

INTRODUCTION

The Vagabond takes two of our favorite vintage amp tremolo sounds: Harmonic tremolo and bias tremolo. Vintage amp designs were limited by the expense, bulk and power demands of adding more tubes. This led to simple elegant designs with their own personalities and imperfections.

Both tremolo styles used large bias voltages added to the guitar signal to vary tube gain. This limited depth and speed. This added signal was large enough that if you pulled the grill cloth off the amp you could see the speaker cone pulsing in rhythm with the effect.

If the tremolo went faster you'd hear a low frequency hum. If it went deeper you'd hear the amplifier beating or popping in time. The design also had to account for the tolerances of whatever vacuum tubes, which were much wider than the solid state electronics which were soon to come.

Technology of the future past:

The vagabond uses 1970s technology to push past the limitations offering deeper and faster modulation, while staying true to the character (and dare we say "imperfections") of 50s and 60s tube tremolos.

Bias Tremolo:

This effect works by biasing the power tubes of the amplifier. This means the effect is after the preamp, and after the reverb circuit. Being after the reverb means the reverb signal is affected by the tremolo as well. This kept the effect from being washed out by the reverb.

It is a unique sound with a smooth, but throbbing attack at the top of the sweep that often makes bias tremolos sound deeper than they actually are.

Harmonic Tremolo:

The tremolo moniker is a slight misnomer. The confusion is only deepened by the fact that Fender always labeled it as "vibrato." Harmonic tremolo is actually a cross fade effect between a high-pass and low-pass filter. The throb of tremolo is there, but with some hints of phaser and vibrato.

CONTROLS

Speed and intensity: The same controls you'll find on most old school tremolo units, although some were labeled with "rate" or "depth" instead. Speed makes the tremolo go faster. Intensity makes it go deeper. You got this, right? Right!

Harmonic / Bias Switch: Switch between the two tremolo styles.

Volume: Adjust the volume level to make up for the usual tremolo volume loss. You can even boost the signal.

Envelope Drift: Turn to the left to slow down the tremolo when you play harder on the guitar. Turn to the right to speed it up. Set to dead center this knob has no effect.

SIGNAL CHAIN

Pedal board placement will greatly affect the sound. There's no wrong way to do things, but it's best to know what you want before you start tearing up cables and Velcro.

For example, let's say you want to replicate a bias trem amp with reverb. You'd place the Vagabond before your reverb, and possibly overdrives. This arrangement goes against the traditional thinking that modulation pedals belong near the end of the signal chain.

Some tremolos don't do well when placed before overdrive pedals, but that was something we had in mind while designing this pedal. The vibe-like qualities of the harmonic tremolo setting are especially brought out when followed with some overdrive. So before you start hacking up a new set of patch cables check out the possibilities.

SUBDECAY

VAGABOND

TREMOLO



USER GUIDE

VERSION 1.00A

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Power: The Vagabond can be powered by a dedicated Class II regulated 9 to 18 volt DC power supply with a negative center 2.1mm barrel type plug. Current draw under normal operation is less than 25mA. If using a "daisy chain" power supply all other units on the power supply MUST be negative ground.

Specifications: Input impedance: 500K. Output impedance: <1K

Operation and Care: Keep away from extreme heat, cold and moisture. Use only a dry towel to clean. No user serviceable parts. Contact Subdecay Studios, Inc. for repair or maintenance.

Warranty: Subdecay Studios offers a 3 year limited warranty from the purchase date to the original purchaser. This warranty does not cover misuse, or the neglect of the user. It also does not cover the finish, paint, or any exterior, or superficial damage. Any unauthorized repairs will void warranty.

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