



New Standard in Stompbox Compression?

The Effectrode PC-2A

There are plenty of compression pedals on the market today, and they basically come in two flavors – those that “color” your tone and those that are “transparent.”

In certain situations, you want a coloring compressor, such as to give you that super-squished tone for Tele country pickin’. Other good examples of guitar compression are Jeff Baxter’s use of a Dan Armstrong Orange Squeezer on those classic Doobie Brothers singles, or Steve Lukather’s funky chunkin’ on the Stevie Nicks’ hit “Stand Back.” It’s a cool sound.

The Effectrode PC-2A tube compressor goes the transparent route, adding a natural compression that complements a guitar’s tone without smothering it in “effect.” The company points out that it uses no VCA chips, op-amps or “budget components” in the box’s signal path – it’s 100 percent analog and built on a photocell. There is also an NOS tube operating at real amp plate voltages, just like high-end vintage compressors in many professional studios. The pedal’s name – PC-2A – is a nod to one of the most famous studio compressors of all time, the Teletronix LA-2A.

To help achieve that hallowed sound, a mini 6021 “submarine tube” was designed into the pedal’s circuit to help create the compression, which is wonderfully fat and smooth. There’s no “thin and squishy tones” here – just aural velvet. There are only three controls on the PC-2A; Peak Reduction, Gain, and Limit/Compressor. On a rack compressor, the user can scientifically pinpoint just the right amount of Attack, Threshold, and Ratio, while on a pedal, those functions are simplified;

the Peak Ratio determines the amount of compression, while Gain is the output volume. The limit/compressor adds more compression flavors, but to our ears, one was just a little “fatter” than the others, and we left it in that setting most of the time.

According to company “effects scientist” Phil Taylor, the pedal’s proper side chain replicates the response of the human ear and allows for heavy compression without excessive pumping. And the PC-2A’s photo-optical Gain

control is based on a CdS photocell, which is quieter and ensures less distortion than VCA and FET designs. Certainly, the pedal is wonderfully quiet, at least compared to other floor compressors on the market. It sports true-bypass, as well.

So, who’s going to want the Effectrode PC-2A? Well, acoustic-fingerstyle virtuoso Adrian Legg uses one, which says a lot.

Tested with an Ibanez archtop and a PRS Starla, it fattened the tone considerably. One acid test is to listen to the dynamics of the high and low strings; on a cheap compressor, higher strings can become thin and wimpy-sounding. No such problem here – the PC-2A leveled the volume of each string for a more consistent performance. Further A/B’d with an MXR Dyna-Comp (which is a good pedal, but one that definitely colors tone), the PC-2A gave new girth without covering the guitar’s natural voice. Used with discretion, this compressor is one of those floor pedals you could leave on 90 percent of the time. It’s a great-sounding and well-made stompbox, and can help give any guitar a cleaner, fatter, more professional sound. – **Pete Prown VG**



EFFECTRODE PC-2A
Price: \$359.
Contact: Effectrode.com.