

GT140

Session Secret

Effects Chain

OK, You've got an overdrive, a distortion, a chorus, a delay and a reverb... now how do I plug them in??

Building a live or studio rig is something that, like brewing fine ale, always needs time, and if you spend it wisely you'll end up with a great tone. There are so many possibilities and combinations that would be impossible to discuss all of them in detail, so we're gonna see the most two common ones.

1. Place all the pedals before the amp/s input.

This method is probably the most common. The pedals are usually arranged in the following order;

GTR > Compressor > Wah > Booster > Overdrive > Distortion > Volume > Modulation (chorus, phaser, flanger, etc.) > Delay > Reverb

Of course it's worth experimenting with different combinations, but this is the starting point.

Downside: the guitar signal doesn't 'survive' all these pedals. You cannot use the amp's natural distortion with the modulation, delay and reverb, because you will end up with these effects being distorted by the amp.

Upside: if you're not using too many pedals (e.g. wah, distortion and delay) and you don't want to use the amp's distortion, the quality of the signal is still acceptable. In this case the rig would be easy to carry and to install.

Solution: There are units available, like GigRig, VoodooLab Ground Control Pro, TC Electronics and Custom Audio Electronics, that solve the problem in slightly different ways. The idea is to connect all the pedals to another unit (rack or pedalboard) that works as a sort of mixer. Basically, every pedal has its own loop which means that when all the pedals are off, the guitar signal is pure as it goes from input to output bypassing all the pedals. When you use a pedal, or any combination, the guitar signal only goes through the active pedals, bypassing all

others. There are several advantages to this. You can create your own patches (no more tap dancing), adjust pedal and patch volumes and these units usually have a buffer which helps to keep the integrity of the tone. Generally people that use this system don't want to use the amps distortion.

Downside: more stuff to carry. *Upside:* it makes life so much easier!

2. Place some pedals before the amps input and some into the effects loop.

This is similar to before, but there are now two effects chains.

GTR > Compressor > Wah > Booster > Overdrive > Distortion > Input
Effects loop send > Volume Pedal > Modulation > Delay > Reverb > Effect loop return.

This works in the same way as the previous setup, but now you can use the amps distortion as the modulation effects will be added afterwards. Amps have two main types of effect loop: serial and parallel.

Serial means that the entire guitar signal goes through the effect loop (ie all the pedals in the loop) while parallel means the signal is split in two, with one going straight to the speakers whilst the other follows the loop effect. Of course, most of the players prefer parallel because it's less invasive to the guitar's tone.

This system, in combination with the units mentioned previously, seems to be way to go for many pros. Of course the choice of rig depends on the style and context of your gig.

Here's a list of common options. This list doesn't pretend to be a Holy Grail of rigs but just a starting point for many players.

Jazz live gig: Gibson ES-175 D with Roland Jazz Chorus (this amp has chorus, tremolo/vibrato and reverb). Extras: compressor, delay. Of course it's up to you if you want a whammy pedal for a Jim Hall-esque lick!

Country: Telecaster with a Fender Valve amp (Deluxe Reverb, Twin, etc). Extras: compressor, overdrive, analog delay (short), phaser.

Classic Rock: Gibson Les Paul with a Marshall (JCM 800, Plexi, etc). Extra: wah, delay.

Heavy Metal: EMG equipped guitar with a Marshall or Mesa Boogie Dual Rectifier. Extras: wah, whammy pedal, chorus, flanger, delay.

Blues: Stratocaster with any valve amp that you like. Extras: wah, overdrive/booster, Leslie.

Ex 1: I've used my Gibson ES175-D straight into the POD XT with Compressor (threshold -21dB), Roland JC120, Analog chorus (0.69Hz, 71% Depth, 39% Mix, 50% Bass, 79% Treble), Analog Delay (40ms, 38% Feedback, 25% Mix, EQ flat), Reverb: Cavernous (10/15%).

♩ = 280 B♭ G⁷alt. C^m7 F⁷alt. B♭ G⁷alt. C^m7 F⁷alt.

5 B♭ G⁷alt. C^m7 F⁷alt. B♭

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Ex 2: Telecaster, Keeley Compressor (S: 3 o'clock; L: max), POD XT set on Plexi 45 with Analog Delay (same as previous). Hybrid picking needed for this one.

♩ = 150 A

3

1.

5 2.

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Ex 3: For this one I've use a Japanese Ibanez equipped with EMGs (81, SA, 85) into the POD XT (Marshall JCM800). Reverb added from the desk.

$\text{♩} = 80$

Am F

5 G

7 E7(b9) Am

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Ex 4: The last example has been recorded with an old Strat, MXR Dynacomp (Sensitivity: 1 o'clock; Output: 3 o'clock) into the POD XT set on the Marshall Plexi 45.

♩ = 120 Bm7

4 E9 Bm7

7 E9 Bm7

T
A
B

P.M. - - - - P.M. - - - -

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