

J. ROCKETT AUDIO DESIGNS

HOOLOGAN

REVIEW BY **SAM HILL**
STREET PRICE **\$174.99**



J. Rockett offers a wide variety of tonal enhancement tools, and the brand has gained notoriety for its take on both Klon Centaurs, the Archer and Archer Ikon. And while those pedals certainly deserve the praise they receive, there are many other great units to check out. The Hooligan is one of those. Distilled from its older brother, the WTF, the Hooligan is a simpler version, with three knobs, a single footswitch and some tonal tweaks to focus on its best qualities.

The first thing I noticed about this pedal is its incredible heft. It's small

and pedalboard friendly, but it feels like a brick. This thing is built freaking solid. It's clear that J. Rockett is concerned with making a quality product, and that's very reassuring. At first glance, the pedal seems straightforward. Not unlike many dirt boxes, two of its knobs are labeled Level and Gain, and they function as one might expect. The third knob is labeled Gunk, and this is where it gets interesting. This knob is actually a rotary switch and opens up a wide variety of tones ranging from subtle to extreme. Turning the knob clockwise, the settings become more intense. J.

Rockett had a pedal in mind that could nail the sounds of a Rat while also getting Paul Trombetta-style horn sounds, doing that and a whole lot more. It sounds great as a basic fuzz, but there's much more going on here.

The way I would describe this pedal is that it has a lot of sounds that many players didn't know they needed. Many guitarists have a tendency to focus on "Holy Grail" sounds, and that's great. Legendary tones are legendary for a reason. However, legions of guitarists using the same effects within a certain style or genre makes music

homogenized. A new sound can inspire when needed, and the Hooligan will do that.

Classic fuzz and drive sounds are achieved by setting the Level and Gain knobs to taste while leaving the Gunk knob below noon. There are variations here, but the Gunk knob noticeably takes things in another direction past noon. This is where players will want to carefully integrate it into their rig, as it's likely not a tone many are accustomed to. Squashed horn sounds and glitchy fuzz frenzies are available simply by adjusting the Gunk knob. Within the context of the Hooligan, Gunk is a very positive thing. It's not the sonic equivalent of soap scum in the shower, it actually yields some very nice overtones and, at times, notes sound like they're cutting right through the speaker in the best possible way—kind of like always having an amp being pushed to the brink. With the Gunk knob set fairly high, my hands automatically started playing Neil Young's "Hey

Hey My My," and to my ears, it sounded dang near identical. But the Hooligan isn't trying to mimic any single sound. It will go wherever the imagination of the player takes it.

Players needing some different dirt will do well to check out the Hooligan. While it can deliver unobtrusive, classic gain sounds, this pedal is for the bold fuzz lover that wants to take things a step further. For those guitarists thinking they have their fuzz needs covered, it wouldn't hurt to check this out. Personally, I'm a big fan of simple pedals that are also extremely versatile—nad that is how I would describe the Hooligan.

WHAT WE LIKE

Solid range of overdriven to fuzzy tones. Unique tones for the sonic adventurer. Excellent build quality. It's called "the Hooligan."

CONCERNS

The more extreme settings won't be useful to everyone.