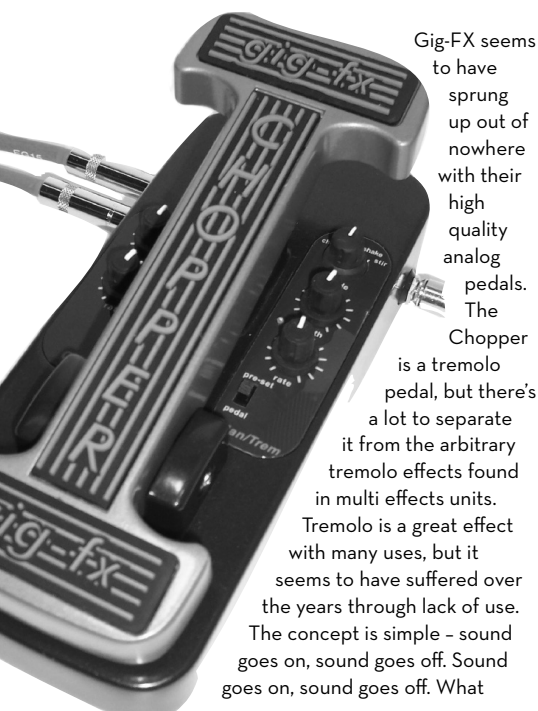


GIG-FX CHOPPER PEDAL

BY PETER HODGSON



Gig-FX seems to have sprung up out of nowhere with their high quality analog pedals. The Chopper is a tremolo pedal, but there's a lot to separate it from the arbitrary tremolo effects found in multi effects units. Tremolo is a great effect with many uses, but it seems to have suffered over the years through lack of use. The concept is simple – sound goes on, sound goes off. Sound goes on, sound goes off. What

the Chopper adds to this general description is: modulation rate controlled by a wah-style rocker pedal; rotating speaker emulator with rate adjusted by the pedal; and full stereo operation.

SAY G'DAY TO UNCLE CHOP CHOP

In stereo, the Chopper's effect can be panned from one side to the other or combined in phase or out of phase. The sonic effect of this is almost like your music is bubbling up through water, locked into a note perfect rhythm. The pedal functions via two oscillators. One is a square wave which produces the chop sound and the other is a triangle wave which provides the tremolo or, in stereo mode, pan. To the left of the rocker pedal, there are controls to adjust the chop setting. To the right, controls for pan and tremolo. A mode switch selects between Chop only (CHOP), Tremolo/Pan only (STIR), and either of two combinations of both (BLEND and SHAKE).

CHOP SHOP

The beauty of this is that in Blend or Shake modes you can set up a rhythm using the two sections, such as a blubbery eighth note pulse from the

triangle wave, and a staccato quarter note rhythm on the square wave. You can assign either – or both – rates to the pedal, so you can create an underlying rhythm using the rate control with one rhythm, while increasing the other with the pedal to build musical tension, or you can send both through the pedal to start off with a slow, sequencer-like rhythm, then slowly depress the pedal to increase the speed towards the first crushing power chord. The Chopper is equally at home with vintage-style wobbles and warbles, Hendrix swirls, and jarring industrial metal strobe-outs.

In pan mode, you can use the rocker pedal to vary the speed with which the sound wooshes around the stage/room/mix. It's at this point I thank my lucky stars for happening to have an amp with a stereo effects loop, as I could use the pedal in the loop while maintaining the amp's own distortion sound.

TOOL BOX

The Gig-FX chopper is a hell of a pedal because the range of rhythmic and textural possibilities are huge and the sound quality is unbeatable. It's easy to see why Adam Jones of Tool is so fond of

it, and hopefully his use of the pedal will inspire other players to explore the vast possibilities of this too-long overlooked effect class. It's one of those pedals that inspires you to come up with new song ideas immediately, and it's that what it's all about?

SPECS

All analog circuitry, crystal clear sound, no coloration
Transparent bypass achieved by a FET switch
Reliable, wear-free, noise-free optical operation
Bypass mode when pedal is in 'heel down' position
Mono in, stereo out, even when in bypass mode. Both outputs are equal with "zero gain"
9V working with low 15mA current consumption.

RRP \$379

Distribution: Sound and Music
Call: 9555 8081
Email: brett@sound-music.com

GIG-FX MEGA-WAH PEDAL

BY PETER HODGSON



The Gig-FX roster of users includes such names as Prince, who played the chopper tremolo pedal on Saturday Night Live, Adam Jones of Tool, Juan Alderete of The Mars Volta/80s glam shred band Racer X, Adrian Belew of King Crimson/Bowie/NIN, Mark Tremonti of Alter Bridge and Creed, Living Colour's Will Calhoun, and Richard Fortus of Axl Rose's latest sacrilegious incarnation of the Gunners.

The company's Mega-Wah combines six wah effects and a volume pedal, in a sturdy, practically bombproof construction.

WHY DON'T YOU CRY ABOUT IT

The wah modes include Classic, in mono or stereo; Mega-Wah, which is described as the Classic wah on steroids; Trig-wah, a funky envelope filter type effect; Auto-wah, a straight-forward touch wah effect; Stereo-Wah, in which two circuits give twice the awesome wah power, especially good for use in stereo effects chains; Stereo-Reverse Wah, which reverses one channel for some phasey phreakiness; and Foot-volume control: does what it says on the tin. The Mega-Wah operates with optical technology, which uses an LED array and an optical sensor to control the effect. In this design, the closer the LED gets to the array, the more intense the effect.

It's a method used on some other high end wah pedals, tremolo and compressor pedals, and the entertainingly squeaky Digitech Whammy Pedal, and it provides a very smooth taper difficult to achieve with traditional pots.

HEY, WAH HAPPENED?

The coolest feature of the Mega-Wah is the Stereo-Reverse mode. The ability to have one side wailing up while the other wails down is undeniably funky. It reminds me, bizarrely, of Eddie Van Halen's rarely heard and unorthodox wah technique, where he tends to rock the pedal backwards rather than forwards so the wah sweep goes from high to low instead of the other way around. This is such an attention-grabbing sound, especially in the context of 40 years of standard wah operation, that its inclusion here is a further breath of fresh air for this innovative pedal.

BOW-BOW-WAKKA-WAKKA-BOW-BOW-CHICKA-CHICKA

The Classic mode has all the vibe and tone of the original pedal it pays tribute to, while Mega-Wah takes it a step or two further. Trig-Wah sounds especially great with bass for those phat Bootsy Collins moments.

I have a few little niggles with the Mega-Wah. The

background noise was a little high – not something you'd notice on stage or on a recording, but noticeable in a home jamming environment; and the switching system, which relies on putting the pedal in the 'heel down' position to bypass the effect, means it's easy to accidentally turn the effect off. But the sound quality and flexibility cannot be argued with, nor can the sheer number of sound possibilities.

SPECS

All analog circuitry
Transparent bypass achieved by a FET switch
Stereo in/stereo out, mono in/stereo out
Optical operation.
Bypassed when pedal is in 'heel down' position
9V operating voltage, 30mA to 40mA current consumption

RRP \$379

Distribution: Sound and Music
Call: 03 9555 8081
Email: brett@sound-music.com

MARSHALL JVM 10410

BY AARON MOAR

IN THE BEGINNING...

Marshall Amplifiers have been at the forefront of producing classic rock guitar tones for over four decades. This year sees the unleashing of their latest beast, the JVM 410 100-watt head. Following a highly anticipated release to the music world, the JVM has been tipped to be the new bench mark for guitar amplification. Having gigged with several Marshall amps over the last decade, I was extremely excited to road test their latest product.

In appearance, the design is typical Marshall: gold control panel, heavy-duty hardware, black vinyl casing and the legendary white script logo. An initial glance at the 28 knobs on the front may leave your head spinning. A closer look assures that the JVM is simple to use, it is merely versatile...very versatile. Four channels are available – Clean, Crunch, OD1 and OD2. Each has their own independent set of bass, middle and treble, digital reverb and gain controls. There is also a mode switch for each, which covers three varying degrees of gain (indicated by an LED that glows green, orange or red), allowing the amp to have a massive twelve preset sounds. Two master volume controls can be switched, which is handy when needing to take the volume up a notch for a lead break. Furthermore there is a presence and resonance control to adjust the overall quality of the treble and bass tones respectively.

IS THERE ANYTHING THIS AMP CAN'T DO?

Did I mention this amp was versatile? The JVM has a silent recording mode, active when the amp is in standby, where the amps signal can be taken out of a balanced speaker emulated line out. This is

perfect for the home studio enthusiast who wants to record their guitar tracks at 3am without annoying the Jones family next door. On the back panel there are five speaker outputs, a series and parallel effect loops and also MIDI sockets, allowing the JVM to be compatible with MIDI effects units and storing up to 128 MIDI presets. The six button footswitch which comes included can be used with the factory settings or alternatively you can program it, making it easier to recall sounds you have worked on.

WHAT DO YOUR EARS THINK?

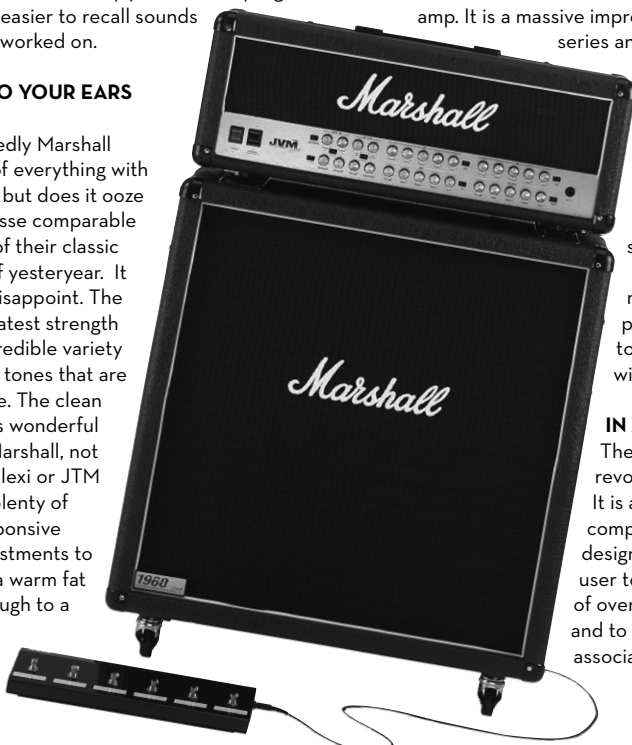
Undoubtedly Marshall thought of everything with the JVM, but does it ooze tonal finesse comparable to some of their classic models of yesteryear. It doesn't disappoint. The amps greatest strength is the incredible variety of quality tones that are accessible. The clean channel is wonderful vintage Marshall, not unlike a Plexi or JTM 45, with plenty of good responsive tone adjustments to give you a warm fat tone through to a sparkling

twang. With a little added gain, I dialed up some very cool blues and rock sounds. The crunch channel sounds similar to a JCM 800. Moving through OD1 and OD2 the amp produced some good punk tones and then finally moved into screeching metal territory. Clearly, the JVM isn't designed for external pedals, but for getting high quality amp overdrive. The qualities of every Marshall ever made seems to be attainable with this amp. It is a massive improvement from their 2000 series and blows the 900 series out

of the game. Perhaps the only setback was the digital reverb. Although adding a small amount of reverb added some extra presence to the overall sound, it is not as organic sounding as the reverb used on some of the earlier models. Guitarists with the patience to explore all the tonal possibilities of the JVM will be more than impressed.

IN A NUTSHELL

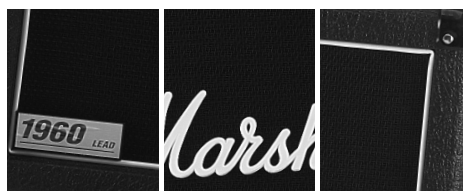
The JVM is an exciting and revolutionary Marshall amplifier. It is a totally modern amp with completely classic tones and design. Its versatility allows the user to produce a huge range of overdriven and clean sounds and to emulate tones that are associated with other Marshall



models. If you are a fan of Marshall, prefer to use overdrive from the amp rather than pedals and like to play a variety of music styles, then go and try one out. In Marshall's long and brilliant history, the JVM 410 is sure to stand tall as one of the great designs.

SPECS

Output (RMS) 100 Watt
Pre-Amp Valves: 4 * ECC83
Power Amp Valves: 1* ECC83, 4 * EL34)
Dimensions (mm): 750 * 310 * 215
Weight: 22kg



RRP \$3199

Distribution: Electric Factory
Call: 03 9474 1000
Email: sales@elfa.com.au