

DIGITECH

DIRTY ROBOT

REVIEW BY **SAM HILL**

STREET PRICE **\$149.95**



If you look on a bunch of pedalboards, you'll probably find some common themes—it's rare to see a player without some kind of dirt box, modulation pedal, or some kind of delay or reverb. There are far more pedals to choose from, however, in this Golden Age of stompboxes. You may play in a band that requires sounds beyond guitar, and you may just be yearning for some new sounds to fuel your creative endeavors. If you find yourself in either of those categories, I present to you the DigiTech Dirty Robot.

Housed in a small, durable package like its other

siblings in the DigiTech lineup, the Dirty Robot looks sufficiently space-age with its robot design and stacked control knobs. It features stereo ins/outs to ensure compatibility with any rig. At the top of the pedal is a switch that selects between two modes. V1 features classic synth sounds, while V2 gets into vocoder and talkbox territory. A Mod control mixes in chorus, and also gives you access to vibrato—just like having a mod wheel on a synthesizer—when you step on the footswitch and hold it. The Drift knob both selects between, and

blends together, Square, Octave and Sub sounds. The Sens[itivity] knob adjusts the filter sensitivity, and Time adjusts the length of the synth sweep between the points that are set by the Start and Stop knobs. It may sound a little complicated, but it's not difficult to get cool sounds. Just be aware that the controls function a bit differently depending on which mode you're in, and one must experiment with settings until you find something you like.

High Mix settings sound great, but one of my favorite sounds was a classic analog synth tone with a relatively low Mix so I

could hear plenty of my dry sound as well. This made it sound like a synth was playing in perfect unison with my guitar riff. Fans of Rush and '80s synth-driven soundtracks will love V1, and anyone trying to cop Joe Walsh or Bon Jovi-esque vocal tones will find V2 especially useful. The modulation is a delightful addition; the chorus and vibrato can take a harsh and jarring synth sound and turn it into an otherworldly ambient soundscape.

Anyone who extensively uses a looper should consider this pedal; the ability to loop layers that sound like a completely different instrument is very useful for solo performers, and bands that need a wide range of sounds but don't have a lot space on stage will love that so many synth features have been crammed into a pedal they can hold in the palms of their hands. Just for fun, I compared sounds from the Dirty Robot to the synth patches on my Yamaha MX61. With some tweaking, the Dirty Robot sounded

very close to several of the classic synth models. I was thoroughly impressed.

The Dirty Robot is a radical pedal with a wide palette of useful far-out sounds, and the affordable price makes it an excellent gateway into interstellar sonic exploration for the player that wants to break out of their routine but doesn't want to spend tons of money on a synthesizer or an entire collection of pedals. This is, by far, the best synthesizer you can buy for \$150. Remember the old days when you used to sit around and make fun

of your friend's DigiTech pedals? I don't, because the company has been nailing it with awesome pedals finding favor with pros and bedroom noodlers alike. Above all, you should make it a point to try the Dirty Robot because it's really freaking fun to play. DigiTech has another clear winner here, and I can't wait to see what it come up with next.

WHAT WE LIKE

Awesome synth sounds. Stereo capability. Cool graphics.

CONCERNS

Nothing.

