BD-2 oddities

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7 posts • Page 1 of 1

BD-2 oddities

QUOTE

by **zentropa** » 13 Feb 2017, 23:28

I'm finding something odd lately with BD-2's. I've had a dozen or so over the years, the first of which I bought back in 1997.

Has anyone noticed there's a distinct difference in how the pedal behaves on the earlier versions to the ones that are more recent?

I'd never had more than one at a time but had a few of them this past year that I got in trades and resold and what I have found are that the early ones sound "like I remember," which is that when dialed in they love to linger in that "edge of break" state with a boosted feel. Pick lightly and it's nearly clean, hit it harder and it will crunch. Dial the gain too high or strum too hard and you end up in fizzville.

The later ones that have passed through my hands have had very different dynamic characteristics. They don't clean up nearly as well with humbuckers as the older ones do... but they have another sound that doesn't really happen on the other ones where it pretty much sounds/behaves like a normal overdrive (reminds me a bit of an OD-2). When these get pushed harder they aren't nearly as fizzy but they also aren't able to ride that breaking point like the older ones do.

I'm not saying one sounds better than the other, they just seem to have completely different purposes. The newer ones are "easier" to play for a consistent tone but seem to lose what I remember being the defining characteristics of the ones I bought new back in the 90's.

The years in reference that I know off hand for the "old style" are 1995-2002. The newer ones were 2008-present. Is this just me or has anyone else noticed this?

zentropa
Posts: 530
Joined: 24 Jul 2012, 07:47
PM

Re: BD-2 oddities

QUOTE

by **charmonder** » 14 Feb 2017, 02:22

You might be on to somethign... I bought a BD-2 a couple years ago but it didn't sound the same as what I remember back in 2003. Then again I was a completely different person, but I do remember the BD-2 I grew up with was kinda thinner and fuzzier sounding in a good way

charmonder
Posts: 951
Joined: 04 Oct 2012, 17:45
PM

Re: BD-2 oddities

QUOTE

by **zentropa** » 14 Feb 2017, 04:01

"different than I remember" is exactly what came to mind when I played a newer one I picked up in a trade.

In the 90's I used one when I was playing a Strat through a Twin Reverb. Seemed like the pedal lived in that "just over the edge" level of gain. When I switched over to SG's through Marshalls I found it absolutely useless since it just kicked straight into fizz mode.

The newer ones (including the Waza Craft) seem to kick straight into some saturation but have a very wide band between "just saturated" and "fizzy."
My '95 can actually turn into just a clean boost if I ease up on the picking but then break into a light crunch when I hit it harder. I just can't make the newer ones do this.

After futzing a bit with my older one I have found I can dial in that saturated pre-fizz tone but it has very little play in it. e.g. From 1 o'clock to 2 o'clock on the gain it does it, above 2:30 and it's straight fizz, below 1 and it never reaches that state at all. To give a comparison, the newer one seems to reach that saturated state from like 11:30 through 4 o'clock and doesn't fizz until the gain is maxed.

It's just interesting that there's this much variance in the dynamics.

zentropa
Posts: 530
Joined: 24 Jul 2012, 07:47
PM

Re: BD-2 oddities

QUOTE

by **visserman** » 14 Feb 2017, 15:33

I think there is, but the overall character of them is the same I tend to believe.
I have brought the issue of variety up to you a long time ago, it is not practical to test a lot of different ones.
I had one which sounded harsh, and when I tried other ones in the shop I found one which sounded better, less fizzy. Still, at some point you will dial in a sound where they all sound the same, or at least, very close.

To get them to behave how you like it may be worth spending more time to combine them with compressors and a bit of EQ

visserman
BOSSAREAPLATINUM
Posts: 948
Joined: 09 Dec 2011, 15:46
Location: Leeds, West Yorkshire, England, UK
PM

Re: BD-2 oddities

QUOTE

by **sclitheroe** » 14 Feb 2017, 16:49

I think, (and I'm no expert), that the BD-2 uses FETs for it's gain stages, as opposed to an opamp or regular transistors, and I think, (but I'm not expert), that biasing of the FETs to get the desired gain characteristics is a more involved process - typically done with trimmer pots or similar on a build-by-build basis to achieve optimum results.

In fact, I seem to recall that one of the innovations of the BD-2 circuit was that FET based gain stages that are useful for guitar tones could be mass assembled without requiring a manual calibration of the biasing for each circuit board - there are, to my knowledge, no trimmer pots in a BD-2 to bias the FETs properly; they are plug and play components. (I think this is in part why the circuit is designed around a 7 or 8 volt design, rather than 9V?)

So in my opinion, the differences you are hearing are either component drift leading to changes in bias, or simply the acceptable range of variation (as deemed by Boss QA) for an auto-biasing FET gain implementation.

All this could be me talking out of my ass - someone else with more detailed knowledge of the BD-2 circuit can confirm, but that's my understanding of how it works under the covers.

sclitheroe
Posts: 1453
Joined: 25 Nov 2011, 21:02
Location: Stoney Creek
PM

Re: BD-2 oddities

QUOTE

by **zentropa** » 14 Feb 2017, 18:46

The overall character is similar, viss.

Thing that is weird is that some of the other characteristics get thrown so badly.
I use highly scientific terms like "bite," "jagged," "smooth,", and "fizzy" to describe things hehe. When those things change a lot of their "strengths" shift around. e.g. the newer pedals have less bite/snarl so that they don't work as well for aggressive lead playing from the neck pickup (imo). At the same time they have a much smoother break up and creamier overdriven sound. Add a strength but subtract one as well.

I wouldn't have noticed it as much if there were a few things that my older one does that the newer ones just don't want to do unless I swap out guitars (e.g. single coils in place of humbuckers).

I think I was mostly looking for verification that my ears aren't lying.

I believe you are correct sclitheroe. I believe the OD-2 is a similar design. Even if that's not exact, it doesn't work the same as the standard op amp -> clipping diodes.

If they buy a million transistors at a time, the next million will likely sound different than the previous million.

I've known a lot of BD-2 fanboys so this makes me wonder which version they are in favor of.

zentropa
Posts: 530
Joined: 24 Jul 2012, 07:47
PM

Re: BD-2 oddities

QUOTE

by **mtjohnson** » 03 Apr 2017, 20:07

Hi Everyone!
I Have a Bd-2 from 2005, but i didn't pay attention in the details mentioned here. What I can tell you is that I had it modded with "Keeley phat mod" and the pedal now has a great dynamic! You can get since the clean tone to a refined fuzz type of distortion (with the Gain control at max).

Plus, it has the "phat" switch to give a wider range of overdrive/distortion tones.

This is my main distortion pedal since then (it replaced my Marshall Gv-2 pedal)

Believe me, it worth the mod!

I hope it helps you

Cheers from Brazil!

mtjohnson
NEWUSER
Posts: 6
Joined: 20 Jun 2014, 19:29
PM

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7 posts • Page 1 of 1

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