



90



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Multi-effects pedal
CONTROLS: Three assignable patch controls, View, Action, Page Left and Page Right buttons; main and secondary menu knobs, master volume knob

SOCKETS: MIDI in, MIDI out/thru, headphone jack, stereo in, stereo out, TRS expression in, USB
BYPASS: Buffered bypass

POWER: 9V DC centre-negative 3A (supplied)
CONTACT: Yamaha UK
 uk.yamaha.com

1 HEADPHONE JACK
 Playing late at night? Don't want to annoy the neighbours? Practise silently by dropping an amp block into your preset and then plugging your cans into the headphone out

2 DUAL EXPRESSION INPUT
 Despite having only a solo expression input, this jack accepts a TRS cable, so it's possible to run a dual expression pedal from the HX Stomp to control wah or pitch-shift effects

3 DISPLAY
 Although it features a diminutive form-factor, the HX Stomp manages to cram a crisp full-colour screen onto the front panel

LINE 6 HX STOMP

£558



The power of the full-fat Helix in stompbox form. Surely not!

Recognising that some players just want the effects from the Helix, Line 6 brought out the HX Effects – a slimmed-down Helix with most of the effects, and none of the amps. The HX Stomp is the counterpart to that unit, in that it contains 300 effects, including the Helix, M Series and legacy Line 6 patches, as well as the amp, cab and mic options of the full-fat Helix. It even supports loading impulse responses, so if you have modelled your own amps, or purchased commercial IRs, they can be loaded as well.

Cramming not only the sounds of those units, but also a full-colour screen into a unit the size of the HX Stomp is certainly impressive and no mean feat. This leads to what seems to be a failure of the unit: that owing to its size,

it's very hard to not hit one or more of the parameter control knobs with your foot when hitting the footswitches. Line 6, however, has clearly thought of this, and those knobs are not functional when the unit isn't in edit mode; nevertheless, there is always the worry that you're one heavy stomp

by a pedal switcher. In that context, it's easy to see the attraction. Though the HX Stomp is limited in terms of its controls on the front, it's highly customisable, and offers a broad palette of professional-grade effects to explore. For the guitarist that wants specific modulations,

IT OFFERS A BROAD PALETTE OF PROFESSIONAL GRADE EFFECTS

away from a broken pedal. Still, it's a relatively minor concern, and perhaps pitching up the front of the pedal on a 'board would be enough to avoid damaging anything.

With MIDI in and out, there's clearly been some consideration for those that want to incorporate the HX Stomp into a rig controlled

by a pedal switcher. In that context, it's easy to see the attraction. Though the HX Stomp is limited in terms of its controls on the front, it's highly customisable, and offers a broad palette of professional-grade effects to explore. For the guitarist that wants specific modulations,

delays or a cab sim on tap 'just in case,' the HX Stomp is a smart, compact solution, and the capacitive footswitches make assigning and editing a relatively error-free procedure – it's unlikely you'll need to refer to the manual much at all.

In terms of the sounds, it's exactly the high standard that you'd expect from Line 6. On the distortion side, we found a decent amount of mileage with the Rat and DS-1 models, before settling on the OCD as one of the better all-round drives present. Through our single-ended 5W British-voiced tube amp, we found a lot to like with both single-coil and humbucker pickups, with a fat drive sound dipping into heavy saturation as we rolled up the output. Plugging in our studio headphones, we set up a Plexi model at the end of our signal chain, dropped the gain and master volume, and stuck an 87 condenser model in front. Going from the amp in the room to a simulated amp is always a claustrophobic experience, but moving the Plexi forward a spot – as simple as pressing the rotary knob, moving the block and clicking again to confirm – and



The return of the multi-effects

We've seen large multi-effect units make a comeback; is it time to reassess compact ones?

For players of a certain age, if you say 'Zoom 505', they'll be transported back to their first band, playing in a friend's garage. Somebody would have a 505, or 505 II, and would be using it to create an absolute crime of a guitar sound. Where bigger digital modellers have for many years had enough processing power to produce useful effects (if not amp simulations) the smaller multi-effects of the late-90s and early 2000s were pushing the envelope for 'useful'. The HX Stomp suffers from none of these drawbacks with fantastic effects and, crucially, in something of a first for a pedal of this size, decent amp models as well.

adding a room reverb with short decay and a low mix proved surprisingly convincing. Even breaking out our trusty seven-string didn't faze the HX Stomp, and it handled hotter EMG active pickups just fine.

In terms of the reverbs, the newer reverb models didn't overly excite us apart from the rich Ganymede patch, while we found ourselves generally tending back toward the granular reverb of the Particle patch in the 'legacy' section.

Meanwhile, in delay-land, we're delighted to discover that there's

Loaded with 300 sounds, the HX Stomp is a beefed-up version of the HX Effects



The MIDI in and out allows for integration with a pedal switching rig



more on offer here than you can shake a stick at, with the Sweep, Transistor Tape, Cosmos and Harmony delays impressing this reviewer.

Conversely, the HX Stomp is almost a victim of its own small-format success. When you consider the sheer depth and quality of the sounds on offer here, you may find yourself looking at the Helix LT or Helix and wondering to yourself what having additional footswitches would allow you to do. That said, just setting up a basic rig, such the excellent ping-pong delay in front

of a solid reverb, with a decent amp sim at the end of the chain, might well be worth the price of admission alone, especially if you're playing a function gig or going direct into a PA – and for players utilising switching systems, it's most certainly a worthy purchase.

Alex Lynham

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

ALSO TRY...

LINE 6 HX EFFECTS

£499

The HX effects doesn't have the screen or the amp models, but it's an intuitive and fantastic effects processor that's small enough to grab-and-go for jamming or gigs.



BOSS GT-1000

£849

It may not be as intuitive to use as the Line 6 units, but the effects and amps on the GT-1000 are fantastic, with sounds from the DD-500, RV-500 and MD-500.



LINE 6 HELIX LT

£799

A slimmed-down version of the larger Helix, the LT boasts all the effects and cabs you could ever need, as well as a best-in-class user interface.

