





# TC ELECTRONIC PLETHORA X5 £399

## MASH to the future

**L**iving up to its name, the TC Plethora offers a smorgasbord of options. It takes the algorithms and functionality from TC's excellent TonePrint-enabled pedals and combines them into a workhorse unit. The Plethora's large screen and on-board editor make it easy to build custom signal chains of TonePrint patches. The connectivity options at the rear of the unit leave no stone unturned,

a good way. Consider the case of two adjacent banks. We set up a traditional chain of delay, reverb, compression, chorus, and TC's excellent MimiQ double-tracker effect on one. Then, we set the bank below to pitch shift and delay effects with MASH-controlled parameters – pitch up and runaway oscillations. This ability to alternate the sensible and the madcap is available on a whim. The amount of fun you can have

Our gold standard for a pedal is generating new riff ideas, and several arrived as we experimented with the stereo effects on the Plethora.

The only real negative we found is that to get the most out of the pedal, we had to run a drive in front of it. As a result, the Plethora is best seen as replacing several pedals on your board, rather than as an all-in-one pedalboard solution. Luckily there's a send/return loop on the rear, so you patch your favourite drive into a custom chain. A less serious issue was that the signal chain seemed to be very particular about order. Some combinations worked better than others, and differences in wet-dry volume resulted in volume drops. In the end, we had to do quite a bit of adjusting to avoid volume jumps when engaging or disengaging effects.

**Alex Lynham**

### AT A GLANCE

**POWER:** 9VDC (provided)

**SWITCHES:** 5, with MASH functionality

**INPUTS:** Mono/stereo in, mono/stereo out, insert send/return, expression, MIDI in/through, USB

## IT NEGATES THE NEED FOR AN EXPRESSION PEDAL

as you'd expect for a flagship unit.

Though there's an expression input, this went unused during testing, thanks to the USP of this pedal – TC's MASH technology. On individual pedals, this pressure-sensitive switch negates – to some extent – the need for a traditional expression pedal.

The Plethora has a huge range of effects, and parameters are assignable via the unit rather than software. In this context, the five MASH switches can turn this from a workhorse to a freakshow – in

chaining Whammy pedals is a niche amusement, granted. Yet, it's just the sort of thing that could make or break a studio session if you're in search of that little extra nugget of inspiration.

The user interface isn't immediately as intuitive as some of its competitors. It did at least meet our minimum standard for quality, though – we didn't need to reach for the manual to work it out. The TC algorithms are of a high quality and manipulating and using the effects is intuitive.

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★