

IBANEZ ES2 ECHO SHIFTER £115

Shift your expectations with this analogue delay

IN THE annals of Ibanez effects history, you'll find some of the most practical stompers of all time – and some of the most bonkers. The ES2 Echo Shifter sits between the two: at its heart, it's an old-school analogue delay with a few modern additions – but it boasts some bonkers ones, too.

To adjust the delay, you get three controls (feedback, mix and an awesome delay-time slider), plus a tap tempo footswitch for more precise delay times, which range from 30ms to one second. Then there are the oscillation and modulation switches. Oscillation, is the 'spaceship' sound you get from upping a delay's repeats so much that the pedal begins to feed

back on itself, and the ES2 makes this accessible at the flick of a switch. Combined with the foot-adjustable delay-time slider, you have access to all sorts of sonic mayhem – from pitch-shifted repeats to whirring UFO take-offs.

Sometimes, the ES2 can get too crazy for its own good. Turning up to 12 o'clock on the modulation depth control adds a chorus-y shimmer to the repeats, but anything above is so dramatically pitchy it's enough to make you hurl – we'd have liked a rate knob.

You don't have to go nuts with the ES2, though: its lush repeats have classic analogue charm without the noise; and if you want to get crazy, the option's there.

Michael Brown



TYPE: Delay pedal

CONTROLS: Feedback, mix, depth, delay time, oscillation switch, modulation switch, tap tempo footswitch

SOCKETS: Input, output, power

BYPASS: Buffered bypass

POWER: 9V battery, 9V power supply (not included)

CONTACT: Headstock Distribution

0121 508 6666 www.ibanez.co.jp

SUMMARY	FEATURES				
	SOUND QUALITY				
	VALUE FOR MONEY				
	BUILD QUALITY				
	USABILITY				
OVERALL RATING		★★★★★			

TOONTRACK METAL AMPS EZMIX PACK £29

Heavy tones made EZ

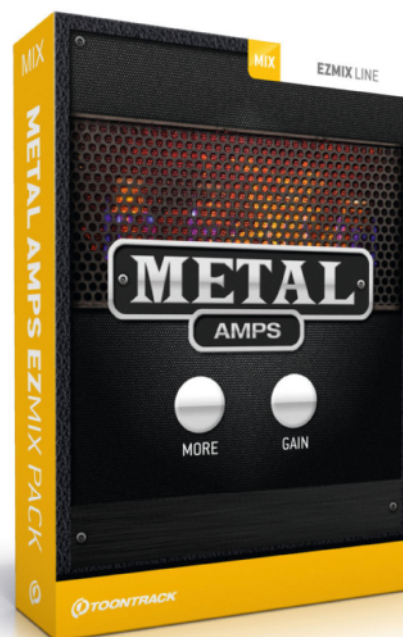
VERY little fills up your time quite like mixing: balancing levels, altering EQs, adding effects... it can get tedious, fast. Fortunately, Toontrack saw fit to speed up the whole process with its EZMix 2 plug-in, which offers a range of presets ready-made for mixing, with no further adjustment required. It has found favour with the likes of Misha Mansoor, while a range of expansion packs now cover more specialist sounds, from producers such as Andy Sneap to genre-specific presets – and that's where the Metal Amps Pack fits in.

The pack comprises 50 presets (40 for guitar, 10 for bass), based on impulse responses and modelling of classic high-gain

amps and cabs, all custom-made by pro engineer Jocke Skog. If you're after gained-up sounds that don't need any extra work, each preset offers tight and satisfying dirt, while effective noise gating affords machine gun-like precision to your rhythm playing.

The core tones are great, though each preset offers just two controls – usually gain and EQ, but these can branch out into parameters such as modulation depth or cabinet blend. For anyone used to the sprawling interface of Guitar Rig and its ilk, the EZMix approach could seem a little limiting, but for demos and even the occasional tone in a pro-quality production, here's all the heavy you need.

Michael Brown



TYPE: Metal amp tone preset plug-in

PRESETS: 50

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: EZMix 2

software (£104); Mac OS X 10.5 or higher, G5 with 512MB RAM; Windows XP SP3 or newer, Pentium 4 or Athlon processor with 512MB RAM

CONTACT: Time+Space

01837 55200 www.toontrack.com

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	SOUND QUALITY				
	VALUE FOR MONEY				
	USABILITY				
	OVERALL RATING	★★★★★			