



CONTROLS

THE six controls are reassigned for every pedal, and illuminate to show which ones are active

EFFECTS

HOTONE is aiming to release up to 300 amp, effect and cab models – at time of writing it had just over 70

SMART CONTROL

NO tiny screens or button pushes here; you load in the effects from your iOS or Android device

**AT A GLANCE**

TYPE: Modelling stompbox
CONTROLS: 6x knobs, 1x bypass switch, Xtomp app
SOCKETS: Stereo input and output, USB
BYPASS: Switchable buffer/true bypass per-effect
POWER: 9V adaptor
CONTACT: MusicPsych
 Distribution 0207 607 6005
www.xtomp.com

HOTONE XTOMP £179

Can one tiny pedal deliver 300 effects? This smart-stomper reckons so...

GEAR you can control from your phone is all the rage these days, and the latest unit promising Bluetooth-enabled effects wizardry is the Hotone Xtomp – a sharp-looking stompbox, housing a growing list of pedals, amp and speaker models (it's up to 72 as we write). Still confused? Let us explain.

The Xtomp was launched at NAMM earlier this year, with bold boasts from Hotone that it will one day host to 300 different effects models. It's got six assignable pots to take care of your controls, as well as a mushroom-shaped on/off switch. The onboard Bluetooth talks to your phone via the free Xtomp app, which in turn hosts a menu of gear. You pick your pedal, amp or speaker model from your phone and the hardware loads it. It's a concept that's been done before (see DigiTech's iStomp, or the Eventide H9) and is becoming more popular, as it cuts down on

expensive features such as screens. Hotone promises it'll be releasing regular updates, which will grow the library to the 300 target – we were a bit sceptical, but during our few weeks with the pedal, it was indeed updated three times, each time adding new stuff to the list.

It's very intuitive, and there's an impressive range of effects

The models are categorised by Amp, Distortion, Dynamic, Frequency, Modulation, Ambient, Combo (not that kind, more on this later), and Cabinet. Each model in the category is named, with familiar graphics to give you a clue as to what it's modelled after. Should you load it into the pedal, you can choose the bypass type (true or buffered) and trails on/off for delays and reverbs.

It's all very intuitive, and there's an impressive range of effects on offer, ranging from the staples (Muffs, Screampers, etc) to the boutique-aping of brands such as Providence, Hermida, Fulltone and others. Outside overdrives, our favourites are the Backmask

(reverse delay), Spaceko (modulated delay), Toucher (envelope filter) and, quite surprisingly, the AC acoustic simulator, which was one of the most impressive we've tried.

The pedal can also load preset 'combo' effects, where it'll pair mod and drive sounds, fuzz and octave, reverb and delay et al. We'd like to have the option to create our own dual-patches, but there's

nothing to say that couldn't happen in future.

Now for the sticking points. If you want to use this live, you'll most likely want to 'set and forget' your model. Many of the patches took between one to two *minutes* to load, and while that isn't too bad when you're sat watching TV, it's an eternity if you're on stage and your singer is 'doing banter' at the crowd. Not to mention that radical jumps between effect types will likely require you to physically reorder your pedals. All in all, though, the Xtone is a solid proposition, which could deliver where others haven't managed to.

Stuart Williams

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