

ALEXANDER PEDALS

JUBILEE SILVER OVERDRIVE

REVIEW BY ERIC TISCHLER

STREET PRICE \$189.99



Alexander Pedals enters the Marshall-in-a-Box (MIAB) arena with its new Jubilee Silver stompbox. The field is crowded, but the Jubilee Silver manages to stand out by answering the oft-asked question, "What's a MIAB that can deliver Plexi tones and more modern high gain?" with a resounding "Me!"

The Jubilee Silver is based on Marshall's Silver Jubilee amp. Released in the late '80s, the Silver Jubilee was intended as a celebration and summation of Jim Marshall's various classic amps to that point. As such, it was designed to capture a range of gain, from Plexi

to JCM 800. Players ranging from John Frusciante to Alex Lifeson to Rich Robinson seemed to agree that the amp met its goals.

Alexander's Jubilee Silver does a good job of meeting those same goals, which is to say it offers a wide variety of Marshall-esque tones. The key to that range, of course, is in the three-band EQ and Drive control. Alexander says the EQ is "passive;" I'm not sure if that's a typo, if I misunderstand the usage of "passive," or if the cutoff frequencies of the bands are confusing me, but that wasn't my experience with the pedal. I got close to

flat EQ with the Mid and Bass controls around noon, Drive all the way down, and Treble maxed. Bringing up the Drive control quickly changed that balance, but the Jubilee Silver's EQ was up to the task of sculpting the Drive to suit my needs.

I started with the bridge humbucker (of course), and initially found the tone a little pinched. The crossover between the Mid and Treble control is subtle; the Jubilee's mids are fairly bright and strident, as you'd expect in a Marshall, and it took me a little while to identify that they also contain some meat that was clogging the midrange. By

dialing in a slightly scooped EQ setting—Treble and Bass both around 2 o'clock, Mids at noon—and setting Drive at 1 o'clock, I felt like I was ready to join an Iron Maiden cover band; rolling back the Mids a bit more put me in, say, LA in the mid-to-late '80s. In addition to providing the rich and brash gain of a JCM 800, the Jubilee Silver's articulation was strong, and touch sensitivity was good, although the pedal likes to see a full load from the guitar, so rolling back the volume isn't a great way to expand your palette.

While my efforts to get low-gain tones with humbuckers were unrewarding, single coils—particularly P90s—managed to make the most of the Jubilee Silver's charms. I was able to cop Hendrix-esque tones (JTM's), Clapton-with-Mayall dirt (Bluesbreakers), and gnarly Ron Wood-like scuzz (Tweed amps, the precursors to Marshall's amps)—not a bad selection there! At 18 volts, the Jubilee Silver was livelier and more open, and offered additional low end. These features worked to the

advantage of single coils, but humbuckers loved the extra squish at nine volts.

I'm usually skeptical when people claim their favorite pedal has to be used at gig volumes, but the Jubilee Silver really was at its best when my amp started approaching stage volume. Perhaps this was in part because the pedal's output is pretty modest; those hoping for a boost to their front end may be disappointed. However, those who want to nail a variety of Marshall tones but don't want to give up a lot of pedalboard landscape should be pleased.

WHAT WE LIKE

There are a nice variety of Marshall tones available in a single stomp box.

CONCERNS

The EQ is sensitive, so there's more dialing in by "feel" than ear. Also, there's not a lot of output on tap.