School me on the ProCo RAT

by **natthu** » 06 Aug 2012, 14:51

So I've always been a fan of the EHX Russian Big Muffs, and I currenty own several. However, it seems that a similar competitor may be the ProCo RAT.
I have never tried a RAT and I'm somewhat oblivious to what exactly the differences are between all the different versions (and also what the difference is between a RAT and Big Muff).

As far as I can tell there are all these RAT variants (plus others).... RAT, RAT2, White Face, Turbo, You Dirty RAT, Deucetone, Juggernaut, Duo.... plus vintage and RI versions of some

Is there a typical RAT sound that is provided by any of these in particular? If I wanted to try a RAT, which one should I go for first?

natthu

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Laurie** » 06 Aug 2012, 15:04

Spend the money and get a vintage small box.

Next up get a reissue with the LM308 chip.

Avoid the Turbo, You Dirty RAT, Deucetone, Juggernaut, Duo

It is a massively different beast to the Muff. Apples and Oranges.

Laurie

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **natthu** » 06 Aug 2012, 15:21

Right. That narrows it down somewhat

What's with the "white face" version? There appears to be some hype surrounding those....

natthu

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Laurie** » 06 Aug 2012, 15:39

They are rare is all. It's just paint as far as I can tell.

Laurie

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **skugga** » 06 Aug 2012, 16:29

It's a limited (2000 made) vintage spec reissue with a LM308 chip

skugga

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Laurie** » 06 Aug 2012, 16:39

And there are vintage white face rats... My comment was about the vintage rat, not the reissue.

Laurie

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Cavefish34** » 07 Aug 2012, 15:08

I used to have a "vintage reissue"(oxymoron) but later found a clean big-box version to replace it. I find it to be a great little pedal... not at all like a muff and less "fuzzy"..... more of a straight distortion tone. You can get some great sounds out of it with the distortion level down too...nice sustain. The tone control works resverse of what you expect....more of a filter-cut. It's pretty harsh when cranked but I guess that's why it's called a rat.

Cavefish34

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Jeremy** » 10 Aug 2012, 02:37

I love my RAT - has a sound reminiscent of a MIJ DS-1 in the way the harmonics hang together

Any Rat with the LM308 chip will sound the same, I gather

so the re-issue "vintage" big box will sound as good as an older (pre-90s) small box

the pre-90s ones are all more desireable (I'd love one like the picture Laurie put up) from a collectors point of view, but no better sounding

they didn't move away from the LM308 chip until relatively recently (the Chinese made ones)

great pedal. I'm going to dig mine out tonight and disturb the local wildlife and the neighbours pets (and the neighbours!)

Jeremy

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **visserman** » 14 Aug 2012, 09:58

What not many have mentioned so far is: The clean boost, and added brightness. In the advertising they mention the Fender Twin, well that is not far off really. It is excellent in that kind of playing mode. Because of the filter, they are also good at that "just broken up sound".

Max all controls and, yep, you get the harsness people mentioned before.
Overal it is a very flexible overdrive/dist.
The sound also reminds me somewhat of a MXR dist. Plus.

I would have thought it should not be hard to get the small one, Rat 2? as they made many of them.

On the turbo side and other versions, probably similar as what you get with the TS9. If you get the orginal and like that sound you can always look into some of the others, or simply add another dist. pedal to up the mojo and mayhem.

visserman

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **71Smallbox** » 26 Oct 2012, 21:49

Basically, get one with the LM308. They stopped using that chip sometime around serial number 275,000 or something like that in 2000. I believe and they were still built here until 2003? when they moved to China. The last USA ones had true bypass which is great if you change out the crappy TI chip, you have an awesome sounding Rat that sounds as good as a Whiteface.

71Smallbox

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Monotremata** » 29 Mar 2013, 04:08

> *natthu wrote:*
> *Right. That narrows it down somewhat*
>
> *What's with the "white face" version? There appears to be some hype surrounding those....*

> *Laurie wrote:*
> *They are rare is all. It's just paint as far as I can tell.*

Sorry to necro the thread (ive been gone awhile) but isnt the picture you posted a whiteface version? The only difference like Laurie said is the logo. Before they looked like the one in that pic the logo was reversed. It was a white box with the text in black. All it means is its even older.. Mine looks like the pic, its an 86.

Oh wait.. There was a version like the one in the pic that also has an led (mine doesn't).

Monotremata

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Ricey** » 30 Mar 2013, 20:31

One poster compared the Rat sound to the DS-1 and another compared it to the MXR Distortion +, which are two completely different sounds. Who got it right...or were they both wrong? I have both a MIJ DS-1 and MXR, but have never heard a Rat.

Ricey

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Monotremata** » 30 Mar 2013, 21:47

The Rat sounds NOTHING like a DS1. Maybe you can tweak it to get in the ballpark but yeah two completely different tones.. I have a newer MIT one from like 2004 or so, I cant comment on a MIJ DS-1 but Im assuming its not all that different.

Its like I said earlier, the Rat is more like the HM-2s big beefy distortion. Right now looking at mine on my board, volume is at 2:00, filter is at 1:00, distortion is also at 2:00. It sounds almost EXACTLY like my HM-2 right next to it with Volume at 3:00, both color knobs just past 12:00 and the distortion at around 1:00. A/Bing them the other day,the only difference I could hear between the two was the HM-2s obviously scooped mids. Other then that, both pedals like I have them set sound identical.
Ive never played a D+ so cant comment there..

Monotremata

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Ricey** » 01 Apr 2013, 00:04

I've got to find both a USA Rat and and HM-2!

Ricey

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **WhereBoysFearToTread** » 13 May 2013, 16:44

I want one too.
maybe it has to do with my obsessive listening to The Raveonettes over these last 6 months.

so the goodsounding ones are all except the china made new ones?

WhereBoysFearToTread

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Monotremata** » 13 May 2013, 17:24

Someone mentioned they stopped using the LM308 around 2000 or so, and I know AnalogMan wont even touch a new one because of the changes to em.

Best bet is to just look for one thats made in the 80s/early 90s and you should be good to go. I think any of the 'big box' models are ok too no matter when they were made. Those should all be true to the original circuit.

Monotremata

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Pieces Of The Night** » 14 May 2013, 05:08

Keeley charges more to mod newer Rats because of of all the component changes.

Pieces Of The Night

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Laurie** » 14 May 2013, 05:49

My big-box reissue does have the 308 chip. It is a modern manufacture chip and there is some debate about whether the tone is the same but there is no definitive answer.

Laurie

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **fuzzbuzzfuzz** » 14 May 2013, 10:54

> *WhereBoysFearToTread wrote:*
> *I want one too.*
> *maybe it has to do with my obsessive listening to The Raveonettes over these last 6 months.*
>
> *so the goodsounding ones are all except the china made new ones?*

Ah with a swash(?) of reverb, had me pulling out my Danelectro Spring King and RV-3 😁

...and resolving to write songs in only the key of Bb minor. Ok maybe not the last bit 😉

fuzzbuzzfuzz

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Monotremata** » 14 May 2013, 19:26

> *Laurie wrote:*
> *My big-box reissue does have the 308 chip. It is a modern manufacture chip and there is some debate about whether the tone is the same but there is no definitive answer.*

Yeah I have quite a few new ones in a box but havent had the time to actually try and build anything with them yet hehe. My last job at UCSB was a pretty good source for ICs and stuff. The university storehouse was loaded with that stuff!

Monotremata

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **techhed** » 11 Jun 2013, 05:56

I just bought a newer china made rat and a/b'd it with a friends whiteface reissue. Not much difference. Just a tad more bass on the china made one. But overall same tonality.

techhed

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Guga Ramone** » 12 Jun 2013, 18:31

> *Techhed wrote:*
> *I just bought a newer china made rat and a/b'd it with a friends whiteface reissue. Not much difference. Just a tad more bass on the china made one. But overall same tonality.*

And this makes me wonder about all the fuss about older vs. reissue. I guess that most part of all of this talking is because a good number of people have prejudice with almost everything that once was made in the USA, but now is made in China (or whatever 3rd world country).

Guga Ramone

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **techhed** » 13 Jun 2013, 05:39

I think half of what is going on might be parts aging in older pedals. But I think most of the hype over all these different specs is just that, hype. I used to have a MIJ,and an MIT DS-1 and they didn't sound all that much different from each other. Again all I can think of is Parts aging.

techhed

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **natthu** » 13 Jun 2013, 08:24

> *Techhed wrote:*
> *...I used to have a MIJ,and an MIT DS-1 and they didn't sound all that much different from each other. Again all I can think of is Parts aging.*

I have an MIJ DS-1, and it sounds very different to my MIT one. Maybe yours are closer together in production era? I doubt it's entirely attributable to aging parts though, the op-amp has changed in the DS-1 many times since its first appearance.

natthu

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **techhed** » 14 Jun 2013, 02:56

I was just having a discussion with a friend of mine and while I know that the opamp has been changed in the DS-1 it could also be that part tolerances have become much better. In the 70-80's you had about 5-10% tolerance whereas now we have 1-5%. Just a theory.

techhed

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Monotremata** » 15 Jun 2013, 18:55

Ive actually read alot of comments about the newer MIC Rats on both The Gear Page and the TDPRI Telecaster forums that theyre pretty much just as awesome as the old 80s models. I wish I wouldve been paying attention when the WF reissues were out (theyre now officially discontinued as of like last week so get em while you can find em) but eh I lucked out and just happened to get an '86 small box for free years ago so I cant complain..

Monotremata

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **techhed** » 15 Jun 2013, 21:57

I really like the sound of my MIC RAT. It works for both guitar and bass! I might buy another down the road and have that modded, but I think ProCo will reissue the Rat again in a few years when they feel the need. They seem to do it every 5 years or so.

techhed

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Monotremata** » 29 Jun 2013, 22:32

> *techhed wrote:*
> *I really like the sound of my MIC RAT. It works for both guitar and bass! I might buy another down the road and have that modded, but I think ProCo will reissue the Rat again in a few years when they feel the need. They seem to do it every 5 years or so.*

Yeah my old 86 Rat sounds rad with my Jazz Bass too. If youve ever heard the band Unsane, Dave Curran's bass rig is an old 70s P Bass->Rat->Ampeg B2R.
Theyve been reissuing the old Rats forever. Big box/Smallbox, Whiteface/Blackface, etc.. Just gotta wait for em to strike again.
I completely missed this round of them, but now Im gonna make sure I keep my eyes open and get one next time they do it (unless I come across a good deal on the new WF reissue).
My Rat in its 'old age' has got an attitude at times, luckily for the last 6-7 months its been working perfectly fine, but once in awhile it likes to cut in and out and do weird things with its volume so Id like to put it away and keep it safe from my feet hehehe.

Monotremata

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **techhed** » 12 Jul 2013, 08:34

I hear ya on that one! I just saw a reissue whiteface down at my local guitar shop. $149.

techhed

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **zombiwoof** » 12 Jul 2013, 16:57

Do a search on Ebay, they are going for as low as $127.00 or so with free shipping. Keep a look out for a slightly used mint condition one and pay even less. For a "discontinued" pedal, there sure seem to be a lot of them around.
Al

zombiwoof

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **bigtone** » 14 Aug 2013, 21:53

I have a early 90s Rat with the 308 chip and did a simple clip of the 47ohm resistor (simple Reutz mod) to increase the bass and lower the gain. Makes it a really nice pedal if you usually don't set the gain on a stock one above noon.
The RATs from serial # 250K and lower are the ones to get.

bigtone

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Jeremy** » 20 Sep 2013, 05:31

I've got a question for RAT experts: Was the Rat2 ever re-issued, or was it a continuous production run?

I bought a Rat2 off ebay and the buyer advertised it as a "original late 80's RAT". Looking at the pot codes, it appears they date to the 45th week of 1990

thats no biggie - late 80's/early 90's makes no difference to me - UNLESS ....

what I have is a re-issue, in which case I would feel a bit ripped off

does anyone know whether these were ever re-issued, and if so when the re-issues started?

Jeremy

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Jeremy** » 20 Sep 2013, 08:36

I think I've found the answer

the Rat2 appears to have been in continuous production since 1988 - present. No re-issues

http://ratdistortion.com/history/

Jeremy

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **zombiwoof** » 20 Sep 2013, 16:07

Yes, but production moved to China from the U.S. at one point, and also around the year 2000 the opamp changed from the LM308 to the OP07, which some people say makes a difference (there is a lot of argument about this). The case also changed to a sloped case with different knobs at one point. So, although it's been in continuous production, the Rat II has been through various changes.

Al

zombiwoof

Re: School me on the ProCo RAT

by **Jeremy** » 22 Sep 2013, 03:11

Sloped cases from 1993

Jeremy