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ORIGINAL 'SCRIPT LOGO' MXR PHASE 90 PEDALS ARE RARER THAN HENS' TEETH. DAN STEINHARDT WONDERS IF THIS REISSUE CAN REWRITE THE SCRIPT...

MXR VINTAGE 1974 PHASE 90

In the mid-1970s, MXR was producing what many believe to be the greatest phaser ever made, the legendary 'script logo' Phase 90. Players such as David Gilmour, Andy Summers and Jeff Baxter were all conjuring memorable sounds from their Phase 90s but it wasn't until a young Eddie Van Halen sparked up an instrumental called 'Eruption' that guitarists started knocking down the doors of their local music shop demanding the pedal he used to get 'that sound'.

In a strange twist of fate, it was probably the sound Eddie created with this little orange box that led to the first design changes to this pedal. Players were a bit disappointed when their Phase 90s didn't seem to reproduce the tones that Eddie extracted out of his, probably because they'd forgotten to order a wall of Marshalls and a truck load of talent at the same time. Consequently, certain resistor values were tweaked to give

the Phase 90 a more pronounced mid-range so it would sound bigger through small amps, but many felt that with these changes the pedal lost a bit of its character.

Around the same time the company changed hands and the MXR logo was replaced with the current 'block' style, which made the original 'script logo' version pretty easy to spot for players who preferred the sound of the older pedals. Nowadays originals change hands for big bucks, but MXR has released what may be the ultimate pedal reissue – the Vintage 1974 Phase 90. To test out this new pedal, we have rummaged around in the dusty GB toy cupboard and dug out our very own original MXR Phase 90 made in 1974 for comparison.

CONSTRUCTION & FEATURES

So pedantic are the collectors of vintage Phase 90s that most of them will even be able to specify what sort of enclosure their pedal is in, the most collectable being the original

'Bud Box' from 1974. The reissue's enclosure is, in all but name, the same. The circuit board, components and construction bear more than just a passing resemblance to the original pedal as well.

The circuit board is identical to the original with all components being either the same or modern day equivalents of what was available in the early '70s. As there are no modern surface mount components use here, even the construction method is the same as it was back in the early days of MXR, when these things were being put together in a chicken shed. MXR has even included a piece of the same type of insulating foam between the circuit board and the back plate, so in 20 years this should also disintegrate and leave an awful mess just like in the originals!

The single speed control gives you access to all the classic Phase 90 tones and, in keeping with the original, there is no DC power adaptor input, so this pedal will only operate on a 9V battery. Although changing

GBINFO

MXR VINTAGE 1974 PHASE 90

PRICE: £179

TYPE: Analogue phaser
stompbox

FEATURES: Speed control

POWER: 9V battery only

DIMENSIONS: 55(h) x 60(w)
x 110(d) mm

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