

G2.1u offers 54 effects, chosen from nine different modules. We liked the amp models in the 'Drive' module best

If you can't be bothered to create your own, there are 40 preset tones offered, covering everything from Green Day to Santana

The LED display isn't quite as helpful as a proper LCD screen, but you'll soon get used to it with practice

The expression pedal lets you control effect parameters in real-time, making G2.1u a real weapon on the stage

£129

# ZOOM G2.1U

STILL USING PROCESSORS IN THE STUDIO AND PEDALS ON THE ROAD? TRY THIS... WORDS: HENRY YATES

## THE SIZZLE

Let's not waste time with a long-winded introduction to Zoom. If you take even a passing interest in the march of gear technology, you will already know what this Japanese giant is all about. Inevitably, when we're talking Zoom, we're talking FX pedals. Ever since this firm launched in 1990, their mission has been to shift effects units from the land of the rising sun to the gigbag of the rising overdraft. Few firms do FX better, and fewer still make 'em as affordable.

This afternoon, TG is preparing to stamp on the snappily-named Zoom G2.1u. It doesn't look like much, frankly, but that's probably what they said about the Telecaster. It's not until you open the manual that the blood starts pumping. Essentially, the G2.1u is being marketed as the best of both worlds: a unit that copes equally well in the studio (as evidenced by its amp models) as on the Peckham pub circuit (note the expression pedal). The blurb looks tasty and the price tastier, but with the PODXT Live still towering over this sector like a colossus, can the Zoom pedal really compete?

## WHAT'S IT GOT?

As you'd expect from the daddy of digital effects, Zoom have packed in the features. The G2.1u offers 54 different effects, ranging from wobbly luxuries like flange to ever-so-serious options like compression. It goes without saying that TG was most smitten with the 'Drive' module, which offers 17 distortions modelled on some of the coolest amps and stompboxes in history. Admittedly, that's a pretty meagre haul compared to your average Line 6 product, but most of the big names – from Marshall's JCM800 to the Fender Twin – are represented here. More interesting is that each drive type has two settings, allowing you to optimise

## WHO'S IT FOR?

Budget-aware guitar players who divide their time between the stage and studio

## INFORMATION

**ORIGIN:** China  
**TYPE:** Guitar effects pedal  
**EFFECT TYPES:** 54  
**EFFECT MODULES:** 9 (can be used simultaneously)  
**PATCHES:** 40 (user) and 40 (preset)  
**SIGNAL PROCESSING:** 32 bit  
**DISPLAY:** 2-digit 7-segment LED  
**ADDITIONAL FEATURES:** USB audio interface, expression pedal, PCM drum machine  
**POWER REQUIREMENTS:** 9V AC adaptor [not included] or 4x AA batteries  
**DIMENSIONS [HxWxD]:** 79 x 255 x 165 [mm]  
**WEIGHT:** 1100g  
**CONTACT:** Exclusive Distribution 01462 481148  
**WEB:** www.zoom.co.jp

## ALTERNATIVELY

Zoom G2 – £79  
 Korg AX3000G – £249  
 Line 6 PODxt Live – £399

the sound for an amp or a recording desk. It's a fantastic touch, we reckon.

All the effects modules can be linked, edited and saved, but if that's too much hassle then you'll find a decent selection of tones across the 40 preset patches. As FX veterans are probably aware, this is the first stop for dabblers, with four banks of sounds (made up from a combinations of effects) that are probably more useful than anything you'll come up with yourself.

*"The G2.1u is a great tool for jamming and recording, thanks to its generous selection of 40 digital drumbeats"*

The G2.1u is also a great tool for jamming and recording, thanks to its selection of digital drumbeats. There's a choice of 40 beats – that's 39 more than Ringo knows – and each one can be adjusted for tempo. You shouldn't need us to point out the expression pedal. What it controls depends on what effect you're using – from speed of delay to fruitiness of wah – but, like everything else on the G2.1u, this is infinitely tweakable.

Sealing the deal in style is the Cubase software and USB connection offered by the G2.1u. It enables you to record on to a computer and actually get your own music out there.

## BUILT TO LAST?

There's no faulting the expression pedal – we've spent the afternoon walking all over it. From a durability point of view, the buttons and dials aren't too bad either, but we did feel they might be a bit fiddly amidst the blood and thunder of a gig. Unless you're bent over them like a safe-cracker, it can be tricky to tell whether you have

selected 'Drive' or 'ZNR,' and the lack of a comprehensive LCD screen (like the POD) means you'll need to learn this unit's codes pretty fast. But if you're asking us whether the G2.1u would survive if the drummer stands on it, the answer is 'probably.'

## HANDS ON

An intuitive layout means it doesn't take long to get rocking on the G2.1u. TG soon found itself editing patches, and was impressed by the varied uses of the expression pedal and option of linking up to a computer. That's all fine, but it wouldn't be worth a damn if the effects were lame.

They're not, of course. There's a beautiful richness about the Marshall models that shouldn't really be feasible from a bit of plastic, while the Peavey 5150 sounds faithful to us. The pedal emulations are great, too, with the Fuzz Face in particular supplying a fat and authentic low end. That said, TG felt the most original effect was the Zoom Digital Fuzz, which emulates the spluttering of an amp that's had its speaker slashed with a razor blade.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

If money grew on trees, we'd choose the PODXT Live over the Zoom G2.1u. It's got more options and arguably sounds more authentic. While money has to be earned in office jobs, however, we'd have no hesitation giving this pedal two thumbs up. You get a whole lotta features for £129, and there's no doubt that this unit would be a top addition to any guitarist's setup. It hit the (G) spot.

**FOR:** Great effects and price

**AGAINST:** Controls are a bit fiddly; not that many amp models

**TG RATING:**

