

USB port
Connect to your computer and organise patches; this also acts as an audio interface for recording



COSM models
The COSM amp modelling brings a new level of sophistication at this price point

Expression pedal control
You can control wah, volume, pitch bend and Boss' new Freeze effect

Boss ME-25 £169

Say hello to Boss' most feature-filled, entry-level effects unit to date

TG remembers our first budget multi-fx unit: it was small and controlled by cycling through menus with a series of illogical button presses. In other words, about as user-friendly as that programmable VCR your dad could never figure out. Add the fact that it made our guitar sound like an angered wasp and cost about the same as Boss' latest effort, and you're reminded of how far budget gear has progressed in the last 15 years.

It might be entry level, but if you hadn't seen the price tag you'd be forgiven for thinking the ME-25 was a more expensive bit of kit. The metallic black finish brings it in line with its bigger brother, the ME-70, and it's the first unit at this price point to include Boss' COSM amp models. With analogue-style control, a looper, USB connectivity and some free recording software, the ME-25 exceeds expectations of what you can get for £169 in 2010.

Effects-wise, the ME-25 does the business. It doesn't include some of the more elaborate

effects of its sibling, but what you do get is a useable set of classic, distortion, modulation, delay and expression pedal-controlled effects.

Super Stack offers the sound of an overdriven valve-style stack amp, and the global Solo switch gives you a volume boost for lead parts. Also included in the unit is the new Freeze effect. This samples your playing to produce a sound that's not dissimilar to a sustained reverb-tail, providing the perfect textured backdrop for more ethereal playing.

The ME-25's not infallible, and while the size of the display is still limiting, the unit's userfriendliness lies in the fact that you can quickly find the settings you want to change and then use the rotary controls to adjust them. The patches are selected by using the Memory Up/Down footswitches, but you can only move up or down by one patch at a time. This means that if you're planning on using the unit in a live setting, you'll need to be pretty devious with the order in which you program your sounds.

Conclusion: Multi-fx pedals at this price are often designed for people who want to dip their toe into the world of effects, offering a solid (if not mind-blowing) taste of the sounds available. The ME-25 goes one better; the sounds are all decent quality, and the upgraded COSM amp models add yet another touch of class to the unit. For more control and some extra effects, look to the ME-70. But if you want to get started with a unit that laughs in the face of its limited budget, buy an ME-25.

Stuart Williams

At a glance

Boss ME-20

TYPE: Digital multi-fx
EFFECTS: Preamp, OD, Modulation, Delay, Expression, Tuner
PATCHES: 60
CONTROLS: 3x rotary controls, 3x footswitches, expression pedal
SOCKETS: Input, output L/R, aux in, phones, USB, power
POWER: Batteries, PSU
CONTACT: Roland 01792 702701
WEB: www.roland.co.uk

SUMMARY

For: It'll keep you busy for years

Against: Patch selection will limit giggers

★★★★★

TG says... ME-likey!



"IF YOU WANT TO GET STARTED WITH A MULTI-FX UNIT THAT LAUGHS IN THE FACE OF ITS LIMITED BUDGET, BUY AN ME-25"