

SOUNDROOM



MXR M84 Bass Fuzz Deluxe

BY BRIAN FOX

IN JUST THE LAST FEW YEARS, MXR'S Bass Innovations division has launched a slew of new pedals for bass, ranging from octave and overdrive to filter and compressor. This year, MXR adds to its already impressive roster with the M84 Bass Fuzz Deluxe. The M84 is housed in MXR's familiar petite enclosure, which in this case sports a copper sparkle coat as funky as a pimped-out Monte Carlo from the Nixon days. The Bass Fuzz Deluxe has true-bypass switching and is powered by either a 9-volt battery or a standard Boss-style AC adapter.

LOW RIDER

Because distortion—and fuzz, in particular—is essentially the bombardment of a signal's upper partial harmonics, bass players often experience a loss in low end when they kick on a fuzz box. Some address the issue by splitting their signal into two separate rigs, running one amp clean and one

amp dirty. It's an effective fix, but not a route most bass players are willing or able to take. Many modern fuzz pedals have a blend knob that allows the player to dial back the degree of dirt, but MXR takes it a step further by offering individual **DRY** and **WET** controls, as if your bass were indeed split into two separate signal paths.

In terms of layout, the M84 is dead simple: **DRY** and **WET** knobs control the clean and effect levels, **TONE** works like high-frequency roll-off, and **FUZZ** controls the degree of saturation. With the knobs at noon, the Bass Fuzz Deluxe really does deliver the best of both worlds—a buzz-saw fuzz without overly harsh highs, blended with a muscular fundamental. Some fuzz pedals can be unwieldy in terms of sheer volume; kick it in with the knobs cranked too high and you risk ripping your own head off (let alone blowing the tweeter on your amp). However, even at absurdly high settings, the

Bass Fuzz Deluxe felt totally manageable—extreme, but under my control.

If you want to add some bottom (so that the dancers just won't hide), rolling back the **TONE** and setting **WET** and **DRY** knobs around 2 o'clock will take you higher, but leave your fundamental intact. Fresh. Easing back the **WET** cops the kind of blown-speaker Geezer-y goodness that formed the foundation of heavy metal bass tone. Once the level of dirt is dialed in (mostly via **WET** and **FUZZ**), the **TONE** control plays a big part in this pedal's versatility. Cranking it puts a whole lot of fizz in your fuzz, and tweaking the **DRY** control sets the presence—or absence—of your bottom end.

The Bass Fuzz Deluxe covers a huge range of tones, from furry fuzzed-out funk to gnarly modern bite, all while allowing you to maintain a strong fundamental. For that, its elegant simplicity, and its fresh look, the Bass Fuzz Deluxe earns a **BASS PLAYER** Editor Award. **BP**



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- Check out a video demo of the Bass Fuzz Deluxe with Chris Chaney.
- MXR Bass Products Manager (and legit bass badass) Darryl Anders and engineer Jack Tang rap about the development of the Bass Fuzz Deluxe.
- Flash back to our review of MXR's M82 Bass Envelope Filter.

MXR M84 BASS FUZZ DELUXE

Street \$129

Pros **WET** and **DRY** knobs offer killer range of fuzz tones

Cons None