



REVIEW



Tech 21 Bass Fly Rig v2

A petite and powerful bass multi-effects pedal

REVIEW BY PAUL VNUK JR.

Tech 21 has maintained a thirty-year focus on high-quality analog recording gear for guitarists and bassists. In 2014, the company launched the compact and easy-to-use Fly Rig series of multi-effects pedals, offering multiple SansAmp amp voicings and effects. Today we are looking at the newest version of the bass-focused Bass Fly Rig v2.

Dang, that's tiny!

There are currently five models in the line: three for electric guitar, one for acoustic, and now the Bass Fly Rig v2. Each is housed in a matching 12.5" x 2.5" x 1" enclosure. These may be the single most petite and light (1.3 lb.) comprehensive pedalboards available.

All Fly Rig models feature five high-quality momentary stomp switches, seven dual-position toggle buttons and thirteen backlit parameter dials. Connections include a pair of 1/4" I/O, 1/4" send/return (external loop) and a male XLR output. A 9.6v DC adaptor supplies power.

SansAmp

The Bass Fly Rig v2 is a cabinet-emulating front end for direct bass recording or live performance, with well-chosen bass effects. With the press of a button, it is equally at home as just an effects box (i.e. no cab sim) for your bass amp and cab.

It starts with the all-analog SansAmp section. A simple one-knob FET compressor kicks things off, there's an input pad for use with an active bass, and then a level control. While simple, the compressor moves from light, gentle control to complete sustain-inducing clampdown.

This is true of all the controls on the unit. Small turns yield significant changes, and finesse is the name of the game.

Virtual tubes

The SansAmp offers two sonic character types: the classic SansAmp Bass Driver tube-based amp/cabinet sound, and VT Bass DI, which has an Ampeg flavor. The first maintains a depth and openness that seats nicely in the mix, and the latter is a bit thicker and more forward.

You get two channels, three-band active EQ, analog drive control, and level control; jump between channels at the stomp of a button. A second button labeled Bite brings the aggression, opening up the top end to highlight the visceral sound of the strings. Bite combined with the amp Character sounded great on my Rickenbacker 4003, while the VT Bass DI setting better suited a friend's classic 70s Fender Jazz bass. Bite and Character are global. Wish list item: it would be great to have independent Bite and Character controls for each channel...

FX

The final section is a small but mighty collection of well-chosen digital effects, and a tuner. Here we have a one-knob

chorus—its backlit knob does double duty as a clip indicator for the whole unit. Chorus sounds range from subtle swimming modulation to a full-scale doubling effect.

The Octave Fuzz comprises three controls labeled Mix, Range and Q. Each can be used without the other. The Octave at low values is reminiscent of the classic 80s-era Boss sound, while at high values, it becomes almost synth-like and has an auto-wah, envelope-driven quality to it. Add a healthy dose of fuzz, and it becomes trippy and magical. Fuzz moves from gentle wool to a warm full-blown grind. Here the mix knob is vital to retain discernable notes in the delicious chaos. The tuner, like the rest of the unit, is simple and effective.

It can take some patience and a steady hand to get command of the full range and nuance of all the available controls, and to learn how to tailor them to complement the music and playing style.

In the studio, the Bass Fly Rig v2 is a great device to have on hand. The SansAmp section offers a solid front end for tracking, and the effects place creative inspiration on tap, from subtle to well over the edge. It may seem limiting to pedal junkies who travel with giant rigs, but there is also beauty in simplicity!

Conclusions

The Bass Fly Rig v2 will appeal to all who want top-notch bass tone, a solid selection of the three most bass-standard effects, and most of all, ultra-portability and ease of use. How many pedalboards can fit in a bass case or backpack? 🎸

Price: \$299
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