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Jam Pedals Red Muck review

A lot of people have asked me to review the Red Muck from Jam Pedals. It's not that often that I come across a clone of the early Sovtek pedals although cloners are starting to acknowledge these unique sounding Big Muff models. With great interest I gave the pedal a shot. Here's my review.

My very first Big Muff was a green Sovtek that I bought new back in early 1997. I still got it. This was before the internet exploded with boutique companies and at least here in Oslo there was very little knowledge and interest among the guitar stores for the new wave of analog pedals. The Big Muff completely changed my conception of tone and it's been my favourite distortion pedal ever since. Another model that I'm particularly fond of is the triangle Muff. In my opinion this is the most musical of the Muffs with a classic scooped warm tone and lots of sustain.



The Red Muck from the Greek company Jam Pedals promise to be a clone inspired by both the triangle and early Sovtek models. IMO a great idea since the triangle sometimes lack a bit of gain while the Sovteks can be too aggressive. The pedal is housed in a BYOC sized box with fitting Soviet inspired graphics and feature controls for gain, tone and volume, true bypass switching and it runs on 9V battery or adaptor.

The pedal was tested on two different Stratocaster setups – Fender CS69+Duncan SSL5 (bridge) and EMG DG20 – and two different amps – Laney Cub12 15w stack and Reeves Custom 50w – both with Weber Thames 80w speakers. I also did an A/B test with a 1996 green Sovtek Big Muff and a BYOC Large Beaver triangle clone.

My first impression was that the pedal sounded dark and lacked the crisp top of the Sovtek. It was also hard to squeeze out enough gain. Easy to dismiss as one in a million perhaps but with some patience and tweaking the pedal started to reveal its true identity. First of all the Red Muck is probably the most silent Muff I've ever tried. Even with the gain all the way up the noise level is quite moderate. It also has a very dynamic tone control that both has a wider range and still manages to maintain the character of the pedal without sounding too dark or too bright. The overall tone is very similar to a Sovtek with a fat saturated lower end and a mild mid boost. Like the

triangle the Red Muck allows a much more dynamic control with the guitar volume and it responds incredibly well to your picking compared to the Sovteks.

I've always preferred Big Muffs that aren't too aggressive with a milder warm tone. If you swear by your P2 or the bright gain saturated ram's head then you might dismiss the Red Muck as too mild or too dark. However this is one of the best sounding Muffs for smaller home setups that I've come across. The mild tone allows for David's Muff+booster setup and even a compressor in front without getting too wild and noisy, which is often the case with a ram's head or Sovtek on smaller setups. On a bigger stage setup the Red Muck opens up and in combo with a Tube Driver nails David's PULSE and Island tones with a transparent character allowing both the amp and guitar to shine. Much like the qualities of the triangle Muff.

I don't really have that much to put my finger on with this one although it's perhaps not as versatile as many other Muffs. But then again I don't think the Big Muff is a very versatile distortion all together. Unlike the P2 or the early Sovteks, which stands well on their own, the Red Muck needs a booster behind it. Personally this is a plus because I think it's easier to blend with a booster but I would like it to have just a hair more gain and I also think it lack some of that "click" attack from the triangle and ram's head, which the Sovtek is also capable of.

I warmly recommend the Red Muck and especially if you're mainly playing at home on a smaller amp and low volume. The pedal is easy to tame and goes well with most boosters and overdrives without getting too saturated and noisy. Check out the big range of vintage clones at [Jam Pedals' homepage](#) and learn more about the Red Muck.

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