



A tasty, generation-spanning fuzz sammich

JHS Pedals' Muffuletta offers up an **affordable alternative** for **Big Muff fans**

BY WADE BURDEN

WHEN I WAS 14 and managed to get ahold of a guitar I only knew two things: I needed a wah, and I needed a Big Muff. I made three dollars an hour working in a bait store, and I mowed lawns. It took awhile, but I managed to save up enough for a used guitar pedal -- now all I had to do was wait till I could catch a ride the nearest town with a music store. I needed a Big Muff, and I didn't know why. But the minute I'd seen that used Sovtek, I knew what I had to do. I had to clean a lot of fish tanks and mow a lot of yards.

I gave up on my love for EHX/Sovtek pedals years ago. As great as a Russian muff sounds, the Russians, with all their newfound early nineties freedom, couldn't be bothered to build a buffered bypass that didn't affect your tone more than when the pedal was turned on. I've played a lot of Big Muff clones, and most don't live up to the original. In an effort to fix the Big Muff, they usually lose what made it great: that smoky scooped mid range.

So when the JHS Muffuletta showed up at my door, I was skeptical. I'm happy to say, though, that the Muffuletta does what no other Big Muff clone does: nails the tone. No improvements. No efforts to fix the flaws that inevitably lead to you losing the thing you were chasing -- the thing that makes it a Big Muff.

What makes this remarkable is that you have five classic Big Muffs crammed into one tiny box, plus a JHS update. I'm not an engineer, but I know that Josh Scott (JHS) called up Jon Cusack (old school pedal genius and the man behind Cusack Music) and they put their heads together until the kinks were worked out. The controls are simple: Tone, Volume, Sustain, and Muff Selector.

Tone, from about zero to noon is classic Big Muff. From noon on, you get more high end than you would on most muffs, but paired with the Sustain and Volume controls you have a lot of control over that sweet spot where the even order harmonic

distortion happens -- the place where the tone seems to thicken up, smooth out and become more musical than it does in other positions.

Volume does exactly what volume controls have always done, and the Sustain knob dials in the amount of fuzz. The key to really nailing a lot of those classic Muff sounds is the interaction between the sustain and the tone. Hint: Keep the tone low. Another hint: nothing pairs with a delay for beautiful solos like the warm, dark, scooped mids of a Big Muff.

The Selector is a rotary knob with six positions. Each turn of the knob tells a series of internal switches to turn on or off, re-routing your signal through the appropriate parts of the circuit for the position you have chosen. Every satisfying click on that rotary knob is changing up to 20 components inside to emulate the circuit of a classic Big Muff. Obviously, the controls are digital, but your signal is completely analog, just like with the original Muff.

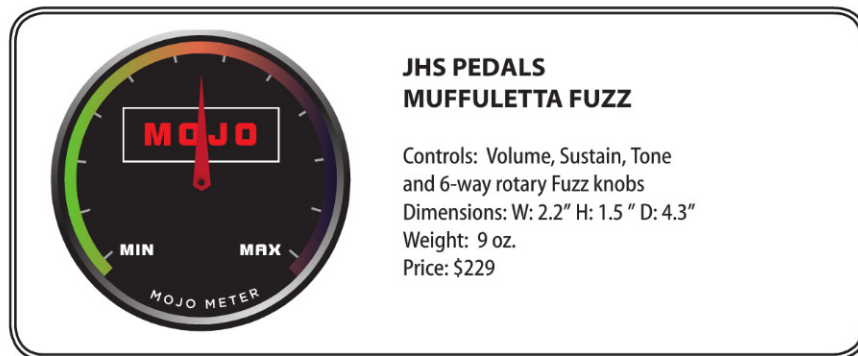
Have you been looking lustfully at

classic Big Muffs on eBay, knowing that \$700 for a Ram's Head is too much? Knowing that your wife will beat you to death with that giant grey and blue Civil War Big Muff if you pull the trigger? Do you just have to hear a Triangle Muff once in your life? You know it's too big and finicky to be on your pedal board, but surely just south of a grand is fair for an original V1 Big Muff in excellent shape! Try not to think about the fact that they were inconsistent, and that if it's in great shape, it probably wasn't played because it didn't sound that awesome... You can risk buying one of these classic behemoths, or you can get a Muffuletta: Civil War, Russian, 70's Pi, Triangle, Ram's Head, and a modern JHS version of the classic circuit, all in one box. Ever wonder what the differences were? Click right through them and hear the circuit open up or compress, get brighter or darker with every version.

Do you love the way the Russian Muff sounds for slow heavy parts, but want something more articulate for solos? That's cool, two simple clicks over is the famed Triangle Muff that can nail those Gilmour-ish solos. One click back, and you're covering Smashing Pumpkins to perfection. If you love the dark, booming, fuzzy nastiness of vintage Big Muffs, foibles and all, the Muffuletta is for you. It's a history lesson, and a guitar

effect all in one. And it's made in Kansas City, so the Russians can focus on bigger problems than how your pedal sounds when it's turned off. 🌀

Wade Burden was raised by wolves in the woods of Southeastern Oklahoma. The beard behind www.beardtone.com, he is good at beards and ok at guitar. He writes songs and yells a little bit in his band The Born To Kills, and he runs a very blue collar business in LA. He also thinks you should trust your own ears; you'll be happier than if you just take someone's word for it. You can follow Wade on Instagram: @beardtone.



JHS PEDALS MUFFULETTA FUZZ

Controls: Volume, Sustain, Tone
and 6-way rotary Fuzz knobs
Dimensions: W: 2.2" H: 1.5" D: 4.3"
Weight: 9 oz.
Price: \$229

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