



Xotic cleverly made the X-Blender's blend knob big enough for foot control.

XOTIC X-BLENDER

BY MAX SIDMAN

IF YOU'RE A PERSNICKETY TONE FREAK WITH A LOT OF pedals, then you know the knife's edge you walk at every gig or practice. After spending hours carefully selecting the hippest collection of stompboxes, your set list doesn't include many songs that call for a single effect. Suddenly your painstakingly dialed-in pedalboard becomes an impediment to the sanctity of your instrument's natural tone—a seemingly unnecessary sacrifice, given how rarely you might use it. Even with true-bypass pedals, signal strength and fidelity suffers as it travels through your pedalboard's circuitous electronic path.

The Xotic Effects X-Blender is a particularly happening solution. Not only does it help remedy tone-suck, it adds even more sound-shaping power to your arsenal. A footswitchable effect loop, the X-Blender can bypass your entire effects chain or place it in series with your bass and, when the BLEND switch is engaged, allow for a continuously variable mix between your rig's dry and wet sounds. When I hit the TRUE BYPASS switch, the dry signal of my bass rang true, and when I engaged the SERIES mode, my pedalboard sounded exactly as I expected it to, as though

the X-Blender was invisible.

As if the simple joy of clean and efficient tone management wasn't enough, turning on the BLEND mode revealed the X-Blender's real utility. Not only could I vary the ratio of my dry-to-wet tone by turning the big knob, but I could make use of the pedal's internal preamp. VOLUME controlled the overall output; BOOST added a quick 6dB gain bump; the 2-band EQ regulated my bass's treble and bass response; and the EFX PHASE INVERT button was available to help me phase-align my signal with vintage effects, some of which can phase invert as a consequence of their operation. The X-Blender's onboard preamp went beyond mere buffering; it substantially expanded my sonic palette.

The X-Blender felt sturdy, and its average size made fitting into my crowded pedal or dropping into my gig bag's pouch easy. While the footswitches are the hardy standard-issue metal jobs, and DRY/WET knob is big enough for a mid-song foot-turn without any contortion, the other controls are small and not easy to adjust on the fly, so your better off setting and forgetting them.

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XOTIC X-BLENDER

Street \$230

Pros Well executed footswitchable series/parallel effect loop; EQ and gain-boosting preamp.

Cons Preamp controls are too small.

TECH SPECS

Input impedance 1MΩ

Power 9-volt tip-negative AC adapter or 9-volt battery

Weight 1lbs

Contact

www.xotic.us