

# **DAMNATION AUDIO MBD-1 MOSFET BASS**

## **DISTORTION QUICK START GUIDE/FAQ**

You may be wondering why I decided to do this write up since I already have a way-too-long-of-a-manual on my site.

I wrote that manual when I started building the MBD's and some of those ideas may no longer represent the way that I and many users may find themselves setting up and using the MBD. So instead of rewriting the manual, I wanted to write this as an alternative approach to begin using this pedal and answer some questions that have come up routinely over the last year as well.

I will write this in the form of a Q&A but some of these are questions I made up to share things that I have learned along the way.

### **Holy Crap this thing is loud!!!**

Yes, yes it is. I did that to keep up with my high output basses and the rest of my signal chain is set up to handle a loud pedal. If your rig isn't used to high volume signals then there is no shame in keeping the Volume and Clean controls well below noon. The range is wide on purpose. But not every amp or succeeding pedal is ready to receive an up to 18V p-p signal. I wanted to lower this but some of my customers angrily protested so I've kept it dangerously high for the time being. But the thing to keep in mind is if you plug this in and everything down the line sound broken then you may want to back off on the Volume a little.

### **I can't hear distortion.**

Turn down the Clean channel and turn up the Gain and Depth Controls. If need be, turn up the internal boost trim pot (the trim pot on the left-hand side when looking at the PCB). You may also need to turn up the Tone control to help you cut in the mix. The last thing to add would be the Clean channel (if at all). The more clean you add the less distortion you have and if you start playing a game of turning up Clean then Gain then Clean then Gain and so on and so on you'll end up with a hot mess. So, set distortion first then fuss with the Clean channel.

### **There's too much distortion.**

Turn down the Gain and Depth controls and possibly the internal boost trim. Cut back on some highs to mellow out your tone and you'll sink back into the mix.

### **It's too bright.**

Turn up the Depth and Gain controls and turn the down the Tone control to taste. Don't be afraid to adjust your bass and amp's EQ and make sure you're using a rig with a good amount of low end definition. A good bass and bass amp is pivotal to a good bass tone regardless of pedals used. Also, if you have new round wound strings those will be extra bright coming out of a distortion so use your bass's tone knob to cut back on those highs until the strings lose some zing.

#### **It's too dark.**

Turn down the Gain and Depth and turn up the tone. The range on these controls is wide and is meant to allow for accommodation of many basses and rigs. Don't be afraid to turn controls all the way up or down. Also make sure your rig had a good amount of highs and you're not using a bass with dead strings. I've learned this lesson far too many times. The MBD is designed to sound good enough in most settings but she really shines with a good bass with good strings and a good full range head and cab. When I'm using something like a fridge or a vintage cab I always max out my Tone control and use my head to add some more highs if I need to cut. With a modern full range cab, I find that I keep the Tone around noon and adjust the Depth to taste. New strings are certainly not required but they help.

#### **It makes a loud pop.**

This is one thing that I never had issues with personally but I have heard from several customers that had popping issues. I used to address them one-by-one but I have moved to using a buffered bypass design. It's not a cure-all but it helps in most cases. There are sadly a multitude of reasons why an effect would pop while switching and I can't guarantee against all of them. What I can say is that using clean regulated and isolated power supplies and known good cables with a properly serviced bass and amp can help reduce popping a bunch as well as switching a pedal on and off a few times while the system is muted can help work out any pops without damaging anything. The unknown variable is all the other pedals and effects in your signal chain. There could be a possible interaction between effects that is unknown to me. I have tested my pedal in several different rigs with different levels of questionable gear and power but I haven't tried them all.

#### **It's too noisy.**

To borrow a phrase from a friend you'll find noise if you go looking for it. I will admit that it is not the quietest pedal I've ever used but it is on par with other distortion pedals I have played. Distortion pedals by nature create noise but if you find it to be too much then I recommend many of the same remedies I mentioned in the previous paragraph such as: using clean regulated and isolated power supplies and known good cables with a properly serviced bass and amp. I recommended trying the MBD solo or in conjunction with a few pieces of gear to see when and where any unwanted noise develops. I also like to suggest trying a battery and a different bass and amp in a different location to help eliminate different variables. And to reiterate one more thing I said in the previous paragraph: The unknown variable is all the other pedals and effects in your signal chain. There could be a possible interaction between effects that is unknown to me. I have tested my pedal in several different rigs with different levels of questionable gear and power but I haven't tried them all.