HM-2 Appreciation

by fuzzbuzzfuzz » 22 Jun 2015, 14:58

A little pedal fetish material

A rare state of affairs, three of the beasties sat atop my cabinet. Alas it will be short lived as they have to have new homes and resuscitate my wallet after picking up the surprise CE-2! (I`ll keep one of course!)

I really must try one/them out in anger through a Marshall cranked, something I've never had the chance to do. I also love the fuzz produced when running them only on 9v, very raunchy Univox-y. What a top pedal!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **Pepe** » 22 Jun 2015, 15:57

It is one of my favourite pedals! It doesn't matter if it's MIJ or MIT - they all sound the same IMO. I love the HM-2's EQ! It has just the right mid/hi accentuation to cut through the mix (if you don't set HIGH to values under 11:00h).

When you've found your favourite setting, share it with us here:
viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2402

Pepe

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **Fallen_lassen** » 23 Jun 2015, 11:42

Appreciation approved. Love its fuzzy vacuum cleaner space sound. I also had three of them. Now i have one and two of my friends have one as well. Everybody needs a hm-2.

Fallen_lassen

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **Dirk** » 23 Jun 2015, 14:00

I had one for a while, but my real Marshall amp won in sound, so I moved it on to the next guy.

Dirk

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 21 Jul 2015, 03:18

The HM-2 and SD-2 (in lead mode) are my favorite boss high gain distortions. It seems these have spiked in price over the last few years though. I got used to being able to pick up MIJs for $35-45 and MIT for $25-35 at any time that I never replaced the last one that sold to a friend and they seem to be 2-3x as much now. I have an open spot

on the board and just can't bring myself to drop $100 on another one.

My MIT's were always a bit noisier and had more feedback than the MIJs but the tones were pretty spot on.

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 28 Jul 2015, 17:10

Well, I managed to sell off some old gear and ended up buying an MIJ HM-2 this weekend for $100 at a local shop, so I guess I can go back on what I said before.

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 16 Aug 2015, 13:46

They sell like hot cakes - good to grab one

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 24 Aug 2015, 14:25

I`ve just this week acquired two more to make three once again - probably temporary when the wife questions their multiplication!

I noticed something...

Having finally chosen a mint boxed one for safe keeping, I bought another second hand dated June 1986. That one did the starved octavia type tone when using the regular 9v supply. I thought "ahh yes, I like that". Then it occurred to me to test my mint one. Shock! No splatty goodness, just a dimmed LED and a tamed "normal" sound. Picked up a third today, same deal - later serial October 1987, no splatty sound. Weird?

So did they change something around then? (all are MIJ)

I suppose I do have an excuse for two now!!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 27 Aug 2015, 19:56

Hrm, I've never looked for what you are mentioning (the CE-2 is the only pedal I've really done a lot with in that way).

I did decide to sell HM-2 I picked up a few weeks ago though... for a strange reason. Due to some severe hand/wrist injuries I've gone several 2-3 year stretches where I played 0 guitar. Each time I come back the technical aspects of my play-style/technique seems to change randomly. When I picked up this HM-2 it was my buddy that played it in the store and he was just killing it. I was the one that ended up buying it but when I hooked it up and started playing it it sounded bad (or at least not what I wanted). Talked with my friend about this and the next time he was over we started "A/B-ing" by me playing something, passing him the guitar and him playing the same thing and vice-versa.

It turns out the combination of my pick attack angle and the way I am applying pressure when I fret the notes is just not getting the tonal/dynamic response out of the pedal that I was wanting. End result is that he ends up with an edgy chunky tone while I get muddy fizz and he wants to buy it off of me.

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 30 Aug 2015, 14:02

I'm sorry to hear that mate.

I do understand though. I now have three HM-2s sitting on my shelf - occasionally I can get one to sound right but sometimes it sounds dreadful. I wonder if my picking is also not sharp enough. I have the dilemma now of which to sell, my mint boxed non squishy tone or do I keep it and sell the fuzzy toned one? Or the lot! I went mental and got something at a high price so sales are required!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **Pepe** » 30 Aug 2015, 14:09

> *fuzzbuzzfuzz wrote:*
> *I went mental and got something at a high price so sales are required!*

What is it?

Pepe

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 31 Aug 2015, 01:33

Combine my moniker with the pedal company we all love. Then go back in time, way back...

I simply couldn't resist. I was light headed afterwards when it dawned on me what had happened. On the plus side I've managed to get most of the cash together raised through buy/sell efforts, touch wood I'll be displaying s pic or two on here in two weeks!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **Dirk** » 31 Aug 2015, 08:07

You bought one of JImi Hendrix's old Fuzz Faces?

Dirk

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **Fallen_lassen** » 31 Aug 2015, 10:22

Ah. Lucky cat beebaaa. Kinda

Fallen_lassen

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 31 Aug 2015, 14:33

> *Dirk wrote:*
> *You bought one of JImi Hendrix's old Fuzz Faces?*

With a couple of ounces inside and a headband...haha to be so lucky!

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **Dirk** » 31 Aug 2015, 18:28

Oh I don't know, I read that he brought dozens of Fuzz face and wah-wah pedals on tour cause he broke them all the time, or set 'em on fire...
So there should still be some of his stuff around?

I know for a fact that Kirk Hammett used an old Vox wah on the Black Album that was rumoured to be one of Jimi's, how cool is that?
It sure sounds great on Enter Sandman and a host of other songs!!

Dirk

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 31 Aug 2015, 21:27

> *I do understand though. I now have three HM-2s sitting on my shelf - occasionally I can get one to sound right but sometimes it sounds dreadful. I wonder if my picking is also not sharp enough. I have the dilemma now of which to sell, my mint boxed non squishy tone or do I keep it and sell the fuzzy toned one? Or the lot! I went mental and got something at a high price so sales are required!*

Ah, so I'm not the only one that has the "OMG this sounds bad" moments with it eh?
Back when HM-2's were $30 used I basically tossed them around like candy. I think I had about 12 of them before this one, the last of 2 of which I sold for $35 each about 8 years ago, 1 MIT 1 MIJ. Depending upon which guitars I was playing (Strat -> SG -> LP -> Super Strat -> PRS) it seems with 25.5" scale necks I tend to use finger pads for riffing/leads and finger tips for chords. With 24"-25" scale I have a tendency to play finger tips on everything (seems I micro-bend when playing pads) and when I play tips I tend to press a little harder due to leverage. This wasn't really anything I intentionally did, it just sort of developed along that path and I noticed it in hindsight. The tip + increased pressure seems to take a lot of the chunkiness off of the attack, which is just a weird reason to have a pedal perform/not perform imo.

Selling is always a rough call when they are different. I usually keep the one that makes me feel: "this is what this pedal is supposed to sound like." I always felt the HM-2 was "supposed" to sound sort of like an MXR Distortion+ through a driven JCM 800, so if it was me, I would keep the one that sounds closest to that.

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 16 Sep 2015, 22:55

I picked up a used MIT HM-2 today to shoot it out vs. the MIJ a friend is buying from me (I can return the MIT if I want to) and found something interesting. My MIJ HM-2 is later production ~87-88. I was only able to tool around with the MIT for about 10 minutes but already it sounds more like "I remember it's supposed to sound like."

I'm not sure if I just have a dud with the MIJ but it just doesn't have any boost feel to it when I step it on, and it's more fizzy than crunchy. By boost feel, I mean that compressiony signal pull that is the sort of thing that gives you more ability to cut through in a live situation mix. It sort of sounds like a quick vacuum suck on pick attack that seems to give a pronounced push when you strum or pick a note. It's something odd but it seems I've almost always purged every Boss distortion/od I've purchased that was manufactured between 1986 and 1988 (OD-1, SD-1, DS-1, OD-2, MZ-2 etc.) for this reason. The sounds are a lot smoother, but seem to lack punch and the ability to have a jagged edge sound. I'm curious if this has to do with some of the components used during this era if this is common or not. My older HM-2's I've owned didn't have the same problem that this one does, nor have the MIT's. The upside is that they are very quiet (very little hiss when on and not playing anything) but they just seem weak dynamically compared to others.

Am I crazy here or does anyone else know what I'm talking about?

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 17 Sep 2015, 06:42

Interesting thoughts and observations.

As I mentioned they certainly vary in power requirements (outside of the ACA/PSA change), my later models all retained crunch even if underpowered - whilst earlier models exhibit severe sag and octave like overtones.

I wonder if particular caps or the like were used at this time that have aged more poorly compared to others installed in earlier models?

I also find some to lack gain too, perhaps for the same reason..?

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 17 Sep 2015, 07:22

The MIJ is mega saggy if underpowered... like... sounds like sludgy fizz with no body or oomph to it.

My favorite MIJ's that I've owned were 83-84's. The MIT's I'd owned before were crunchier but had over twice the white noise and would feedback almost like I was using unpotted pickups. I'm actually finding a lot of odd things lately... pedals that I owned 1994-2004 or so, just aren't sounding the same as ones I've picked up from 2010 to present. I know on another thread someone had recently referenced the non-polarized cap types (poly film, taped, etc.) and I'm wondering if that may have something to do with it, either that or the aging process seems to have really started to make a difference over the past 5 years. In some cases, like modulation effects, this seems to end up resulting in a warmer, fuller sound. Dirt boxes not so much.

I tend to accumulate and jettison pedals in waves... to the extent that there's 4-5 models that I've had more than 10 of and another half dozen models that I've had 5 or more of. 10 years ago things seemed a lot more reliable pedal to pedal, but nowadays I'm finding a lot more instances of "good ones" vs. "bad ones." I'm not sure if this is my ears playing tricks on me or if it's started happening like what happened with the original TS-808's where half of em started sounding crappy by the end of the 90's.

I also find some to lack gain too, perhaps for the same reason..?

This is a weird one. I know there are some pedals that inherently have a lot of boost feel to them when you click em on and others feel almost passive, like you are just fizzing up the tone without any real increase in presence or compression. I'm starting to become acutely aware of the differences lately and it's starting to bug me when it's the same damn model and 1 has it while the other does not. e.g. I just got a '91 black label MIT ACA SD-1 and it's the best performing stock SD-1 I've ever had (out of 18) and smokes the late 80's MIJ's I've had.

It just gets weird. My inner collector wants to keep the one that will be most valuable, but my inner player wants to do the one that performs the best with my playing style.

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 23 Sep 2015, 19:58

Apparently it was HM-2 day today. Hit 7 pawn shops and found 3. 1 MIJ in box, 1 early MIT w product of roland taiwan sn sticker and 1 later MIT with a bottom SN.

bought the later MIT and will see how it compares to the mij and paper sn mit i am sitting on right now.

It seems weird to me because i have been unable to duplicate the sounds i had of the last ones i had ~5 years ago.

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **Pepe** » 23 Sep 2015, 20:32

Component drift? Electrolytic capacitor leakage? I always thought that all MIT and MIJ HM-2's sounded the same.

Pepe

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 23 Sep 2015, 22:01

The tone when playing loudly is fairly uniform across them, especially if the knobs are close to being maxed out.

There's a handful of different characteristics that have quite a bit of variance.

The ones I have noticed the most difference between MIT and MIJ are the white noise (hiss) when on and not

playing and feedback. 2 of the MIT's I've owned would feedback/squeal really easily.

The other big difference I'm finding lately is the compression dynamics.

Not sure what exactly is causing it all but it's getting weird hehe.

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 24 Sep 2015, 14:53

Well, after shooting out the 4 HM-2s i have in my possession I would have to say the noise/hiss is the only generalization i can stand by for mij vs mit. All 4 sound and respond differently at the volumes i can play them at but i would bet they are super similar at higher volumes

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **Pepe** » 24 Sep 2015, 16:13

So MIJ models are almost hiss-free in general?

Pepe

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 24 Sep 2015, 17:59

I would agree with that assessment on the MIJ HM-2. Minor hiss, but very minor compared to (most) MIT's.

Another pedal that compares similarly is the OD-2 MIJ vs. MIT. The MIJ's are almost dead silent. The MIT's have some noticeable hiss in comparison.

A lot of what I am going through right now is mostly nit-picking. All are HM-2s and will sound like HM-2s. It's certain things like "this one has a more defined attack edge in the upper mids and treble", "this one has more definition in the low end without feeling muddy," "this one has the smoothest note blending when playing multiple strings on the high end", etc.

The reason I'm obsessing so much on it right now is that the first one I picked up in a few years didn't sound like I remember them sounding.

Odd side notes. I ended up picking up that other MIT with the Roland Taiwan SN and also realized another MIT HM-2 I have (that I will be returning to guitar center) also has that SN label.

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by fuzzbuzzfuzz » 02 Oct 2015, 15:33

So how did the two MITs work out? Any difference? Any good?

For Tonight's shoot out...

3 x MIJ HM-2s plus 2 x DS-1s - huzzah! All lucky finds on travels through Japan. There was one shop with a stack of Old Boss like Lego bricks, three high/deep!

The two HM-2s to the right have slightly duller font (as many do). For me I'm happy that two do the Octavia type noise at starved voltage - the far left has more output and clarity (aged less) so I'll be keeping that one!

They all sound different.

The DS-1s are 82 and 84 and sound similar - oddly the 84 is a tad bassier.

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 02 Oct 2015, 16:50

Cool finds.

One of the MIT HM-2's had a short. The sound would cut out intermittently and you would have to shake it to make it return. I returned it as I didn't feel like messing with it and it wasn't cheap enough to really flip for a profit. I returned another MIT to guitar center (the one I overpaid on because I knew I could return it).

The one I kept sounds closer to the MIJ. It's actually not very noisy but it is also a bit dull. Similar crunch levels but slightly less note definition than the MIJ. Seems it has a bit more "body" in the low mids. My friend is buying the MIJ from me.

The super crunchy MIT I returned hit the tone I wanted the most, but not enough to justify the $30 price difference. Since none of them really nailed what I wanted from it I just kept the one I paid the least for

It's still an HM-2, just not what I remember an HM-2 being...

The other notable thing is that the buffer on my DS-1's would just murder the HM-2's. (With the DS-1 on bypass) If I put the HM-2 first and I would lose all crunch in the final tone. If I put the DS-1 first and the HM-2 would output sludgy fizz. The DS-1 is now banished to a board where it's the only dirt box.

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **sclitheroe** » 02 Oct 2015, 23:47

> *zentropa wrote:*
> *The other notable thing is that the buffer on my DS-1's would just murder the HM-2's. (With the DS-1 on bypass) If I put the HM-2 first and I would lose all crunch in the final tone. If I put the DS-1 first and the HM-2 would output sludgy fizz. The DS-1 is now banished to a board where it's the only dirt box.*

Interesting..I wonder if the DS-1 buffer differs from other commonly used Boss designs?

sclitheroe

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 03 Oct 2015, 01:03

Yes, buffers, must remember to switch the order of all the HM-2s and double check any issues that way. I'm now curio about the HM-3s as they are more common - totally different beast?

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **zentropa** » 03 Oct 2015, 06:48

I dont know anything about buffer designs, i just know when ne sucks hehe. I tend to put them in 3 tiers: good, plinky, and bad. Plinky = seems to squish the dynamic response but leaves the basic tone the same.

The HM-3 is a different beast to the HM-2. If an HM-2 is 80's metal, an HM-3 is grunge, if that makes any sense. Sludgier, expanded dynamic range on both the highs and lows, lot more fizz. HM-2's tend to be tighter, crunchier, and live more in the upper mids. I found it much more difficult to track down an Hm-3 locally. Looked for 5 weeks and found 14 HM-2's and 0 HM-3's. It wasnt exoensive, but had to buy it on ebay.

zentropa

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 15 Oct 2015, 01:29

The most at one time residing in FBF mansions. One now winging its way across the world.

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: HM-2 Appreciation

by **Pieraga** » 12 Feb 2016, 21:21

I own an early 80s HM2, it's my primary high gain dirt pedal in my board, it's a lot easier to tame than my mt2 and mz2,

Pieraga