



JIM DUNLOP JOHN PETRUCCI SIGNATURE CRY BABY JP95 £189

The prog-metal titan brings you the versatility of a Cry Baby Rack Module in pedal format, freeing you to find your own voicings from your 'board

Words Trevor Curwen **Photography** Adam Gasson

The Cry Baby has been around for 50 years now and is still going strong with loads of variations of the iconic wah pedal currently available, several of them being artist signature models. Besides the classic Clyde McCoy model (named after a trumpet player!), the signature range has named models from guitarists Jerry Cantrell, Joe Bonamassa, Buddy Guy, Dimebag Darrell, Eddie Van Halen, Kirk Hammett, Zakk Wylde, Slash and Jimi Hendrix.

Now, one might wonder why there are so many? Well, yes, the graphic artwork and finishes are all different, but a wah pedal is a wah pedal, is it not? Well, as far as the signature range is concerned, each player has specified how they want their wah to sound. So, what we get – besides different components and facilities

in some models – are finely tuned differences in EQ, bandwidth (Q) and volume when active, giving each iteration a distinctive voice. The new addition to the range has that, too: the JP95 John Petrucci Cry Baby comes with the Dream Theater guitarist's preferred voicing, but it's not just for Petrucci admirers; it may be the most versatile Cry Baby floor-pedal yet, as it features eight internal trim pots to set up its sound to your own preferences.

For years, John Petrucci has used the Jim Dunlop Custom Cry Baby Rack, a system comprising a pedal connected to a rackmount unit with knobs to adjust a host of parameters. This new signature wah's intent is to put the finely tweaked sound that John achieved with that unit into a single pedal. However,

ABOVE The pedal has a satisfying amount of travel and resistance

RIGHT A dark chrome mirrored finish gives the Cry Baby a sleek look with only subtle references to its signature originator



while the pedal comes factory-set with *that* sound, it offers the rack wah's facilities in miniature, so if you want to tweak it yourself you just need to take off the baseplate, grab a mini screwdriver and make some adjustments to the trim pots. One trim pot adds extra volume, another adjusts the Q for the sharpness of the wah sweep, and the remaining six offer EQ adjustments over a range running from 100Hz to 3.2kHz, nicely covering all the relevant frequencies for a guitar and amp combination.

It's actually a fine-looking pedal in its dark chrome mirrored finish, the only indications that it's a signature pedal being a subtle blink-and-you'll-miss-it Petrucci graphic beneath the Cry Baby logo and a 'JP' shield design on the rubber treadle pad. Switching the effect on is the usual matter of pressing down on the 'toe' of the pedal, a pair of blue LEDs (one each side) letting you know it's active. The pedal exhibits just the right amount of treadle travel and resistance, with a smooth transition from heel to toe.

Sounds

The Petrucci settings right out of the box are throaty and aggressive with boosts on the pots covering the vocal frequencies of 800Hz and 1.6kHz and reflecting his own wah. With a dirt box in front of it, Petrucci's wah becomes more of a tone-shaping tool – an expressive filter to change the character of notes to get them to sing out or bloom into sustain, something that

it does really well. Still, that's not to say that it doesn't suit the wah-wah solo style or wacka-wacka rhythms if that's what you're after, although you may need to look at adjusting the six tonal frequencies for optimum impact. The fact is there's loads of control here to voice the pedal exactly to your taste, whether you want the midrange emphasised or scooped, a screechy or smooth top end, or to roll off some of the bottom for a tighter sound with humbuckers.

Verdict

It's thanks to JP that this pedal was developed, and while it has got his name on it, that's perhaps not where the main focus should be drawn to. What we have here is the versatility of the Cry Baby Rack condensed into just a single pedal. Of course, there isn't the instant tweakability of being able to grab the knobs on the rack and set up a new sound on the fly, but how many of us need that? JP himself said that once he had found his desired settings he didn't change them at all. What we have here is a pedal that you can absolutely tweak to create your own sonic signature then set it and forget it – and revel in its simplicity of use. **G**

PROS Comprehensive tonal control of the wah effect; solid build; good looks

CONS Pot adjustment positions could be marked better visually

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: USA
TYPE: Wah pedal
FEATURES: True hardwire bypass
CONTROLS: Bypass footswitch, 8x internal trim pots (Volume, Q, 100Hz, 200Hz, 400Hz, 800Hz, 1.6kHz, 3.2kHz)
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output
POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

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