Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...?

by **Laurie** » 30 Mar 2012, 18:23

Long ago I built a thing called the "Blue Light Fuzz" (BLF) ... which eventually died and the idea transformed into the Big Sky Drive production pedal. While the circuit for the BLF was never used for the BSD, I always thought it was good enough to emerge in the form of something else, and now it has.....

Loosley based on the BLF, I'm toying with a distortion/fuzz design unlike anything else I've ever seen (truly - I've seen a HUGE number of schematics for pedals, and no one has ever done dirt this way as far as my research can tell).

I've come up with a mathematically/technically complex circuit that is deceptively straightforward to implement (read "economically priced" - in the range of the HZD). Working name: Unusual Heavy Dirt (UHD) pedal. The UHD behaves similarly to a tube amp that has been pushed up to power amp compression, then the pedal goes past into (to me) an interesting new heavy fuzz.

I've never heard anything with harmonics and content like it. That's good technically, but I'm not yet sure whether I like it "musically". Best ingested at high volume, I think! The only way to know if I'm onto something is to build a few and send them out for field trials.

So here's my question... does the world really need another dirt pedal? Developing a pedal to "field trial" standard takes a lot of time and effort, and I have to find some willing victims... err... "field testers".

Should I sepnd the time and effort, or should I move on to the next design?

Laurie

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Pepe** » 30 Mar 2012, 18:33

Sounds intriguing. I like strange distortion, like the XT-2 which I really love. I would take one with my LGP Deluxe.

Pepe

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **tunghaichuan** » 30 Mar 2012, 20:20

I think a lot of guitar players are mostly unhappy with their tone. And as such, they are always looking for the next big thing.

To answer your question, I think that there is always room for one more distortion pedal, especially one like you

described. What we don't need is another Tube Screamer variation. Ibanez and Maxon already make great versions of that design.

There are a few of us who like oddball, off-the-beaten-path dirt boxes. I don't know there there are enough to justify putting such a pedal into production, though.

tunghaichuan

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Pieces Of The Night** » 30 Mar 2012, 21:10

I'd be interested in hearing a new type of distortion but then again you should consider the source since I like using the ac-2 after things like the pw-2.

Pieces Of The Night

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **DarrinPA** » 30 Mar 2012, 21:24

What you are describing reminds me of what is used in the studio to do "quad tracking". It's a fuzz that is meant to add that "chrunch" and "fizz" back to the guitar tracks. Most guitar tracks begin to sound rounded or bland even with high quality amps, guitars, mics, and distortion - so the quad tracks with over the top fuzz are recorded, thus making 4 tracks = "quad" tracking. The producer/engineer I work with has two fuzz pedals [they are rather large units] meant solely for quads and cost between $400-$500 each.

I'm going to PM you...

DarrinPA

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **The_Doc** » 30 Mar 2012, 21:56

Speaking as a likely customer, the complexity of the technical design / ease of the build, won't feature in my decision to buy one. As always, for me, the key selling point would be the quality / uniqueness of the tone. I'd be looking for something a bit different that would make me want to use it and not put it down eg. like the HZD and, on

the basis of your description of the UHD, it's looking like it will fit the bill .

If the price point was around the HZD too - another good reason to buy

The_Doc

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **BearBoy** » 30 Mar 2012, 22:34

Laurie wrote:... does the world really need another dirt pedal?
You can *never* have enough dirt pedals

Also, not sure when *need* entered the equation when it comes to buying pedals...

Seriously, sounds interesting

BearBoy

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Laurie** » 30 Mar 2012, 23:34

Thanks for the input! I appreciate the time and effort your responses took.

I took the bread-board rig to a couple of guitarist friends today... they were also "not sure yet whether they liked it" musically either when tried on a number of different guitar/amp combinations. At least my ears are properly calibrated

Will keep beavering away on it in the background and report back when/if it starts to sound properly good.

Laurie

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **natthu** » 31 Mar 2012, 00:25

Does it sound anything like the BLD field testers, or is it just the circuit implementation that will be similar?

Personally, I think you should work on a type of effect you haven't produced yet, just to expand your available range of effects.

natthu

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Laurie** » 31 Mar 2012, 00:27

It evolved away from the BLD field-test pedals... into something quite different.

I agree about the expansion of the range (the V2 TLM is next on the list)... but this one has been sitting with me for a while. And it potentially has excellent feel (i.e. not just something that destroys the signal to fuzz it up) - I just need to take a step back and re-think it.

Laurie

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Zerksies** » 31 Mar 2012, 02:05

As they say you never know

Zerksies

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Jeremy** » 31 Mar 2012, 02:51

I have a MXR Fat Fuzz, which is a prototype of the MXR Blowtorch

The blowtorch is marketed (and maybe 'voiced') for bass - certainly no finesse to it (unlike, say, my GHF and CSF)

it is very crushing with harmonic-overtoney feedback just streaming out of it on full gain (and even on 3/4 gain)

thats the only thing I really like about it

great EQ on it too. Maybe I haven't spent enough time playing around with it

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLZ9NW17ekE

Jeremy

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Laurie** » 01 Apr 2012, 01:06

Does the world need another dirt pedal...? I agree with tunghaichuan and BearBoy (and everyone who thought it, but didn't say it!). Hell yeah!

I've finessed this pedal a bit and have managed to get what I think is credible heavy-overdrive-through-heavy distortion out of it. What a beastie... I ended up having to configure one of the opamps as a simple analog computer to get what I wanted (as before, complex technically, cool implementation)

I'll run it past some local folks and if it passes their scrutiny I'll do some sound clips and upload them for your learned ears to assess...

Laurie

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Zerksies** » 01 Apr 2012, 02:43

Go for another dirt pedal. But it really doesn't have to be heavy. I remember when i use to hang around actually guitar players and they where all after this heavy guitar sound "like so and so" or "like This" but it was not as heavy as they thought. It was more of a DS-1 with an EQ

Zerksies

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **sclitheroe** » 01 Apr 2012, 03:30

Need sound samples.

sclitheroe

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Pieces Of The Night** » 01 Apr 2012, 20:43

Has there be a dirt pedal where you could adjust the amount of distortion in real time? I think there was years ago but I can't remember what it was. I think i would be cool to have one where you could set the pedal a quater of the way then step on it like an expression pedal and push the gain up for a solo then back off it a bit for verses.

Pieces Of The Night

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Pepe** » 01 Apr 2012, 21:35

There was the AKAI Shred-O-Matic:

[Image]

When we had this one in our shop eight years ago or so, I thought it sounded pretty cool. The pedal could either

control the gain setting or it could be used as a volume pedal. There was also a cool phaser with sensitivity control, so it was activated or deactivated at certain volume levels:

Pepe

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Laurie** » 01 Apr 2012, 21:41

I could definitely do a DingoTone Custom Shop version.

I could do a custom-shop version of some of my pedals with an expression pedal jack for some of the controls - depends on what (looked at case-by-case). Can't do it on the standard pedals because the jack just won't fit.

I've tuned in the bread-board "alpha" test rig for this pedal. Will audition it tomorrow. Not sure how it will sound int he real world...

Laurie

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Pieces Of The Night** » 02 Apr 2012, 03:51

Pepe wrote:
There was the AKAI Shred-O-Matic:

[Image]

When we had this one in our shop eight years ago or so, I thought it sounded pretty cool. The pedal could either control the gain setting or it could be used as a volume pedal. There was also a cool phaser with sensitivity control, so it was activated or deactivated at certain volume levels:

Thanks. I couldn't think of what it was. The more I think about it I think Snarling Dogs had something similar as well.

Pieces Of The Night

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Zerksies** » 02 Apr 2012, 13:56

I think you should have a distortion with alot of EQ tweaking or different types of clipping or 2 types of distortion in 1 box

Zerksies

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **visserman** » 03 Apr 2012, 11:46

> *Laurie wrote:*
> *I could definitely do a DingoTone Custom Shop version.*
>
> *I could do a custom-shop version of some of my pedals with an expression pedal jack for some of the controls - depends on what (looked at case-by-case). Can't do it on the standard pedals because the jack just won't fit.*
>
> *I've tuned in the bread-board "alpha" test rig for this pedal. Will audition it tomorrow. Not sure how it will sound int he real world...*

Hello laurie,
Now that it something the world does not need. I would call this a "customised"version of your basic pedal idea: Some players may like it, but it may not be for everyone.

Tunghaichuan made some good points, and I think your original idea for the pedal's sound looks good, but yep, we would need to hear some soundsamples.
Personally, I also feel there is always scope for a different sounding Fuzz/Distortion.
The market for radical Fuzz/Dist. sounding pedals may be smaller than the more subtle sounding versions.
Maybe you could tweak the sound a bit to make it more appealing for players who would like a "less over the top kind of sounding" pedal.

visserman

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **Laurie** » 03 Apr 2012, 16:02

THis one got the thumbs-down from the local boys, and to be honest I was there too. It's a bit too much like an '80s early digital effect trying to emulate distortion. It's got "something" in the harmonics, but too much fizzz and not enough real character. So it's back to the back-burner with it again.

Really appreciate the thoughts everyone shared - I wasn't going to put any time and effort into it, but getting it to a state where I could audition it locally was very useful even though nothing specific has come of it.

And the answer is "yes"... the world does need more dirt!

Laurie

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **sclitheroe** » 04 Apr 2012, 22:18

"I'm as proud of what we don't do as I am of what we do" - Steve Jobs.

World needs more dirt, it doesn't need more bad dirt (I was going to say we don't need more Devi Ever pedals, but realized that's a matter of taste)

sclitheroe

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **natthu** » 05 Apr 2012, 00:04

> *Sclitheroe wrote:*
> *....I was going to say we don't need more Devi Ever pedals, but realized that's a matter of taste...*

I like Devi Ever pedals, however, after doing a little research into which one would be best for me, it became apparent that there are really only a few different types of Devi pedals. The miriad of options are basically minor component value tweaks here and there to achieve a slightly different sound. You could basically slap a few switches in one Devi pedal and effectively have about 5 of them in the one box. I think that would be more useful than lots of slightly different options.

At least if there are a few DingoTone dirt pedals, they are all quite different, and therfore worth having.

natthu

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **sclitheroe** » 05 Apr 2012, 06:18

For sure. It was intended to be more of a joke than a mean spirited swipe - but you are right, they are lots of variations on the same theme. (and I did think that "too much fizz and not enough real character" sounded like something you might read about a Devi Ever in some circles)

sclitheroe

Re: Your thoughts on a heavy distortion/fuzz pedal design...

by **natthu** » 05 Apr 2012, 06:25

> *sclitheroe wrote:*
> *...It was intended to be more of a joke than a mean spirited swipe....*

Don't worry, I got that I was just backing up your argument (in a round about way)....

natthu