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GEAR HERE REVIEWS – GUYATONE TORRID FUZZ TZm5 and COMP/SUSTAINER STm5

Guyatone is another effects company with quite a broad range of stompboxes in its arsenal. The company's "mighty micro" line of effects pedals includes eight interesting little stompers. Here, we take a look at two of them.

FEATURES

First of all, I love that these boxes are so tiny and yet very solidly built. And, smaller box equals more room on my pedalboard. But what's really amazing is how full featured they are considering their tiny footprint. In fact, they have more features than many bigger boxes... go figure!

The Torrid Fuzz has the usual three knobs for Level, Tone and Depth, plus there is a phase switch and an attenuation knob to control the input level. The Comp/Sustainer pedal has Level, Sustain and Attack knobs with the same input attenuation and a Hi cut/boost switch. All the Mighty Micros have click-free, true-bypass switches, and one other nice addition: a little "roll bar" to keep you from stomping on the dials. These guys are thinking!

SOUND AND EASE OF USE

The Torrid Fuzz has a nice range. At the low end it has that sort of blown speaker old blues sound. As you turn in up, you can hear shades of Fuzz Face too. The harmonic content is quite good and the effect is fairly quiet. At full tilt it screams, but not in an unmanageable way. I like that the character of the guitar is not lost even with the box at max. I don't like distortions that are so overbearing that you can't tell what guitar you are using. All in all a fine box for blues rockers and Hendrix fans, and perhaps a second box for metal guys.

The Comp/Sustainer is nice and clean. Once you adjust the attenuation to suit your guitar it is almost noise free. I suspect there are those that have no idea what to do with one of these, so let me give a couple of examples. One thing this will do is control your volume level, so your pick attack, while heard, becomes less important because the box will sort of level out the sound if you pick harder or softer – nice for over-the-top dirty playing and useful for clean, too. Comps also can add some "sparkle" and, of course/ that sort of "sproing" to the sound. If you don't know what I mean, think Roger McGuinn's 12-string sound with the Byrds. And of course, it will up your sustain. This can add a cool touch when you play lead with lots of distortion as you get some interesting bloom and harmonic action toward the end of the note. This box does all that stuff very well.

IS IT FOR YOU?

You bet! These are good solid boxes at a fairly cheap price. As I said earlier, I love the tiny size, very handy. The kind of distortion you use is a very personal choice, but this is a good sounding fuzz-style box with "old school" sound, but with less noise than many similar types. The Comp/Sustainer works great and is also quiet, and if you are looking for this type of pedal I would certainly say give this one a try.

- Chad Johnson, GE