



Suono bellissimo!

The **Dusky Electronics Mandorla** thickens up a **classic circuit**

BY JORDAN UPTON

FOR MANY years I played megachurch music. We used to play five services a weekend with a mid-week thrown in, all of which was inside an enormous skating rink. Which, when mixed improperly, sounded exactly like a skating rink, who would've thought? I've also played in coffee shops, garages, and bowling alleys and as you know, each of those is nightmarish in the pursuit of the even tones that you've honestly put your heart in to finding only to lose when you finally play a gig.

The Mandorla, Italian for almond, by Dusky Electronics is functionally a boutique colored boost pedal. Hand wired in Durham, North

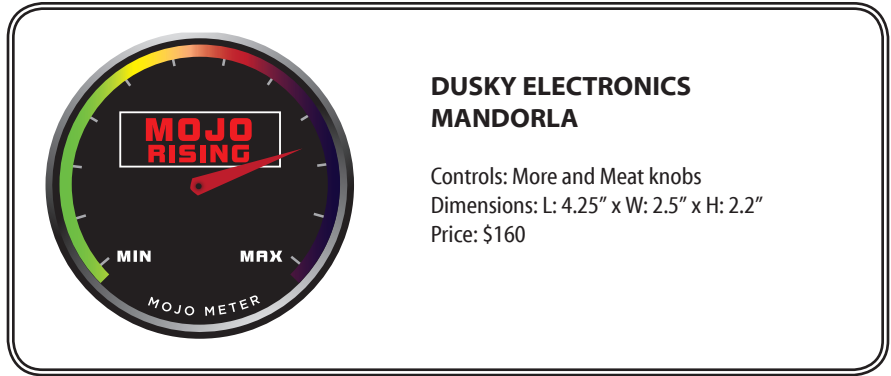
Carolina and driven by a classic MOSFET gain stage, simplicity reigns supreme inside this little box. Given two control knobs, MORE and MEAT, it's quite simple to understand. The MORE knob controls the overall gain expressed, and once engaged, it's immediately made clear what the "colored" aspect is referring to. The MEAT knob is, huzzah, low end.

Designed around one of the earliest guitar-centric circuits from the 60's, the Mandorla's guts are inspired by the old Rangemaster Treble Booster, which back then wasn't even a pedal. You sat this box on top of your amp and just ran the damn thing the whole time,

which after playing this, I kind of see why. Once engaged, the harmonic interests become immediately clear and as soon as you turn it off, you feel like you want to go back. In a lot of ways, a vintage treble booster was used to help appropriate the balance between your guitar and the amplifier. It used to be that if you cranked up the amp, you subsequently pushed your low end with the highs, which on average made things muddier. However, engaging a treble booster between the two helped to alleviate the low end by boosting the high end. The beauty in the Mandorla, as compared to these vintage treble boosters, is the ad-

dition of the MEAT knob. Instead of only pushing up the highs, you can mix back in the lows to your liking, which means more control and more value to the pedal.

On the whole, it's a clean full range boost with enough gain to push your amp into clipping with a distorted focus tone if you want, but I don't believe that's what this pedal is about. The Mandorla is about finding your place in the mix. Whether you're a solo project or in an Arcade Fire cover band, it can be overwhelming to try and resolve mixing issues, especially live. Every room is different and we could spend all day reconfiguring settings to an infinitesimal level but that's not what I want; I want to play. But really to me, I think it's a wonder-maker. We've all used countless pedals to shift the sounds that we create but this is something else. The clarity it brings is simply not something



I've ever experienced. Everyone wants a boost pedal. For me it's usually for that ending when you need to bring the DOOM, but I've never really considered that a boost pedal could be bring such a heightened voice that I might not want to use it for destruction. This thing is like a saving grace; it's the pedal that your mates are going to play through and think, "Whoa, this IS different". It might even make your old Peavey or

Line6 sound good. (*insert winky face here*)

You should learn a little more about Chris Rossi, the instigator behind Dusky Electronics, and the killer stuff he's building. Check out our previous issue (Vol. 6, No. 4) where we spent some quality time with the man himself. Oh, and by the way, you can trial-play anything bought through their website just in case you're not convinced. 🌀