

# MAXON DB10

BY TYLER GREEN

Ever feel like your amp doesn't quite reach the potential that its formidable exterior suggests? Or that you can't match your bandmates' volume when you need to? Sometimes we *all* need a boost to the right orbital altitude.

Maxon's new DB10 Dual Booster puts a more versatile and powerful propulsion system at your disposal. With two distinctly voiced boost circuits and 20 dB of boost on each, it's got color galore and enough gain to launch you into that perfect orbit without ruining your tone.

## Two Stage Rocket

Maxon made some of the best effects pedals of the early '80s—often in Ibanez livery (perhaps you've heard of the TS808 and TS9?). Since then, the company has continued to make pro-grade, amazing sounding effects of exceptional quality, and the DB10 reflects the same knack for design and road-ready toughness that made their original designs and reissues so desirable.

Sporting a dark green paint job and white letters, the DB10 has loads of early '80s charm with its less-than-subtle nod to the TS808. Carrying on Maxon's reputation for building nearly indestructible pedals, the DB10 also gives you the sense that you could hurl it clear across a club without putting a dent in the thing.

Like most boost pedals, the DB10 has a pretty simple layout: two level knobs, two red LED indicators, two

true-bypass footswitches, independent input/output jacks for each channel, and a 9V-18V DC power jack. There's also a very solid battery compartment located on the back. About the only conceivable complaint with the design is that cascading the channels into each other requires a 1/4" cable that can increase pedalboard clutter. A 3-way selector switch serving the same function would have been preferable for some, but Maxon says this topology was chosen because it lets you place a separate distortion pedal in line between the DB10's two boost circuits.

## Fuel to Burn

I gave the DB10 a run with a '60s Fender Twin Reverb in the trial-by-fire environs of a live show and with a Vox AC4 in the studio. In both environments, I noticed that the vintage channel is pretty subtle until cranked. But when you push it, your amp's preamp will really feel the heat, and with the 20 dB of boost per channel,

this pedal has gain to burn if you need it. In terms of tone, the mojo of early Kinks guitar comes to mind immediately. And if you push a single-stage tube amp with the DB10, you can summon classic and tasty overdriven tones at volumes that won't summon the *gendarmes*. It's almost impossible not to have a go at the brothers Davies' slashing "You Really Got Me" in this mode.

The clean channel is very smooth, and while the pedal is pretty transparent on both channels, this virtue is especially apparent on the clean side. This is a perfect setup for situations where you really need the punch to get out in front of a band for solos or certain phrases, without altering your tone too much.

The Maxon DB10 is not just a great preamp booster for single-stage tube amps either. It works just about anywhere in a signal chain where a little more gain might be necessary. However, it's powerful enough that it can easily overwhelm most circuitry, so it's important to remember that a little can go a long way.

## The Verdict

The DB10 isn't cheap at nearly 250 bucks, but when you consider the rock-solid build quality, functional and flexible design, and

massive amounts of gain, this pedal is a great value—particularly if you go to boost a lot in the course of a set. While super flexible, the pedal isn't always suited to all situations and players. If you have a solid-state amp, the muscular gain of the DB10 can crush the front end in a most unpleasant fashion. And if you want a simple single-channel boost or tend to rely on heavier distortions, the DB10 is probably not an ideal match. But with two beautiful and very transparent voices—including a vintage voice that can move into the realms of beautiful, harmonic, mid-'60s-style amp overdrive—this compact stompbox is a pedalboard weapon of enormous potential.



# RATINGS

Maxon DB10, \$249 street, maxonfx.com

**Pros:** Two beautiful-sounding boost channels. Compact design. Great build quality. Vintage looks.

**Cons:** Doesn't include switchable gain cascade. Pricey.

Tones	★★★★
Ease of Use	★★★★
Build	★★★★
Value	★★★★



[CLICK HERE](#) to hear sound clips of this pedal.