

AMPTWEAKER TIGHT FUZZ PRO

REVIEW BY **YOEL KREISER**
STREET PRICE **\$330.00**



Forged deep in the rolling hills of Georgia, Amptweaker's James Brown has unleashed upon us unsuspecting guitarists a new beast of fuzz; a breed promising to combine everything we love about our dirt boxes in one hefty package that can easily survive the rigors of the road. It's got everything a fuzz head (or non-fuzz head) could ever need or want, from warm and meaty germanium fuzz, to screeching silicon, as well as a multitude of other options for both vintage and modern inspired tones. Let's get nasty.

This pedal has a whole slew of knobs and switches (I would expect no less from a company called Amptweaker).

It has controls for Volume, Gain, and Fuzz, as well as a three-band EQ and a special Tight control, unique to the Amptweaker line of pedals. It has dual footswitches, and so it also features a separate boost section to add more hair to your circuit, with volume and gain controls for that as well. Under the knobs lie five more switches, each designed to give a different response and character. The first one is an Octave switch, and that is followed by four other switches labeled Noise Gate, Tone, Transistor, and Edge. The pedal is hefty, weighing in at just about three pounds. I would be 100 percent comfortable leaving my entire pedalboard

at home, and taking my guitar, amp, this pedal, and maybe a delay to a small gig. That's how versatile it is. It presence commands to be tweaked, and it features a really cool red lighting scheme for the angled knobs (designed by Mr. Brown to keep your "night vision" on a dark stage), a protective bar to protect your perfectly tweaked settings, and a host of other incredibly intuitive design choices.

The one thing about this fuzz that makes it insanely complex is its host of effects loops. I am but a simple man; admittedly I have never even touched the effects loop on my amp, since I almost always run it clean. This pedal features three

effects loops, one for the Boost section (can be altered for pre- or post-gain via internal switch), a Universal loop, and Mr. Brown's special SideTrak, which can get very complicated but put simply, it is sort of like a clean loop that only bring in the effects in it when the pedal is off, a bit like a very fancy A/B box.

But what about the sound? The Tight Fuzz Pro can run at nine or 18 volts, with radically different headroom and dynamic response at each power setting. Nine volts is a hair more compressed, while 18 volts is more open and dynamic. The biggest changes in the main sound are in the Transistor and Era modes. The fuzz is warm and meaty in Germanium mode, without any of that characteristic splattness. The silicon mode is bright and piercing, while circumventing a lot of those harsh upper transients. The Tone switch, which alters the EQ curve and character, in '60s mode gives a really nice midrange warmth, with a grunt and growl that really pushes your amp. In '70s mode it is more mid scooped, and is closer EQ wise to a Big Muff.

I generally dislike noise gates, as they have an awful tendency to kill sustain. This one didn't stifle it as much as some others, but I definitely lost some sustain. Since this pedal is just about dead silent, I felt no need to use it. However, if the hankering for a bit of noise-gatey hit you, it can be further adjusted via an internal trim pot. The 3 band EQ featured on the pedal is subtle, but it helps give the fuzz a bit more articulation in any given frequency, and it is extremely useful for adding extra detail and versatility. Mr. Brown's patented Tight section of the circuit rolls off "stray" lows and highs for a more focused mid tone, ideal for highly quick and focused playing. I personally enjoyed leaving this off, as it wasn't really conducive to my style of playing or what I enjoy most about a fuzz. I like to let those upper and lower harmonics shine through, as they add a lot of body and full range clarity, but I can definitely see a practical use for the tight control.

I mostly went for vintage fuzz tones, as I am from the camp of angsty millennials who feel like they were born

in the wrong generation. The sound was brash and powerful, with insane versatility and a really transparent yet colorful character. I was able to get a cleaner version of those unhinged British Invasion tones, and a really warm overdrive with the volume rolled off. Additionally, it is to this day one of the only fuzzes I have ever played that sounds just as good on the neck pickup as on the bridge. It growled for the blues, sang for rock, and crooned for ambitious jazz tones. This is an excellent fuzz for those who love fuzz, hate fuzz, or just want a face full of pure rock n' roll.

WHAT WE LIKE

Incredibly versatile, and is built to accommodate anything you may need or want from a fuzz. Beautiful vintage tones with modern convenience. Built incredibly well, with innovative designs.

CONCERNS

Multitude of options and three FX loops make it a little daunting. Some settings with the boost sound a little too screechy.