



LINE 6

## Line 6 HX Effects

Line 6 puts all of its Helix effects and more in a smaller package that could revamp, or replace, your pedalboard

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**VIDEO DEMO** ► <http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>

When it comes to having something to plug a guitar into, the Line 6 Helix floor processors are all that some players could possibly need. For others, however, they are overkill. A guitar and a Helix that's connected into the PA can be the sum total of your live rig – as long as experienced ears are taking care of the front of house sound and your onstage monitoring – but many players just want to use Helix for its effects through their existing amp, largely consigning the onboard amp and speaker simulation to redundancy in live performance and leaving some pondering the need for all that extra capability and yearning for something smaller with just the effects. Well, if that's you, the wait is over. Line 6 says that this latest Helix HX Effects is designed for the guitarist (and

bassist) who embraces traditional amp and pedalboard rigs.

The HX Effects is an eight-footswitch box with versatile connectivity that's pretty comprehensive as far as effects are concerned. We get all 117 effects from the Helix series as well as another 77 from previous Line 6 pedals, like the DL4, and the ones that the HX most resembles: the M9 and M13 stompbox modellers. These effects are arranged in presets, constructed from a chain of up to nine blocks, each of which can host an effect so, DSP permitting, you can have up to nine effects simultaneously.

You can use the HX either in Preset mode using footswitches, or in Stomp mode where each footswitch engages a particular effect just like a standard pedalboard. Immediate switching

between Preset and Stomp modes is accomplished with the Mode footswitch so perhaps the most practical view of the unit is as a collection of pedalboards that can be called up for use in different songs.

Although you probably wouldn't describe the HX Effects as compact, it's only slightly bigger than a couple of Big Muffs side-by-side, so it's small enough to fit onto a pedalboard alongside other pedals. Of course, it's completely feasible to use the HX Effects in isolation but many more options open up if you use it alongside other pedals and, not just in-line either, as a couple of onboard send/return loops let you integrate external pedals wherever you like in a HX preset signal flow with switching from the HX. A loop can, alternatively, allow amp connection via the four-cable method.

## Tech Spec

**ORIGIN:** China  
**TYPE:** Multi-FX pedal  
**FEATURES:** Selectable buffered or true bypass, 128 preset locations (each with four snapshots) in 32 banks of four, computer-based editor (coming soon), impulse response loading for stage/FOH routings and acoustic guitar body resonance, tuner  
**CONTROLS:** Big knob, 3 x soft knobs 6x buttons, 8 x footswitch  
**CONNECTIONS:** Standard inputs (L/Mono, R), standard output (L/Mono, R), Sends 1&2, Returns 1&2, 2 x Exp pedal, MIDI In, MIDI Out/Thru, USB  
**POWER:** Supplied 9VDC DC-3G adaptor 3000 mA  
**DIMENSIONS:** 275 (w) x 195 (d) x 70mm (h)

**Guitarist CHOICE**

**9/10**

### 01. MODE SWITCH

The Mode footswitch really unlocks the HX Effects' onboard versatility – toggling between two modes to configure the footswitches to either call up presets or individual effects. To completely bypass the pedal you can press Mode and Tap switches together

### 02. GENERAL FRONT PANEL

The six footswitches' scribble strip LCDs and colour-coded LED rings let you see exactly what you need to with high visibility

### 03. KNOBS 1, 2 & 3

Instant access here to editing parameters of an effect when in Pedalboard mode – just touch any footswitch and the first three will appear in the scribble strip

### 04. REAR PANEL

Two mono or one stereo send/return loop can connect external pedals and/or facilitate amp connection by the four-cable method



## IN USE

Setting things up is extremely easy with just a few intuitive controls. At the HX's most basic you can just use a mono input and output and have six footswitches for six effects, but if you want to get deeper there's so much more complexity to explore here.

Not least, you can set it up as the command centre of your system: you can arrange blocks in any order (including parallel signal paths), assign tasks to the footswitches (including assigning multiple blocks to the same switch, changing parameter values, etc), create snapshots (recallable variations of the same preset), utilise the extensive MIDI capability and set up external controllers – there are two inputs to add expression pedals and these can, alternatively, be used for switching

an amp's channels or effects. With wah, whammy and other foot-controlled effects onboard, some might wonder at the lack of a built-in treadle but not everyone needs one, so, for those that do, using external expression pedals makes perfect sense and keeps the unit at a manageable size.

The effects here are of uniformly high quality. Digital modelling these days can provide recreations of classic effects that in many cases are all but indistinguishable from the original and our A/B testing showed plenty of that going on here, with quite possibly all the modulation, pitch and spatial effects you'll need plus an eclectic range of drives/distortions. All this comes with massive flexibility – with 128 onboard 'pedalboards' there's nothing to stop you having six different distortions on the same 'board or a modulation monster

with chorus, phaser, flanger, rotary, tremolo and vibe.

## VERDICT

The HX Effects excels both as a self-contained compact pedalboard or a constituent part of a bigger 'board where it could be a starter unit in building your system or used to expand your existing rig with a range of quality effects to cover all sonic eventualities. At a street price of under £500 there's not a lot you need to ask yourself before parting with your cash. **G**

**PROS** All the Helix effects and more, workable size, external loops, easy editing

**CONS** May not work with your standard pedalboard power supply unit