BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **The_Doc** » 27 Apr 2016, 16:55

Workbench set up for some testing and comparisons

The_Doc

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Pepe** » 27 Apr 2016, 17:35

Great! Is the BC-1X's LED VU meter annoying while playing?

Pepe

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **The_Doc** » 27 Apr 2016, 18:07

I noticed it Pepe but it's no worse than the led flashing with tempo on a delay. Didn't really bother me today.

The_Doc

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **charmonder** » 27 Apr 2016, 18:11

Alright! this is the type of thread I like to see

charmonder

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Ptak** » 28 Apr 2016, 00:27

Thumbs up for this thread! Really interested to see how this turns out.

Ptak

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **The_Doc** » 28 Apr 2016, 10:16

With this test, I tried to keep it simple by setting each pedal up so that it sounded good to me. I haven't detailed any control settings and have focussed on what I was hearing, rather than doing an analysis of how the pedal's controls work.

The setup was straightforward – an Eric Johnson signature strat into the pedals and a clean amp.

I'll start with some general comments about my first impressions of using the BC-1X with a guitar rather than a bass. This is a nice, tight and warm compressor that influences the tone right across the frequency spectrum. I didn't sense huge amounts of sustain though, apart from at the lower frequencies. The led meter was showing that processing was going on across all the strings and up and down the full length of the neck. The higher up the neck I went the less pronounced the compression effect was. Down in the lower registers, as expected, the compression is quite harsh but not unpleasant and resulted in a fattening and noticeable tightening of the tone. At no point during the test did I feel compelled to switch off the BC-1X because it sounded bad with 6 strings.

BC-1X and the CS-1

I think the CS-1 is the king of the tone squash. There is nothing like it and it will squeeze the life out of your tone if you let it. It has its uses though and it does have a warmth to it – as long as you don't touch the treble switch which will thin your tone out dramatically. The BC-1X is nothing like the CS-1. Despite the emphasis on the lower frequencies it does add warmth and body without squashing the tone to death.

BC-1X and the CS-2

To me, the CS-2 is the most musical of the Boss compressors and gets closest to my favourite MXR Dynacomp. It coloured my tone but in a good way – crisp, with plenty of sustain and lots of character. But, I had to remember to turn the 'Level' up as it's a shy little beast! I think the BC-1X has some of the CS-2 tone DNA as it provides lots of that similar warm character at lower frequencies and a light sprinkling of magic compression across the whole tone. Running the two together has convinced me that the estranged love child of a CS-2 and a BC-1X would most definitely make me smile.

BC-1X and the CS-3

The CS-3 is a modern, workmanlike, clinical and rather boring compressor to my ears. It does the job and it does it well but it doesn't make me look forward to stomping on it. It does lack the character of a CS-2 but I was in for a bit of a surprise. In combination with the BC-1X, I noticed that the compression warmed up and became much more interesting. The CS-3 was before the BC-1X in the chain and perhaps the latter was providing the fattening and warmth I was hearing. It sounded pretty good and the extra controls on both pedals helped me to refine the compression until I was happy with it. Yep – this is a nice little combo too.

So, where did I end up?

Just connecting the BC-1X to the strat, with nothing else, didn't do much for me. Not unpleasant but nothing special.

I would never pair it up with a CS-1 because that is such a tone crusher and nothing gets through it.

Add a CS-2 or a CS-3 though and good things happen. With careful tweaking of the controls on both pedals, I managed to get a compression that I was very happy with and wanted to use. My preference is the BC-1X with the CS-2 simply because I have a soft spot for the CS-2 but I think the CS-3 would not be a bad option either.

Playing live I wouldn't mess around with two compressors like this as no one out there would notice any difference from my usual CS-2 but, as an interesting test, it was fun. In the studio too I will most likely use rack units or software and not use the pedals but it won't be half as much fun as this.

As I expected, I didn't discover that the BC-1X would be a substitute for any of the dedicated guitar comps. What I didn't anticipate though was how it could be used to enhance the CS-2 and CS-3 to add a bit of extra tonal warmth and character.

I really enjoyed doing this and I hope you enjoy reading it too.

The_Doc

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Pepe** » 28 Apr 2016, 10:58

Awesome review!

Pepe

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Mark123** » 28 Apr 2016, 15:51

Excellent DOC. I'll try stacked compressors soon.
So the CS-2 is the go-to compressor for you. I used it for a long time, then used the CS-1 for a while (mildly) and am now using the CS-3. For the exact reason you mentioned: does what i should do and doesn't colour the tone. Must confess though that i am expecting a T-Rex compnova today. Stacking material!

Mark123

BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Mark123** » 28 Apr 2016, 15:57

Also curious to see/read favorite settings of forum members. Here's mine on a black label MIT CS-3.

I own a newer version MIT as well, not sure about the label, and i have to dial in more highs on that one.

And as you can see I use compression after OD. Like it a lot

Mark123

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Pepe** » 28 Apr 2016, 15:59

That's pretty much the setting that I liked as well. I couldn't bond with any compressor so far, though, only with limiters. I don't want to fatten my sound, just to calm it a bit.

Pepe

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **The_Doc** » 28 Apr 2016, 16:09

Thanks for your kind comments

It was a real pleasure.

I think the settings on the CS-3 to start with at least we're all at 12 noon. The tweaking was mainly with the tone control.

The_Doc

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Laurie** » 28 Apr 2016, 16:52

What CS-3 is it? Does it have the dBx chip, or the THAT chip?

Laurie

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Dirk** » 28 Apr 2016, 18:19

Good review Doc.

Given the fact that I like my MXR bass comp so much, I won't jump on it, but it seems a really decent piece of kit comparable to the M87.
I think Boss really upped the ante on this long overdue product.

Mark123, those are pretty much the settings I used too; low sustain and maxed attack.
I remember the CS-2 being almost identical but darker and more musical.

Dirk

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **The_Doc** » 28 Apr 2016, 19:24

> *Laurie wrote:*
> *What CS-3 is it? Does it have the dBx chip, or the THAT chip?*

Pretty sure it will have the THAT chip Laurie.

The_Doc

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Mark123** » 29 Apr 2016, 12:07

Mine has the THAT chip, just opened it up. But I guess only MIJ pedals have the dbx chip. I must have had one of those a while back and sold it because i liked the clarity of the MIT that I had better.
In fact the CS-3 was my first pedal ever, bought it as a teenager in the 80s; got stolen in a rehearsal studio.
Interesting that so many use it at about the same setting!

Mark123

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Dirk** » 30 Apr 2016, 08:00

Simply because after 10 o'clock on the Sustain it's squash city...

I believe it was Pepe who revealed that the Attack is secretly a Release control, and that it's wired backwards; ie:
counterclockwise has a longer release time,
clockwise makes it shorter.
I happen to like a short release time, and also a short attack for that matter, but luckily that's preset to short in the CS-3.

Dirk

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **sciencefriction** » 30 Apr 2016, 13:10

This is great! Thank you for the review. I've been trying to read up on the CS-1 before I get one. I was curious how it would stack up to the latest Boss comp. I've never thought about stacking compressors before, that's a pretty cool idea. I wonder how the BC-1X compares to MXR's "Bass" comp, which is now being marketed for guitar.

I apparently need to read up on the CS-3 too while I'm at it, haha.

sciencefriction

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **Laurie** » 30 Apr 2016, 13:44

Quick sidebar about the CS-3. See here: viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2673

I've always considered the THAT version of the CS-3 to be awful. YMMV.

Laurie

Re: BC-1X Comp test with a guitar

by **sciencefriction** » 30 Apr 2016, 15:25

Thanks Laurie. I think eventually I'll track down all three of the CS- pedals, in their earliest forms.

sciencefriction