



DigiTech MonoNeon Whammy

Designed in collaboration with bassist Dywane Thomas Jr, aka MonoNeon, this tone-bending pedal delivers signature sounds in the Whammy format

By Nick Wells

MONONEON, AKA DYWANE Thomas Jr., is a name synonymous with funky basslines; you’d expect him to be, as he worked and performed with Prince in his latter days.

He is also well known for his flamboyant style, both in his left-handed playing technique and his dress sense. This new signature pedal from DigiTech looks to combine the two (funk and flamboyance) in equal measure.

Building upon DigiTech’s existing Whammy technology, additional features include new octave blend modes and a “Hypersonic” mode that allows for up to 3 octaves of pitch bends. Being a MonoNeon signature, it also comes in yellow and orange, to match his signature Fender MonoNeon Jazz Bass that came out in 2022.

So what has the MonoNeon Whammy got that other pitch-shifters don’t?

Build quality

The rugged all-metal chassis is in-keeping with DigiTech’s standard Bass Whammy. As with all the DigiTech pedals I’ve seen so far, it’s built tough, with a durable casing that should withstand just about any abuse you could throw at it. The top of the expression pedal is covered by rubber, ensuring extra grip. At 3.8 lbs in weight, it certainly shouldn’t go walkabout on stage either.

Straight away, as soon as you pick it up you notice the firm but fluid motion of the treadle. Overall, the unit itself is solidly built and everything feels both sturdy and well put together.

To call the color-scheme lurid is something of an understatement. Although fans will no doubt enjoy the orange and yellow, as it wouldn’t look out of place if adorned by MonoNeon himself. The high-vis paint job also glows green under UV light, making it easier to navigate on a dark stage.

“These are my two favorite colors,” MonoNeon told Bass Player. “I love how the construction workers look on the highway. It’s inspired by them.”

Usability

The Bass Whammy uses digital signal processing to produce its pitch shifting. A special microprocessor “listens” to the analogue signal from the bass, and then specific algorithms are superimposed onto it to produce the Whammy effect.

As far as features go, DigiTech has designed this pedal to be practical and versatile. There are 11 Whammy presets, alongside all-new harmony voicings plus all your regular DigiTech Harmony settings. The new three-octave-up Hypersonic effect is the extreme end of the spectrum, while a reworked Detune replaces the standard Shallow and Deep modes.

With a single black rotary selector you can scroll between the different modes. There’s also a footswitch to engage/bypass the

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effect, and a toggle to select either Classic or Chords mode.

Flick the switch to Classic and the pedal runs the original DigiTech Whammy algorithm, which is dialled-in for single-notes. Set it to Chords and you can pitch-shift several notes at once. It’s also designed to work with both guitar and bass.

The main difference between the Harmony and Whammy settings is that, in the case of the Harmony modes, the dry signal is combined with the shifted note, while the Whammy modes give you a completely shifted sound. The names of the Whammy modes indicate where you’ll end up once you reach the toe-down end of the expression pedal’s travel.

Quarter-inch jack sockets can be found at either side. There’s also a MIDI input should you wish to connect an external MIDI controller.

Sounds

My initial reaction to the MonoNeon Whammy was to marvel at just how creative an effect it is. Scrolling through the preset intervals gives you a good idea of what can be achieved with the new octave settings, including patches that simulate a range of synth-like pairings. The 4th-down option was also really useful, meaning I could instantly turn my 4-string Dingwall bass into a 5-string.

The Harmony modes blend your clean signal with a harmony note – one note with the pedal fully down and another with the pedal fully up. Moving the expression pedal causes the harmony note to bend from one note to the other, which sounds like a futuristic pedal steel sliding up or down with your original note as a drone.

It’s worth noting that not all pitch-shifters have expression pedals built in, but it’s an extremely useful addition that means you can bend notes as you play them.

The new Detune setting produces an equally pleasing chorus and is easily good enough to negate the need for a separate box on your board. The wetness of the effect is controlled by the expression pedal.

Still, this is all really just a side-show offered in support of the main event – the new Hypersonic mode, which allows for seriously extreme pitch bends. You can use it to create a kind of rhythmic tone jump akin to Mike Kerr’s iconic riffs with Royal Blood. While Kerr leans on a Boss PS-6 Harmonist for his ferocious pitch-bending, I can’t think of many other pedals that offer the same kind of range as this.

The ability to progressively move between different octaves brings all sorts of spontaneous, creative madness to the table. This also means that achieving a consistent

GUITAR WORLD VERDICT



With or without MonoNeon’s moniker, many bands could get deeply irritated by their bassist endlessly bending harmonies over the top of their tunes, but this pedal’s simple beauty is that there are always new ways of applying the effect. Used sparingly the MonoNeon Whammy is a really creative tool.

PROS

- + User-friendly for the bassist who wants to plug in and ‘Go!’
- + An immense list of features including full MIDI control
- + Designed to work with both guitar and bass.

CONS

- Probably not different enough to make current Whammy owners swap
- Unless harmonizers are your thing, a price of around \$350 is a little extravagant for a pedal you may not use too often

SPECS

TYPE: Pitch-shifter/harmonizer
CONTROLS: Expression pedal, Classic/Chords toggle switch, Rotary selector, Effect On/Off switch
FEATURES: Whammy, Harmony, Octave & Detune effects
CONNECTIVITY: Input, output, MIDI input, power
POWER: 9-volt power supply
DIMENSIONS: 165x63x196 mm
WEIGHT: 3.8lbs/1.7kg

sound takes some practice. It won’t be for everyone, but the sonically adventurous among you will have an absolute blast.

Verdict

I really enjoyed my time with this pedal; some of the settings are way over the top, but others will have you diving right in.

Die-hard MonoNeon fans will need no encouragement, but ignoring the signature association for a minute, this is an extremely good pitch-shifter.

The existing DigiTech Bass Whammy is still in production and has the same footprint as the MonoNeon Whammy, but obviously, comes without the show-stopping Hypersonic Mode and reconfigured harmony intervals.

If those aren’t important to you, then the regular Bass Whammy and Whammy V remain excellent choices, just with a different flavour.

