

# Tech 21 Bass Fly Rig

Tech 21's Fly Rig has been a runaway success for the US company. So, naturally, bass players touring bassist.

**T**ech 21's Fly Rig has been quite a success for the company since its launch and certainly seems to fill the need for a product which a hard working, travelling guitarist can throw in his case and take from gig to session to gig, plugging into whatever is on hand and being assured he can get the same tone every time. So what about us bass players, then? Thankfully, Tech 21 has been working on that and I've been trying the result.

Unusually, I'm not starting at the input of the signal path with Tech 21's Bass Fly Rig, but more toward the very heart of the device, the SansAmp which is an emulator - a simulator of the signal path from amplifier input, through EQ, amplification, speaker and microphone placement. It is tweaked for use being plugged into the front of a normal bass amplifier, or alternatively being plugged into a PA or recording suite, so it's completely versatile. Controls for EQ and level are present, but the main SansAmp control properties have been distilled in to a Character knob and a Drive knob. The

second of which is much like a drive pedal saturation knob. The emulation here starts with a 'warming' of the signal, through the brimming of overdrive and onward towards some stodgy filthy bass drive if you are a little over zealous with the low EQ controls. Finding the sweet spot is a doddle though and a bit of grit is always good!

The Character rotary is a continuously controllable 'amp model' type function. I tried to explain off the top of my head in the video without getting too technical, but it can be described as altering the gain and EQ structure of the SansAmp to emulate a number of famous amp types, from the mellow roundness of a tube combo with a single 15" speaker, to the mid-range roar of a driven stage stack. And in case that's not quite enough, there's also a well-named 'bite' switch that offers up extra top end or pick attack to help you slice through a band mix.

My bass plugged in, the first effect I connect to is an all-analogue compressor, using FET based transistors. It's a single band full-

## STAR RATING



**PROS** Excellent Tech 21 SansAmp on board • Great ef

**CONS** Not really a con but filter block rewards explor

...s said they wanted one of their own. **Dan Veall** tries out the ideal companion for a hard



range compressor that is very easy to use to squish your bass tone to oblivion if that's your bag. I'd recommend light amounts of compression here but know that you can go from pretty much 'off' to creating some very un-bass guitar envelopes! Fun actually. The tone control allows more top end to bleed into the compressor circuit thus adding back sparkle that may have been subdued by the nature of heavy single band compression. This is a good one.

Moving along the front panel to the next foot switch button, the boost function has

two modes. The first is to boost the signal going in to the SansAmp, which is a bit like using an overdrive pedal in front of a guitar amplifier. It's a great way to push the SansAmp over the edge and get it to start sounding more distorted, more aggressive. The second function moves the boost circuit away from the SansAmp input, meaning that you have control over the entire signal volume, making it ideal for clicking in a solo volume change for example. The boost knob at the top of the fascia allows you to preset the level of boost in both cases.

fects • It will fit in a slim bass case compartment

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[...>]



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Dashing over to the left hand side, more effects have been provided, complete with a user-friendly interface. Octafilter offers up three effects in one. An envelope style filter effect adjusted to taste using the 'Q' and 'Range' dials with the added tonal shaping options of 'one octave down' and a fuzz circuit that are engaged using the small black buttons, as seen in the video. Naturally, you can blend all this sonic madness with your direct signal by using the Mix facility. There's so much on offer here that I had to go searching for the sounds I wanted from this effect block but it's always better to have more rather than less and if that means the

Bass Fly Rig takes a bit of getting familiar with, that counts as a good thing because it means the potential is definitely there. Once you find it, getting it back again and taking it with you from gig to gig (which is, after all, the whole point of the device) couldn't be easier.

While we are in the end section of the pedal, I must bring to your attention the two extra buttons which aren't actually part of the Octafilter specifically. The first is a level boost that changes the out connector for headphone use. The final switch is a ground lift for the Direct Injection XLR socket on

the side of the pedal. This XLR socket is for sending your bass signal out to a PA for example.

The final footswitch engages a really nice mono chorus effect whose intensity is adjusted using the appropriately labelled knob on the far left. If you hold down the chorus button for a second or two, there's access to the onboard chromatic tuner which as you'll see in the video tracks down to the low B of my Dingwall bass.

So that's about it - all encased in a sturdy metal housing and I'm pleased to say Tech 21

provides a power supply in the box for the pedal.

Though I've buzzed through the main features in my review, the Bass Fly Rig is definitely a device with real potential and, as such, will reward some time spending on it. Once you've done that it's obvious that it does exactly what it's supposed to – act as a kind of Swiss Army knife that enables you to drop it into your bass case or backpack and go anywhere, knowing you will get the sounds you've worked on. For the player who needs just that, this is going to prove invaluable. **END >**

## Tech 21 Bass Fly Rig

MSRP £349 US \$425

Made in: USA

Headphone button switches the 1/4" output into headphone mode

1/4-inch 4.7megOhm input to deliver the full sound of piezos

Input Pad for active basses

XLR output with ground connect

1/4-inch low impedance output

Rugged, all-metal housing

Metal footswitches and jacks

Silent-switching, custom footswitch actuators

Utilizes included 9V, 200mA DC power supply.

Actual size: 12.5"l x 2.5"w x 1.25"h • Weight: 20.7 oz.