



MAXON

EARTHQUAKER DEVICES

CP101 £99

As part of Maxon's Reissue series, this 'set and forget it' unit offers solid, transparent compression

ORIGIN: Japan
TYPE: Compressor pedal
FEATURES: Buffered bypass
CONTROLS: Sustain, Level, bypass footswitch
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output
POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 70 (w) x 113 (d) x 56mm (h)

Audio Distribution Group
www.audiodistributiongroup.com
www.maxonfx.com

The CP101 is an optical compressor with just two knobs, Dynacomp-style, to dial in your sound. There's no obvious tonal colouring going on here – this is pretty transparent compression that, from the lowest setting of the Sustain knob, adds a touch of dynamic solidity to your signal. Advance that Sustain knob and the compression increases, although it's always smooth. There's no real sense of having kicked in a compressor with this unit – the pedal just bolsters your signal and evens it out until you get into the second half of knob travel where single notes get a little more snap to their front-end rather than any radical reshaping of the note envelope.

It's actually quieter than some other two-knob compressors, and is one of those pedals that you can just forget about, leaving it on all the time once you've found an optimum setting to suit your style. [TC]

VERDICT An easy-to-use, solid performer offering nicely transparent control at an attractive price

8/10

The Warden £205

Signal enhancement is strong on the agenda here with multi-knob control for a natural, nuanced sound

ORIGIN: USA
TYPE: Compressor pedal
FEATURES: True bypass
CONTROLS: Tone, Attack, Release, Level, Sustain, Ratio, bypass footswitch
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output
POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 66 (w) x 120 (d) x 59mm (h)

Audio Distribution Group
www.audiodistributiongroup.com
www.earthquakerdevices.com

Another optical compressor, The Warden offers a full complement of compressor controls to shape your sound. Balancing Sustain (input signal fed to compressor) and Ratio (strength of compression) knobs determines how much compression you're going to get, and it's very natural sounding. The pedal doesn't offer any obvious squishiness even with Sustain and Ratio maxed, but it does keep things solid and consistent, and there's also plenty of headroom, so you can set the Level to drive your amp's front-end.

Tonally, there's a nice open sound with no obvious addition or subtraction of frequencies, but you do get a Tone knob to subdue top-end or – more likely – give it a boost to make up for losses due to compression. You could always just use that extra top-end to enhance your signal, making this a good choice for an always-on tonal component. [TC]

VERDICT Expensive, but those six knobs will deliver nuanced compression for a range of tasks

8/10



EMMA ELECTRONIC

TransMORGrifier £135

If you're after vintage-style compression, this delivers with a distinct voice and plenty of character

ORIGIN: Denmark

TYPE: Compressor pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Level, Release, Attack, Ratio, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 94 (w) x 123 (d) x 48mm (h)

Audio Distribution Group
www.audiodistributiongroup.com
www.emmaelectronic.com

Hand-built in Denmark, this pedal offers compression control via four knobs. Ratio turns up the effect balanced against the Level knob, which sets the right volume for your signal chain. Even at lower levels of the Ratio knob you get a decent amount of compression, the sort that adds a consistency to your playing. At the other extreme of the knob, there's a ton of squashy compression, which has a considerable effect on your note envelope – it's here the Attack and Release controls offer a very effective shaping facility with a wide degree of variation for anyone wanting a click, snap or pop at the front-end of their note. Release is particularly effective in dialling in more sustain as it facilitates the note blooming and rising in volume after the initial compression. Not exactly transparent, there's a slight treble boost and low-end loss, but that may suit some players. [TC]

VERDICT A characterful choice for those who like their compression as an obvious effect

8/10



FAIRFIELD CIRCUITRY

The Accountant £155

It may have simple controls, but this pedal gives you more than compression with a few tricks up its sleeve

ORIGIN: Canada

TYPE: Compressor pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Volume, Ratio switch (1/2/3), Pad switch (1/2/3), bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 45 (w) x 92 (d) x 48mm (h)

Audio Distribution Group
www.audiodistributiongroup.com
www.fairfieldcircuitry.com

This JFET compressor offers a simplified interface. The single knob adjusts the output volume, while the compression is determined by two three-way toggle switches: a Ratio switch that offers three different compression ratios of increasing strength, and a Pad switch that sets the input level, with higher input levels offering more compression. With nine possible combinations, the heaviest compression will be when both switches are set on position '2'.

It's more than just compression, though. There's a tone-enhancing treble lift and loads of scope for using the pedal as an amp boost. You can also get some gritty drive with the Pad switch set to '1' or '2'. The lighter compressions keep signal dynamics naturally in check, or you can switch to the highest compression ratio where there's a large amount of squash with altered note transients for the chicken-pickers. [TC]



VERDICT Micro pedal with easy operation that adds a bit of colour, plus bite and grit

9/10