



MXR Micro Flanger & Micro Chorus **£119 & £109**

Two MXR pedals from the eighties make a comeback. Those were the days... *by Trevor Curwen*

Launched at NAMM 2010, MXR's Micro Flanger and Micro Chorus are in fact reissues of a pair of pedals from the early eighties. At the time, MXR had the larger, mains-powered Flanger and Stereo Chorus pedals in its line-up and the Micro Flanger and Micro Chorus were the company's more compact versions – the same size as the Phase 90, DynaComp and so on. Back in the day, the earliest versions lacked status LEDs, but these were soon added and are present on the reissues.

The new pedals also sport sockets to take standard BOSS-style barrel connectors so they can run from a power adaptor as well as from a 9V battery accessed, in classic MXR style, by removing the pedal's baseplate – held on by four cross-head screws. One other new feature that the reissues have is true bypass switching, bringing them in line with modern pedal mentality.

Micro Flanger

MXR says that the Micro Flanger is based on the classic sounds of the MXR M117 Flanger, featuring many of the same flanging effects as that pedal. Where the M117 has four knobs, the Micro Chorus loses the manual and width knobs, getting down to basics with just a speed knob to control the rate of cycling and a regeneration knob to take care of the intensity of the flanging effect.

Sounds

The Micro Flanger utilises a 100 per cent analogue, bucket brigade device design to deliver vintage flanging tones, and in practice it doesn't disappoint, providing a sound that's reminiscent of the big grey eighties MXR. Most of the variation comes from the speed knob, which runs the gamut

from that classic cyclic shift in tonality through to a warble not unlike a fast rotary speaker. Dialling in regen intensifies the whole shebang as the flanging sweep becomes more obvious and the sound takes on a more trebly, metallic timbre, but never getting into the really clanky stuff that a vintage Electric Mistress is capable of – the MXR grey flanger is more polite. If you want weird sci-fi flanging you may wish to look elsewhere, but if it's smooth deep flanging with a range of sounds to complement your tone you want, try this.

Micro Chorus

The Micro Chorus also features old-school bucket brigade technology and offers real simplicity of operation with a single knob set-up. Whereas BOSS chorus pedals have always offered variable rate and depth, the MXR has just a rate knob to adjust the effect.

Sounds

The sound of the Micro Chorus is nice and rich and it delivers all the different sounds you'd expect from a chorus pedal at the various knob positions. The lack of a depth knob seems irrelevant here as the depth of the chorus effect has been factory-set to somewhere between ideal and perfect! Excellent stuff, ranging from adding some shimmer through to a very realistic impression of a fast rotary speaker.

Verdict

As well as having a cool sound, both pedals have other pluses. If you're concerned about



roadworthiness, both are weighty and solidly put-together and seem like they could stand up to plenty of underfoot punishment.

A possible concern for some is that the pedals bases are made of smooth metal, with no rubber attached for grip, so it's possible that they may move around underfoot, but as most guitarists seem to be mounting their pedals on boards these days it's not too much of an issue. The same goes for the battery access – you may need to keep a screwdriver handy if you rely solely on batteries, but if you use an adaptor all is well. We'd rather the adaptor inlet was at the top rather than the side of the pedal though.

Compact size, true bypass and bright LEDs are all major plus points, but they wouldn't count for much if these pedals didn't have the sound. Happily, however, they do, so give them a listen. **G**

The Bottom Line

We like: Solid build quality; classy vintage sounds

We disliked: Four-screw battery access

Guitarist says: Big flanging sounds in a small package; solid chorus with refreshing simplicity of operation

The Rivals

The **Electro-Harmonix Small Clone** chorus pedal (£59) is a single-knob analogue pedal. The Electric Mistress was E-HX's classic flanger from the period – available now as the **Deluxe Electric Mistress** (£89). In the eighties both MXR and E-HX were overshadowed by the rise of Japanese pedals, notably **BOSS**, whose latest offerings are the **CE-5 Chorus Ensemble** (£86) and **BF-3 Flanger** (£107). **Behringer** also has various options, such as the **Chorus Space-C** (£34) and **Ultra Flanger** (£34).

MXR Micro Flanger

PRICE: £119
ORIGIN: USA
TYPE: Flanger pedal
CONTROLS: Rate, Regen
CONNECTIONS: 6.4mm jack input and output
POWER: Nine-volt battery or DC adaptor (not supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 121 (d) x 70 (w) x 33mm (h)
JHS & Co
01132 865381
www.jimdunlop.com

Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

MXR Micro Chorus

PRICE: £109
ORIGIN: USA
TYPE: Chorus pedal
CONTROLS: Rate
CONNECTIONS: 6.4mm jack input and output
POWER: Nine-volt battery or DC adaptor (not supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 121 (d) x 70 (w) x 33mm (h)

Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★