



EVENTIDE MODFACTOR

COULD THIS BE THE MOST POWERFUL MODULATION PEDAL EVER MADE? DAVID GREEVES SETS PHASERS (AND CHORUS) TO STUN...

Eventide came to prominence in the 1970s, when the US company's pioneering expertise in the design and programming of digital delays led to landmark products like the H910 Harmonizer. Since then, Eventide has remained at the forefront of digital effects development, producing some seriously clever gear, not just for studio recording but also branching out into the fields of broadcasting, communications and even avionics.

However, there was little cause for the average guitarist to have heard of the company until the advent of the Eventide Stompbox range in 2007. Their first pedal, the Time Factor, was an awesomely powerful delay processor that, on top of multiple studio-quality delay effects, offered

possibly the most in-depth yet user-friendly tweakability we've ever seen in a delay. A tough act to follow? No sweat, says Eventide.

CONSTRUCTION & FEATURES

The Modfactor follows the format of the Timefactor exactly. About the size of a thick paperback book, it's constructed from sturdy cast metal with a very clear and somehow charmingly old-school LED display across the centre, separating the three footswitches below from the forest of knobs above. The unit is reassuringly weighty and there's a solid, well-designed feel to every feature.

You have 10 effect modes to choose from: chorus, phaser, 'Q-Wah' (an envelope follower or auto-wah), flanger, 'ModFilter' (a modulated filter), rotary speaker, 'TremoloPan' (a trem with stereo panning capabilities),

vibrato, 'Undulator' (combining delay, detuning and tremolo) and ring modulator. Within each of these, multiple effect types are available – for example, the vibrato offers 'modern', 'vintage' and 'retro' sounds, while the ModFilter can be set to low-pass, high-pass or band-pass filter operation.

You'll already be getting some sense of the complexity concealed within this compact unit, but the key to making use of it all is understanding that the Modfactor uses not one but two LFOs. An LFO (or 'low frequency oscillator') is something that will be a lot more familiar to analogue synth players than guitarists. In this case, it's the thing that controls the behaviour of the effect: the depth, speed and shape of the modulation waveform.

The top row of controls – intensity, depth, speed, shape and 'Xnob' – apply to the primary LFO controlling whichever effect is selected (the

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EVENTIDE MODFACTOR

PRICE: £389

TYPE: Modulation effects processor

FEATURES: 10 effect modes with type, intensity, depth, speed, shape, xnob, d-mod, s-mod, mod rate & mod source controls, 40 presets, bypass, slow/fast & tap tempo footswitches, stereo inputs with guitar/line level switch, stereo outputs with amp/line level switch, expression pedal & aux footswitch inputs, MIDI in & out/thru, USB connector

POWER: 9V DC mains adaptor only (included)

DIMENSIONS: 122(h) x 190(w) x 54(d) mm

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function of the Xnob control varies according to the effect). You could quite happily confine yourself to these controls and have a truly huge range of sounds to play with. However, the real fun begins when you start using the bottom row of controls. These apply to the secondary LFO, the purpose of which is to modulate the behaviour of the first LFO, effectively modulating the modulation!

Confused yet? The idea is that, by using the D-Mod, S-Mod, mod rate and mod source knobs, you can change the depth and speed of the effect along a preset pattern. This two-tiered, modulated modulation opens up a whole new world of possibilities.

The first LFO's shape control and the second LFO's mod source control offer the same wide choice of modulation waveforms, all appropriately illustrated by the display: sine, triangle, peak, random, ramp, square, sample/hold, envelope and ADSR. These last two options are a little different in that they follow the dynamics of your playing – think of how an auto-wah sweeps to follow the volume of the note you play.

Both have one more option we haven't mentioned: the expression pedal. Plugging in one of these lets you control the modulation sweep



GBVERDICT

EVENTIDE MODFACTOR

GOLD STARS

- ★ Studio-quality sounds
- ★ Vast range of stunning effects
- ★ Incredibly deep editing capabilities

BLACK MARKS

- The (understandably) hefty price tag

GBRATING



(or, indeed, the secondary LFO) with your foot. And it gets better, because any combination of knobs on the Modfactor can be mapped to the expression pedal. Simply set the relevant controls how you want them with the expression pedal in the heel-down position, move it to the toe-down position and move the knobs to a new setting, and from then on the relevant parameters will change as you move the pedal. This is a simply incredible feature.

We've not yet even had time to mention the tap tempo footswitch, or that fact that you can connect an extra footswitch for tap tempo, leaving the Modfactor's own switches for recalling the 40 storable presets. We've not mentioned the option of buffered or true-bypass operation, or the stereo inputs and outputs switchable for use in front of an amp or in an effects loop, or the fact that the Modfactor can be controlled or control other devices via MIDI or USB... There really is a lot going on in here, but it's much easier to use than it is to explain. A thorough read of the manual is definitely advisable, but after that you should be off and running.

SOUNDS

We came to the Modfactor with high expectations, and the sound of the unit still blows us away! These are huge sounds (who says digital effects sound 'small?') with next to no background noise or detectable latency. And for all its advanced capabilities, the Modfactor covers the traditional territory of vintage chorus, phase and flange sounds brilliantly. This is a processor capable of great subtlety as well as really way-out sounds, though it can be hard not to get distracted by all that it can do.

When you take these vintage-style effects and start to add in the Modfactor's secondary LFO and performance related features, things start to get really interesting. You can set up lots of particularly cool effects that react to the dynamics of your playing, like a tremolo that slows as the note fades, while your humble expression pedal will become the most powerful thing on your pedalboard.

True sonic adventurers will love the Undulator in particular. This is your door to a new world of atmospheric synth-like sounds and scary, reverse-delayed soundscapes. The Modfactor can produce lots of really interesting and unusual sounds like this, but only if you want it to – the whole point of all this in-depth tweakability is that you can do whatever you want.

CONCLUSION

Most of all, though, the Modfactor is enormous fun, with simply the best modulation sounds we've ever heard from a digital processor made for guitarists. This is a complex unit but, with occasional reference to the manual, it is admirably user-friendly and players who like to really get stuck in and tweak their effects to perfection will be in modulation heaven.

The range of these effects is immense, from convincing takes on classic mod effects to complex, enthralling multi-layered sounds, and the sound quality is universally excellent. We reckon that, with a Modfactor, a Timefactor and a decent overdrive on our pedalboard, plus a couple of expression pedals, we'd have just about every effect we could ever need. The Modfactor is definitely not cheap but it still looks like great value for money. **GB**