

ASHDOWN UNDER MY FEET

Ashdown Engineering is a British manufacturer who have made a name for themselves producing affordable quality gear. Recently they have devised a range of effect pedals specifically designed for the bass guitar. Featuring true bypass switching, the range comprises of a Dual Band Compressor, Sub Octave Plus,

Bass Drive Plus, Envelope Filter and Bass Chorus Plus. I was given the opportunity to Roadtest the first four of these pedals.

COMMON FEATURES

They are a chunky bunch and would take up some considerable room on the pedal board. All have the common feature of 5 dials set in a channel or groove in the middle of the pedal. There is the minor annoyance that the dials are light on a definitive marking so it is hard to determine where they are located in their rotation.

All pedals are housed in durable metal cases and feature an input level control with a trademark illuminated Ashdown VU meter which is protected by 2 metal barriers.

The VU meter allows optimum signal matching and gives you excellent input gain control. All pedals have an output level control to obtain a balance between the effect and the bypass mode. The pedals can be powered either by a 9 Volt battery or an external DC power supply.

LETS HAVE A LOOK AT EACH ONE.

Dual Band Compressor

Ashdown's Dual Band Compressor splits you bass' signal into high and low frequency bands and applies compression separately to both. There is fast attack and decay for the high frequency and slow attack and decay for the low frequency. You can manipulate the amount of compression applied to each and the balance between the high and low frequency components of the signal is also controllable. This pedal can tighten up your sound nicely and get rid of those unwanted variations.

Sub Octave Plus

The Sub Octave Plus provides you with a note an octave below the original note being played at the same volume and is based on the waveform of the original signal. Octave pedals are one of my favourite to have. They allow you to add some subtle reinforcement or take you to extreme bass heaven. You haven't played bass until you have hit an octave pedal hard. A feature the pedal has that I really like is its ability to add some distortion to the sub-octave note. The amount and characteristics of the distortion are adjustable and when you switch back to a normal playing tone you can't help but think something is lacking.

Bass Drive Plus

This pedal generates a range of bass distortion effects from a slight grunge tone to a high-gain overdrive. Whilst not a heavy bottom end distortion, it can still get to some blistering heights. There are controls to set the amount of distortion, adjust its character and level and balance the amount of the effect you place over the clean signal.

Envelope Filter

This pedal is fun. It is capable of a wide range of effects from auto-wah through to some weird and funky tones. The sweeping filter can be either up or down and gives you the selection of a band-pass or high pass filter mode. There is a peak control for more extreme effects whilst the depth of the effect is controlled by the volume of each note as it's played. This pedal can make you very creative or just plain crazy.

The Low Down

So how did they go? Well as a collective, they all fared well and are obviously a quality pedal. The size seems somewhat over the top but that doesn't effect their performance at all.

RRP \$299.99 each

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