



The EX-7 offers a choice of seven classic expression effects – from the Dunlop Cry Baby to the DigiTech Whammy



Unlike other expression pedals, such as wah or volume, the EX-7 has toe and heel (pictured) switches for selecting effects in a split second

The expression pedal controls effect parameters – but also features ‘toe’ and ‘heel’ buttons for easy access to effects



WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?
THINK THE EX-7 IS EXPENSIVE? TRY DOING IT THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY...

It's not until you sit down with a calculator and a copy of *Trade It* that you realise just how economical the EX-7 is. Even skimming over the fact that half the pedals modelled by this unit (such as the XP300, the Leslie and the A/DA Flanger) are no longer in production – and therefore priceless – the amount of cash you'd need to get the remainder onto a pedalboard is staggering.

Let's start with the Dunlop Cry Baby, a reissued version of which will sting you for £110. Not too bad, but then it's over to the Vox showroom to cough up £149 for the reissued Clyde McCoy. Next up are the DigiTech Whammy (MkIV) and Metal Master – yours for £209 and £89 respectively. By this point, you may be feeling the pinch, but you'll still need another £59 for the DOD 250 Overdrive Reissue and £70 for the ProCo Rat. Boss pedals are good value, but you'll still need to spend £39 on the DS-1 and £69 for the Metal Zone. Getting the Big Muff in your gigbag will take a not-inconsiderable £48, while the Ibanez TS-9 costs £99. Finally, you'll need to head to the Jim Dunlop website to pick up a Univibe UV1 for £299.

To get all these effects – plus the cab sims and the pedals that no longer exist – in the compact form of the DigiTech EX-7, you'll pay a mere £229. To assemble them on a pedalboard – in reissue form, and minus all the best ones – you'll pay over a grand.

Mode (it tailors the output depending on whether you're using an amp or a mixer) and the footswitch jack (it lets you connect up the optional FS3X, which is probably quite exciting, but sadly, DigiTech didn't put one in our box).

BUILT TO LAST?

DigiTech's artist roster takes in some of the hairiest (and heaviest) guitarists in the world of heavy metal. That's undoubtedly the reason why the Expression Factory is such a beefy little bastard. It's built from rugged cast-metal, weighs a chunky 3.38lbs and, thanks to its rubber base, it won't skim across your stage like a stone across the surface of a frozen lake.

HANDS ON

We're not knocking units like the POD, but there's a real immediacy about the EX-7's design that will suit anyone taking their faltering first steps into the world of modelling. DigiTech have struck a great balance here, with enough options to keep the dabblers happy, but not so many that it feels like a science lesson. The manual takes less time to read than a cereal box, and you should have the basics down in about 20 minutes.

Having connected one end of the EX-7 to our trusty Marshall and the other to our

ALTERNATIVELY

- Line 6 Pod XT Live – £399
- Korg AX10G – £115
- Vox Valvetronix ToneLab SE – £399

Telecaster, TG decided to set the ball rolling by running through the seven effects models and seeing what flicked our switch. The 'Model' control was duly turned to the '1' position and the pedal pushed fully forward to activate the toe button. Nothing. We tried again, this time pushing harder on the front of the pedal. Still nothing. It was only when we stood up and concentrated our entire bulk on it that the LED finally turned green, and the distinctive tone of the Cry Baby quacked forth from the amp. There's an important lesson to be learnt here – don't use this pedal when you're sitting down. We should explain here that pedals with a rocking footplate (or treadle, as it's known in the trade) often take a little more effort than regular stompboxes to switch on and off. This prevents you from switching the effect off accidentally when you're wiggling your foot excitedly during a solo.

There's no faulting the tones on offer here. Like the proverbial child in the sweetshop, TG was soon gorging ourselves on the various models and pinning down our favourites. Of the seven, we reckon the most useful is probably the Cry Baby. It's totally authentic, with a glorious funky swell that will lend real personality to the most prosaic of solos, and a massive Kirk Hammett-style punch when you rock back onto the heel button to bring in the DOD overdrive. →

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

TG INTRODUCES THE LEGENDARY PEDALS THAT INSPIRED THE DIGITECH EX-7

1 DUNLOP CRY BABY

Thanks to the wacka-chacking of Clapton and Hendrix, wah boomed in popularity at the end of the 1960s. The Cry Baby's ascent to the top of the pile was largely due to its Italian-made Fasel inductor, giving it a thicker tone and lush harmonics. Modern versions use optical sensors instead of the Fasel, but it's the original that's modelled here.



2 VOX CLYDE MCCOY

The world's first wah pedal was born in 1966, when Vox started tinkering with the mid-range boost circuit used in their amps. Originally intended to mimic the sound of a muted trumpet – hence the endorsement of brass hero McCoy – the pedal instead found its way into Clapton's gigbag.



3 DIGITECH XP300

It's been discontinued for years, but this gonzo DigiTech pedal deserved better. With effects including resonators, ring modulators, an autowahmy and reverse effects, the original XP300 was a true original. You can't even find them on eBay.



4 DIGITECH WHAMMY

It's only been around for a decade, but the Whammy feels like a modern classic. There have been four different versions since the release of the WH-1, but most of the pedal's most famous users (like Tom Morello and Munky of Korn) maintain the original is the best.

5 UNICORD UNI-VIBE

Created in the late 60s and promptly immortalised by Hendrix on the Star Spangled Banner, the Uni-Vibe was essentially a four-stage phase shifter with a vibrato option. Chorus would later become a dirty word, but here it was dark and sophisticated.



6 LESLIE 147 ROTARY SPEAKER

Looking not unlike a chest of drawers, this 1960s monster featured a speaker with a segmented drum spinning under it to disperse the sound. Organ players were the first to pick up on its unique tone, but guitarists soon got in on the act.

7 A/DA FLANGER

Introduced in 1977, the A/DA Flanger combined a 35-to-1 sweep range and built-in compressor to create its dramatic jet-engine roar.



A footswitch socket enables you to connect the optional FS3X for additional control



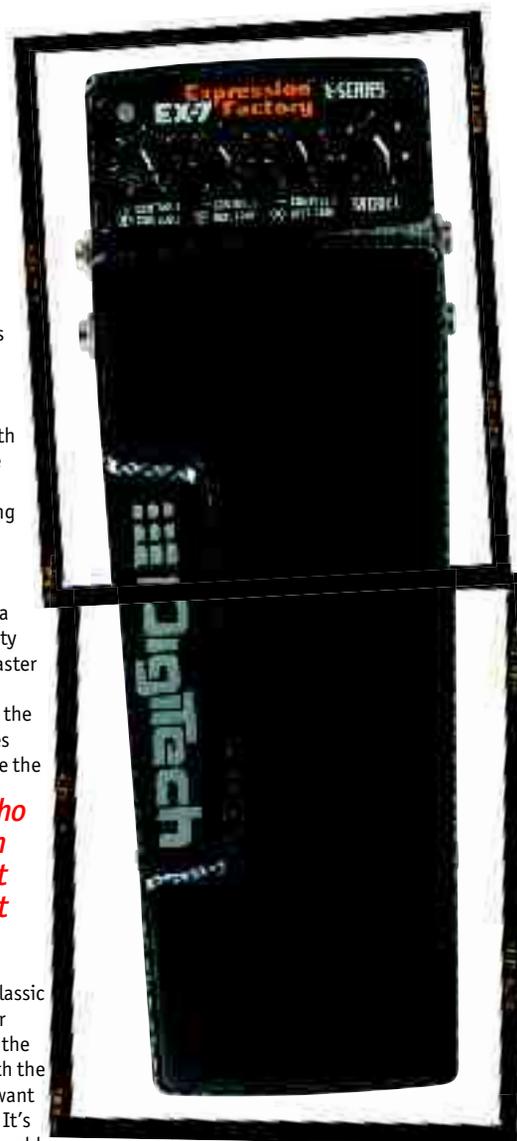
→ That's our favourite – now let's rank the remaining six. The Clyde McCoy wah would have to be our second choice. It's got a subtly different flavour to the Cry Baby – more biting and 'squelchy' – and combines with the ProCo Rat model to provide the ultimate setting for solos. We're also giving DigiTech's own Whammy a place on the podium. Between the massive array of pitch-shifting settings (anything from Octave Up to Reverse 2nd Down) and the unbeatable control of the expression pedal, this is your ticket to flawless divebombs and smooth harmonic shifts. Equally bonkers is the XP300 – our fourth favourite. Perhaps this model is best described as sounding like a troupe of Benedictine monks doing Gregorian chants in outer space. It's atmospheric and other-worldly; swelling and spiralling like an orchestra as you work the pedal, and turning nasty when you bring in the default Metal Master distortion model.

The final three sounds will appeal to the real vintage buffs. The Uni-Vibe wobbles along nicely, and although we don't see the

"If you're an effects junkie who changes his tone more often than he changes his socks, it should be fairly obvious that you'll love this pedal"

metal crowd using this setting much, classic rock fans will love it. The Leslie Speaker simulator is one for the mods. Pick out the intro to Paul Weller's *Changing Man* with the Leslie churning away and you'll never want to switch it off. And the A/DA Flanger? It's not to everyone's taste but it's great for old school Van Halen riffs. Just don't overdo it.

While TG loved the overall performance of the EX-7, it's worth mentioning a couple of minor gripes. For instance, it's possible to override the default settings and 'pair' any distortion model with any effect model, but not to have distortion on its own (ie, without also having a modulation effect). And while the toe and heel buttons work well, it also seemed strange that when you add distortion – then turn it back off – the EX-7 reverts to 'bypass' (ie, instead of returning to the modulation effect). But don't let us put you off with such trifles – this unit kicks serious ass.



THE BOTTOM LINE

All guitarists should have at least one decent expression pedal in their arsenal. This isn't just an indulgence. As everyone from Clapton to Hendrix would agree, the ability to control the ebb and flow of effects like wah brings a personality to your playing that wouldn't be there if you were just using your hands. The only question is whether the EX-7 Expression Factory is the one.

The answer is a resounding yes. If you're a no-nonsense rocker who uses a bit of wah and a lot of distortion, you might not think you need the versatility offered by the EX-7. But then, seeing as a standalone wah and distortion pedal would cost the same as this unit, doesn't it make more sense to go down this route and get the extra models too? And if you're an FX junkie who changes his tone more often than he changes his socks, it should be fairly obvious that you'll love this.

Versatility is one thing, but it's the quality of the tone that really did it for TG. Not only do all the models sound like they should, but they respond authentically too – bringing real dynamics and mood into the mix. Isn't it time you put your foot down?

FOR: Cracking level of authenticity and extensive options

AGAINST: You can't use the distortions on their own

TG RATING

