

Magnatone Twilighter 112 Combo

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First up, before we even look at the specs and consider the tone, this is one sexy amp. It has a definite late 40s/early 50s design aesthetic and would work purely as a piece of furniture. But it would be a shame to place this thing in the corner of a room as a talking point because it's built to sing. If you're not familiar with Magnatone, the brand was founded in 1937 and was active until the mid 70s. Ted Kornblum (ex Ampeg) revived the name in early 2013 with a range of boutique amps, some of which reproduced classic Magnatone designs, and some of which were new, with input from ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons and Neil Young's guitar tech Larry Cragg. These are seriously beautiful amps for serious players, and the list of Magnatone owners includes Paul Simon, Tom Petty, Jackson Browne, Andy Summers, Jack White, Keith Richards, Jeff Beck, Joe Bonamassa, Jason Isbell, Ry Cooder, Jeff Tweedy and many more.

EDGE OF TWILIGHT

The Twilighter 112 Combo is driven by a pair of 6V6 power tubes and a GZ34 rectifier for 22 watts of clean, robust Class AB tone. There are high and low sensitivity inputs, controls for volume, treble, bass and the tube-driven, four-counterwound-spring, long-pan reverb, and a pitch shifting vibrato section which lets you select between FM (pitch wobble) and AM (volume wobble) modes. The effects are foot switchable too: a two-button footswitch lets you turn the vibrato on and off (although you'll need to select which mode you wish to use via the switch on the amp) and to toggle the reverb. And there's also a Remote Pedal jack which lets you use an external expression pedal to control the speed of the vibrato, no matter

which mode you've selected. The combo has a single Magnatone Custom 12" ceramic-magnet speaker (although a Celestion Gold Alnico is optional), and there's a panel-mounted Remote Speaker jack for connecting a second 8 ohm speaker cabinet for stereo vibrato and tremolo/pan effects. There's also a Line Out jack which sends out a speaker-compensated DI signal.

SHAKE-SHAKE-SHAKE IT OFF

At low volume levels this amp is capable of some really sweet-toned cleans that are great for ambient, indie, country and even jazz applications, but it's definitely happiest when you put the power section to work. Its natural overdrive is capable of classic vintage rock bark, great for old-school blues, Rolling Stones riffs and early Zeppelin,



but also perfectly suitable to modern indie and alternative styles. There's only limited control over the tone due to the absence of a midrange control but the amp is voiced to have plenty of character, so when you start to push the power amp you'll get rich harmonics and lots of edge detail, especially if you're using single coils or P90s. The reverb sounds great but the real superstar is the FM mode of the vibrato circuit, which gives a subtle wavering sheen to your chords and melodies. The speed control can get really slow too, which is great for really subtle 'choral' vibrato effects that pair really nicely with the reverb. Imagine a delicate background

'woosh' effect that makes it feel like your guitar sound is floating.

MAGNATONE IS BACK, BABY

This amp is great for anyone who needs rich natural overdrive and complex clean tones without crossing over into full-on distortion. If you like your guitar's natural voice to be heard through the grit, this amp will retain your instrument's character. If you want Hendrix cleans with dimension and body, and some cool old-school effects, this amp will give them to you.

BY PETER HODGSON

SPECS

- Tubes – (4) 12AX7, 12AU7, (2) 6V6, GZ34
- Inputs – High and Low
- Powered Output – 22W
- Controls – Vol, Treble, Bass, Reverb, Intensity (Vibrato), Speed (Vibrato)
- Speaker – Magnatone Custom 12" Ceramic Magnet

HITS

- Beautiful FM vibrato mode
- Sweet-sounding reverb
- Classy looks

MISSES

- Need plenty of volume before overdrive happens

Origin Effects Cali76 Limiting Amplifier

Gladesville Guitar Factory | (02) 9817 2173 | www.guitarfactory.net | RRP: \$729

First thing's first, the Origin Effects Cali76 Limiting Amplifier is an investment. This isn't one of your "ooh I have a few spare bucks, I'll hit the stores" purchases. This is one of those "I'm a serious musician, and making music means more to me than anything else in the world" purchases. If you've ever opened a thread on a guitar forum using the words "What's the cheapest _____?" then this isn't for you. Ok? We cool? Cool.

TAKE IT SQUEEZY

Okay so here's what this is: it's a premium-quality, 60s-style FET compressor inspired by the Urei 1176. Y'know all those plug-ins that slyly hint at their 1176 inspirations? Imagine being able to plug in to a physical unit that does that. Then imagine it being made in pedal form for use as a guitar stompbox, but big enough to go on the desktop for studio applications as well. It has a 100 percent Class A discrete signal path, low-noise electronics, and topology that stays true to the original, while carefully condensing the circuitry. There are controls for Ratio (from 4 to 20), Attack and Release (with 'Snappy' and 'Lively' helpfully printed on these knobs' left and right, respectively), Output, and Input/

Comp. There's also an LED-based VU-style meter to keep you visually informed of what's going on with your signal. There are also dedicated Amplifier and Line/DI outputs so you can integrate it in a guitar or studio rig.

COMPRESSIVE. MOST COMPRESSIVE.

The real magic of this unit is that it gives you true studio-quality compression right there across your guitar rig, and it's difficult to overstate just how much fun this is, and how it makes you play better. When you plug in and hear your music coming right out of the amp with that warm, responsive, intuitive compression that you're used to hearing on an album, it'll give you chills. It's especially fun when you're using P90s,

single coils or lower-output humbuckers because it gives you a little more body. Do you play soul/R&B? Then imagine getting those classic warmly compressed tones right out of your amp. Blues? Ditto. Country? You can dial this thing in to the most 'spanky' country twang you ever heard. Of course, you can also use it to simply round off the edges of your dynamic range as well to help things sit more comfortably in a mix, and it'll do

it beautifully.

SQUEEZE ME

Whether you want to use this for practical sonic management purposes or for all-out 'pinchy' compression effects in your guitar rig or in the studio (and hey, try it on a drum or vocal track - it's amazing!), this is a high quality pedal for serious players.

BY PETER HODGSON



HITS

- Classic sound
- Tank-like construction quality

MISSES

- Expensive (but worth it)