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1 KHDK GHOUL SCREAMER £199

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Overdrive pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Drive, Tone, Volume, Bass switch, Highs switch, Body switch, 2x Compression switch, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

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

DIMENSIONS: 65 (w) x 120 (d) x 40mm (h)

Zoom UK

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The **Ghoul Screamer** is the first pedal from KHDK, started by Kirk Hammett and industry pro David Karon (hence the moniker), and it's the Metallica man's idealised version of a Tube Screamer. While Drive, Volume and Tone knobs will be familiar, the five mini-toggle switches will come as something new.

KHDK says that all switches in the up position gives you a perfect Tube Screamer, and that seems to be the case: classic overdrive with that midrange hump and pretty indistinguishable from our favourite TS808. The icing on the cake, though, is the switches – singly or combined. You can tweak the EQ profile with more bottom-end, glassier highs and a certain midrange aggression to cut through the mix via the Body switch. Then you have two options to increase the compression beyond the normal setting: real versatility presented in an innovative, easy-to-use manner. **[TC]**

VERDICT Extra control options make this one of the best classic Ibanez Tube Screamer-style pedals

9/10

2 KHDK NO.1 OVERDRIVE £169

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Overdrive pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Gain, Volume, Bass, Treble, Lo/Hi switch, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

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

DIMENSIONS: 65 (w) x 120 (d) x 40mm (h)

KHDK says the No.1 Overdrive pedal provides similar sounds to an overdriven valve amp and has cascading gain stages. The Gain and Volume knobs work as you'd expect them to, but there's also a Bass knob that controls the bottom-end, and that acts as a secondary gain control to increase lower mid-frequency gain.

The pedal has two modes. Lo mode has the lower gained settings and can run from a cleanish boost, through edge-of-breakup sounds, to a nice crunchy drive that works well for Keef-style rhythm chops. Hi delivers a fatter, more saturated sound with plenty of sustain, not unlike the sound of later-generation Marshall amps. That fatness and gain increases nicely with the Bass knob, but not so much to muddy the sound, while the Treble knob fully clockwise lets all the high frequency through, but rolls back to mellow the sound: a useful asset when matching it to your amp. **[TC]**

VERDICT Classy sounding valve amp-like overdrive with a wide range of tones to choose from

8/10

3 KHDK NO.2 CLEAN BOOST £169

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Boost pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Gain, Volume, Bass, Treble, Lo/Hi switch, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

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

DIMENSIONS: 65 (w) x 120 (d) x 40mm (h)

The **No.2 Clean Boost** is visually the reverse mirror image of the No.1: the black and white colours have been swapped around; the control setup remains the same. What you have here, though, is much less gain from the pedal's starting point and a slightly warmer midrange voicing.

In Lo mode with Volume up, you can get various levels of clean boost with or without tonal shift by setting the Gain knob from about 10 o'clock and beyond. The Bass knob works in combination with the Gain knob here in adding some extra gain. Careful juxtapositions of the two can dial in plenty of subtle variations, adding a little edge and some grittiness to a clean amp. Hi mode takes us to the next stage of true overdrive and is roughly on a par with the Lo mode on the No.1 Overdrive, in that it can deliver a similar range of sounds in the breakup and raunch areas. **[TC]**

VERDICT Boost and lower levels of overdrive amply covered with plenty of subtle variations available

8/10

4 KHDK SCUZZ BOX £169

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Fuzz pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Fuzz, Volume, Deep, Tone, Scuzz/Fuzz switch, buffer switch, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

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

DIMENSIONS: 65 (w) x 120 (d) x 40mm (h)

A **germanium fuzz** pedal with perfectly appropriate purple chickenhead knobs, the Scuzz Box has a toggle-switched buffer designed to increase placement options in your effects chain and combat tone-sucking from long cable runs – something we take advantage of, finding it adds clarity and reduces top-end loss.

At lower Fuzz knob levels, there are some cool overdrive sounds with a fuzzy edge, but higher up this is proper gooey vintage fuzziness with great playability, responding well to dynamics, cleaning up nicely with guitar volume, and retaining a useful mush-free articulation when playing chords. There's plenty of variation available from the Deep knob, adjusting low-end before the gain stage from lean to fat, and the Tone knob, which sets the top-end. Scuzz mode offers that sputtering gated fuzz, which can be cool, as long as you adjust your playing to avoid false triggering. **[TC]**



VERDICT Vintage fuzz sound combines with modern features in a versatile pedal

9/10