

STONE REPORT

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WEEKLY

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reviewed this issue

ALEXANDER HISTORY LESSON VOL. 2

ALEXANDER PEDALS HISTORY LESSON VOLUME II

REVIEW BY **DAVID A. EVANS**

STREET PRICE **\$239.99**



Some people believe that history does not repeat itself. Others, such as the folks at Alexander Pedals, work hard to ensure that it does. And what a sonic windfall Alexander has delivered unto us in the form of its History Lesson Volume II. Perhaps the time is still early for year-end proclamations, but I'll risk saying right here and now that this little unit is my favorite delay of 2016.

Within just a few minutes of playing with the History Lesson, I was hooked. I began in the magnetic tape echo setting, labeled "1963" just above the toggle selector. The '60s

were good years for primitive analog echo. Just a loop of some magnetic tape, and a series of magnetic tape heads recorded and played back a signal.

I think what most impressed me about the 1963 mode's echo was the modulation, which sounded surprisingly true-to-life and analog. If you need wow and flutter, this pedal has you covered. In fact, I was able to turn down the Time knob all the way and coax a warm, warbly treble out of the unit that rivaled the classic chorus effect of Electro-Harmonix's Small Clone.

The 1977 delay produced

a louder, mids-heavy delay that, true to Alexander's word, is just a bit murky and wet when modulated. As a chorus in slow modulation mode, the 1977 seemed more metallic than watery, and even gave the impression that my amplifier was in an empty bathtub. But as I increased the modulation, the effect became warbly and spacey. Adding in a bit of delay—after all, that's what this pedal is meant to do—lent a really, really cool vintage tremolo effect to the delayed signal. Truly, the History Lesson provides more character in this department than does the

average, Brand X pedal.

Finally, the Volume II's 1984 mode delivered the ultra-clean, digital delay that's heard on so many pop and rock tracks from the '80s. It's a tone that some people love and some people hate. I don't mind it all that much, and believe that it's a useful mode for people who like a "no-nonsense" delay because what goes in comes out. The modulation adds a bit of chorus in the low mode, and full-on wobble in the higher settings, as would be expected of a digital unit.

Among the new additions to the History Lesson, Alexander integrated the new Tone control into the existing Time knob. Should anyone need to eke out just a bit more low end, simply hold down the Bypass footswitch and adjust the Time knob.

Alexander was pretty clever with what's essentially an EQ knob. For example, in the 1963 mode, turning the Tone counterclockwise simulated a loop whose higher frequencies had long

since decayed. A "fresh" tape could be simulated with a clockwise spin of the knob.

As for the other additions, I appreciated Alexander's choice of a Mix knob, which allowed for fully wet or fully dry output. The previous version also lacked the new pedal's extra output jack, which carries the dry signal. Personally, I did not use the extra output, but I'm aware that it's a helpful option depending upon one's gear and setup.

I hope I've conveyed just how good this little unit sounds. Alexander has convinced me that history does repeat itself, at least in the world of effects pedals. I strongly suggest that readers not let this second volume of Alexander's lessons pass them by.

WHAT WE LIKE

Excellent echo modeling with more character than you can shake a stick at. The pedal also doubles as a chorus and vibrato unit.

CONCERNS

Honestly, I have no serious concerns, but only a suggestion about the Tone knob. I suggest that a Volume III of the History Lesson feature a dedicated Tone knob.