes at Arpeggiator's home, but that's years ago, so I cannot really tell anything about similarities. The BOSS Book says that the Turbo Off channel of the OD-2(R) does overall have the same sound as the OD-1, though.

> *visserman wrote:*
> *The Dirty Dog is a misunderstood pedal and not all that common and popular: Can do many things and does it well I feel. It can even give you a Fuzzface sound when you crank all the controls of the lead channel.*
>
> *I know you did get a Dirty Dog through the pedal exchange. Did yours have a whistle tone as well?*

A friend of mine (a very picky guitarist) didn't like the Dirty Dog. But I do. It is indeed pretty versatile and I have to try out your Fuzzface sound recommendation. My pedal doesn't have a whistle tone as far as I know. I haven't used it for a few months. So many pedals, so little time ...

Pepe

Re: Good low/medium gain Overdrive

by **visserman** » 17 May 2016, 10:51

> *Mark123 wrote:*
> *SD-1 is generally seen as an OD-1 with tone control. OD-2 is a different beast. Has its own sound. I think the circuit is very different ..*
> *Read 11gauges post in this thread.. http://www.tdpri.com/threads/boss-od-2- ... or.402101/*
>
> *I like all of them, but the OD-1 in particular*

Thanks for the link, however none of these people tell me anything about the sound of the OD2, What does it sound like? What kind of amp etc.? Lots of technical information about what is inside the pedal but nothing about the sound.

Some other critical issues with that link: SD-1 is not a OD-1 with a tone control: SD-1 is a Marshall JCM 800, and the tone control does not work as a trad. tone control: Open it full and it adds as a boost. The tone control can add a few more colours to the basic sound of the SD-1. To me the pedal has just one sound and the tonecontrol can modify this a little but not like how you would expect a tonecontrol to work.

The OD-1 is not a TubeScreamer, it is a Marshall JMP sound. Tube Screamer is general, not specific, OD-1 is more specific in its colour of sound

So now the OD-2, is there anyone who can talk about this one tone wise? According to that thread It seems that the turbo sound is tinny, and the pedal does not have much gain. Sounds like a OD-1 then eh? with just a few added features.
Okay will open up a dedicated OD-2 thread see if we get anything more there.
Cheers.

visserman