

Guitar Player

ELECTRONICALLY REPRINTED FROM AUGUST 2008

GEAR

Bench Test



Eventide ModFactor

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EVENTIDE STOMPBOXES' TIMEFACTOR (REVIEWED in the December '07 issue of *GP*) made many of the delay effects found in Eventide's studio processors available in a relatively inexpensive pedal—and now ModFactor does the same for modulation effects. Like its predecessor, ModFactor boasts essentially the same DSP engine and effects found in the company's high-end processors, with an unusually robust feature set that includes an extremely versatile and interactive “Billboard” display, true stereo operation

with any combination of instrument or line-level signals, three Bypass modes (including true bypass), and extensive MIDI implementation.

ModFactor has ten basic Effects—Chorus, Phaser, Q-Wah, Flanger, ModFilter, Rotary, TremoloPan, Vibrato, Undulator, and Ring-Mod—but you actually get 27 individual effects, as each Effect has at least two variations or Types (e.g., Flanger offers a choice of Positive, Negative, Jet, and Thru-0). There are 40 memory slots loaded with factory presets, but those may be replaced with user presets, and all presets and system settings may be backed up to a MIDI sequencer or SysEx librarian program.

ModFactor operates in two modes: Bank and Play. There are 20 banks, each containing two presets. In Bank mode, you cycle up through the banks by tapping the right footswitch, and then toggle between the two presets in each bank using the left and center footswitches. You can also temporarily disable banks that you aren't using, saving you the hassle of cycling through them to access the ones you want. In Play Mode, the footswitches control the currently loaded effect. The left switch toggles the effect on/off, the center switch toggles between Slow/Fast (or Brake), and the right switch is for Tap Tempo.

Although ModFactor's built-in controls and switches are fine for basic operation, control freaks will want to explore the unit's many other capabilities. Simply connecting an expression pedal instantly allows you to control a key parameter in each preset, and the pedal may

SPECS | Eventide Stompboxes, (201) 641-1200; eventidestompboxes.com

MODEL	ModFactor
PRICE	\$499 retail/\$399 street
CONTROLS	Intensity, Type, Depth, Speed, Shape, Xnob, Encoder, D-Mod, S-Mod, Mod Rate, Mod Source
FOOTSWITCHES	Active, Slow/Fast (Break), Tap (Play/Bank Mode)
EFFECTS ALGORITHMS	10
PRESETS	20
INPUTS	1/4" with Guitar/Line Level switch (2)
OUTPUTS	1/4" with Amp/Line Level switch (2)
MIDI CONNECTORS	MIDI In, Out/Thru, USB
POWER SUPPLY	9VDC/1200mA wall-wart
DIMENSIONS	4.8" x 7.5" x 2.12"
WEIGHT	2.15 lbs.
KUDOS	Studio-quality effects. Unusually robust feature set. Excellent value.
CONCERNS	Can't name presets. Bulky wall-wart.

be easily reassigned to one or more alternative parameters of your choice. Similarly, connecting a triple footswitch defaults to duplicating the onboard switches (in case you want to get the pedal off the floor for hands-on access), but may be assigned to other functions, including bank up/down, and toggling between two values for, say, the Depth control. MIDI goes even further, enabling you to call up banks and presets, switch individual functions on and off, and sweep through parameters using Continuous Controller messages.

ModFactor's controls and switches are not particularly intuitive until you take the time to familiarize yourself with their operation. Fortunately, the well-written user manual and the accompanying Quick Reference Guide and Preset chart make learning a snap.

At the heart of the unit are two modulation sections containing individual low-frequency oscillators. The top row of knobs controls the first and primary LFO section, and includes the standard Depth and Speed controls, along with effect Type, effect Intensity, Shape (Sine, Triangle, Square, Random, ADSR, etc.), and Xnob (Effect dependent). Four of the five knobs on the lower row—D-Mod, S-Mod, Mod Rate, and Mod Source—control a second LFO, which may be used to modulate the primary LFO. This may *sound* complicated, but in practice it is relatively straightforward, and you dial in new sounds by twiddling knobs and using your ears, just as with any other pedal.

The factory presets are a good place to begin. Several of them, such as Liquid Sweetener (subtle chorus), Big Clone (deep chorus), Slowly Rotate (Leslie), and Barrel Roll (thick flange) are general-purpose effects, while others, such as What's That Smell? (gnarly ring modulator) and Mumbler (eccentric Q-Wah), are more specialized. But analyzing any of them will provide insights into ModFactor's many programming options.

I tested ModFactor patched between my guitar and a Rivera Venus 6 amp, in the amp's effects loop, and as an outboard studio processor, using the switches on the rear panel to select the correct input and output levels. (ModFactor automatically configures itself for mono/mono, mono/stereo, or stereo/stereo operation in response to which input and output jacks have plugs inserted in them.) Some of the Effects, such as TremoloPan, only function fully when the unit is connected in stereo, but most also sounded

fantastic in my amp's mono effects loop and even inline between the guitar and amp.

The Chorus, Phaser, and Flanger Effects are truly excellent, with impressive depth and sparkle, and may be adjusted to cover pretty much any variation on those sounds. Vibrato is quite distinctive, taking the essence of the vintage effect of that name and adding resonance, clarity, and dimensionality. Undulator is an impressive proprietary Eventide effect that creates washes of modulated sound by combining twin delays and twin detuned voices with a frequency-modulated tremolo. Q-Wah creates throaty wah effects with or without an expression pedal, and ModFilter expands on those sounds and modulates them using a selection of sources, including tap-tempo. RingMod possesses a quirkiness encroaching on Moogerfooger territory.

My hands-down favorite effect, however, was Rotary, which is simply one of the best-sounding Leslie simulators I've heard, and worth the price of the pedal alone. Several presets are based on this Effect, and many more are possible given the exhaustive programming options.

My only quibble with ModFactor—other than the same gripes I also had about TimeFactor, namely its chunky wall wart and inability to name presets—is that on a few settings bits of noise such as odd (gated?) cycling noises would momentarily slip through when I wasn't playing. Given that ModFactor is exceptionally quiet overall, and that many modulation pedals make these sounds continuously, however, this is truly only a quibble.

ModFactor is so deep and feature-rich that I was only able to scratch the surface in this brief review. Suffice to say that it is a studio-quality processor containing classic Eventide effects in a small box at a bargain price. What more do you really need to know?



ModFactor's rear panel provides stereo inputs with a Guitar/Line Level switch, stereo outputs with an Amp/Line Level switch, Expression Pedal and Aux Switch jacks, a USB connector for MIDI I/O (standard MIDI In and Out/Thru jacks are located on the side), and a socket for 9VDC/1200mA power.

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