



WALRUS AUDIO

Polychrome Analog Flanger

This colourful pedal delivers many shades of flange

Words Trevor Curwen Photography Philip Barker

Walrus Audio has several modulation pedals in its roster, notably the Julia chorus and Lillian phaser, which both share similarities with the Polychrome, the brand's new analogue flanger. In particular, all three pedals sport a Blend knob that moves from totally dry sound to 100 per cent wet. In this case, it's labelled D-F-V (Dry, Flange, Vibrato) with the most traditional flanger tones at the 50/50 mix, 12 o'clock position, lots of subtler shadings to the left and true vibrato fully clockwise.

IN USE

The overall tone of this pedal is warm and mellow, and its forte is quite a range of classy flanging and beyond. Before you even start messing with the knobs, there

are six different options available from combinations of the two-way Voice and the three-way Shape switches.

The Voice switch's lower position offers traditional full-frequency flanging, while Walrus says the other option delivers a more complex and notched flange effect. It can be quite a subtle difference with certain knob settings, but the main thrust of it is the upper position has a notably leaner sound with less bottom-end.

The Shape switch selects which shape of LFO wave you want to use to modulate the delay line. There are traditional sine and triangle choices offering some familiar flanging tones, but you also get a Random option delivering a more unpredictable effect for the adventurous as it varies the modulation in a less regimented fashion.

Rate does exactly the same as with any other modulation pedal and has a range from 0.1Hz to 8Hz, which effectively means it goes from flanging cycles that unfold over several seconds, up to a sweet warble like a Leslie speaker on fast speed.

The Depth knob here, in control of the width of the filter sweep, interacts with the Sweep knob, which shifts the frequency range of that sweep with plenty of nuanced changes available through their combination. This Sweep knob is at its most effective at lower-depth settings; in fact, with the Depth at minimum you can set a frequency and operate the pedal like a static filter. If you want a more intense effect, you can reach for the Feedback knob, which

01. SHAPE SWITCH

Choose to modulate the LFO with sine, triangle or random waveforms

02. VOICE SWITCH

This offers two voices: the lower setting offers full frequency flanging, while the upper position is most notable for having less low-end

03. D-F-V KNOB

This blender sets your effect, gradually moving from 100 per cent wet to 100 per cent dry with classic flanging tones around the 50/50 mid point

04. LEADS

The left LED shows whether the pedal is active or bypassed, while the right one flashes in sync with the speed

05. FOOTSWITCH

Press and hold for momentary effects or otherwise just use as a standard latching footswitch



Tech Spec

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Flanger pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Rate, Depth, Sweep, Feedback, D-F-V blend, Shape switch, Voice Switch bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V adaptor, 30mA minimum (Not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 70 (w) x 121 (d) x 55mm (h)

8/10

feeds effected sound back through the circuit and can emphasise the sweep's swoosh and add a metallic sheen. Note, though, that it doesn't get quite as extreme as the metallic ice-picky flanging that you can coax from a vintage Electric Mistress.

SOUNDS

There's something about plugging into a flanger that makes us inevitably want to start playing *Message In A Bottle*, as well as get into classic rock territory, such as Van Halen's *Unchained* and Queen's *Keep Yourself Alive*. The pedal works really well with distortion in front of it for rich textured sound with a sense of movement about it.

Traditional flanging aside, though, this is a fine source of varied modulation that

include chorus-like tones, pitch vibrato and the aforementioned rotary speaker sounds. That D-F-V knob is your key to just how much effect you want. With total wet sound, there's some cool vibrato, but roll it back a bit and you'll find a whole range of hybrid modulation sounds to be explored. By the same token, there's plenty of mileage with the knob just a little north of totally dry, with just enough of a tonal shift to pique the interest without overwhelming your core sound.

There's no expression pedal control available here, but what is really cool is the smart footswitch that, besides its standard latching action, offers momentary activation of the effect with a press and hold – just step on it for flanged emphasis of selected notes, chords or passages.

VERDICT

To some players, modulation effects may seem a little interchangeable. It may be fair to say that unless you're trying to dial in a precise match from a vintage recording, it may not matter whether you're using chorus, flanging or phasing to add flavour or a sense of motion to your straight sound – and there are many multi-modulation pedals out there that will give a variety. However, if it is definitely flanging you want then the Polychrome is a class act: a veritable treasure trove of flanging sounds that will slot nicely onto your 'board. **C**

PROS Momentary operation; wide range of sounds; D-F-V knob to blend in your effect

CONS No expression pedal input; slight perceived volume loss on some settings