



## TS8-JZ THE ZIFFER – JORDAN ZIFF SIGNATURE MINI OVERDRIVE PEDAL MANUAL

### SPECIFICATIONS

Input impedance: 550KΩ

Output Impedance: 100Ω

Optimal Power Voltage: 9-18VDC ±10% Center Negative Barrel

DC Power Plug Barrel: Ø 5.1/2.1mm, 12mm long

Current Consumption: < 11mAh @ 9VDC; 15mAh @ 18VDC

Product Size: Length: 39mm, Depth: 92mm, Height: 51mm

Product Weight: 159 gr.

Packed Weight: 200 gr.

### ADVICE, WARNING & CAUTIONS

#### - Read this manual and keep it handy.

- Do not place the pedal in direct sunlight, in extreme temperature and humidity conditions, or in dusty environment.

- Do not make modifications to the circuit and do not install the pedal in any other way except as described in this manual.

- As we struggle to improve ourselves and our products, we may change products specifications, design, and features without notice. Likewise, this manual may be changed or modified without notice so we advise you to download it from the website before using the product.

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for choosing The Ziffer Overdrive – Jordan Ziff Signature mini tubescreamer pedal.

The TS8-JZ Ziffer Overdrive is derived from our TS8-MS Overdrive / MIDI Switcher pedal. We removed the MIDI switching capabilities and added several controls which contribute to subtle tone-crafting and expanded versatility.

We always kept in mind Jordan Ziff's minimalist approach to guitar tone – only using the overdrive to push his 1959 Plexi amp – and mixed the tubescreamer bare essentials with careful sophistication, all while shrinking the packaging into a sturdy 1590A Hammond aluminum enclosure. The Ziffer is a sturdy minion, road-ready, and eager to perform in any environment.

The Ziffer's circuit is tributary to the vintage 808 still, yet features our modifications which we took even further. Compared with the TS8-MS, the Ziffer Overdrive features a DEEP switch with an option for beefing up the lower end frequencies, a DRY/WET MIX trimmer to blend the clean signal over the wet overdriven signal, and a DRY EQ trimmer that acts on the dryline only to mix back either flat clean or tilted frequencies on either the lows or highs spectrum. It still features the tri-option CLIPPING switch which modifies the overall gain structure to better shape suitable tones for a large variety of applications.

On top of that, we replaced the one-transistor buffers with audio grade op-amps which contribute to a lower noise floor, especially in the high-gain settings. We also employ very low tolerance parts, high-quality Panasonic multi-layer plastic metalized film capacitors in the audio path, and build everything on our standard Gold-plated tracing circuit board, for lifetime endurance. The Ziffer Overdrive can be powered anywhere in between 9VDC and 18VDC for improved transparency and high headroom.

### EFFECT CONTROLS



**FOOTSWITCH** – When engaged, the switch routes the audio signal through the circuitry and the Power LED is lit Green. When pushed again, the signal is routed in True Bypass from Input to Output, leaving the audio untouched. This routing is still available even when the pedal is not powered.

**GAIN** – Along with the CLIP and the DEEP switches, the GAIN control sets the amount of overdrive applied to the clean signal. The gain stage preserves the original 808 tubescreamer characters but it is modified for tonal enhancement and variable structural response. The frequency filters are trimmed for enhanced response in the low end while enhancing warmth and clarity. Dialed to a minimum, it barely breaks in, and while twisting to the other end can reach focus and aggression, you may find your best balance in between. Roll down the volume knob in your instrument and the pedal cleans out nicely, always rendering an organic and natural drive. A little dump in the guitar tone as well may lead to your sweetest bluesy tone. Play with it.

**TONE** – The tone control should not be used as much as a tone correction but more like a frequency balancer and drive-response sweetener, appropriate to your particular instrument or amp. If your tone seems too brittle, don't be afraid to turn it counterclockwise for as much as it is needed. On the contrary, if your instrument is too darker sounding, turn it clockwise to add higher mids and presence.

**LEVEL** – The level control is placed post-DRY/WET MIX and sets the overall output volume of the pedal. In its most counterclockwise position, it puts the signal to the ground, leaving nothing at the output. Turned to the max, it passes the overall level set in the GAIN stage.

**DRY/WET MIX** – This control acts like an audio mixer, where you can blend the input clean signal with the hot overdriven signal. This feature works in conjunction with the DRY EQ. When fully counterclockwise, the signal is 100% wet. Turned fully clockwise, it is 100% dry. In between is 50/50.

The typical frequency response of the overdrive exhibits a strong bump in the mids centered on 1 kHz, at the expense of losing some of the low-end frequencies. Although this is highly desirable when pushing an instrument amplifier to cut out through the other instruments in a mix, it may leave something to be desired. Injecting back some of the clean signals may restore a part of the low end, adding more body to the tone. It may also alter the overall gain structure, but, depending on the instrument, the general overdrive sound may be better tuned this way, adding options for creativity.

When set to 100% dry, the pedal acts as a hot buffer or, more correctly, like a mild booster because the dryline is pre-set with a certain amount of gain which is needed to balance the higher gain in the wet overdriven signal. And, when used in conjunction with the DRY EQ, you can choose to inject either more highs or more lows. The latter is particularly useful when using the pedal with a bass instrument or with single-coil guitars, while the former is helpful when driving the instrument amplifier in either mild break-up (where

the proportion of highs in the dry signal may help preserve the sonic character of the amplifier), or in blistering high gain (where a proportion of clean dry highs subtly mixed with overdriven wet mids can improve the clarity of your playing).

**DRY EQ** – This control adds more value to the DRY/WET mixer, allowing more coloring to the clean signal which is supposed to be blended with the wet overdriven sound. It acts like a tilting equalizer with a center pivot at 750 Hz. Turned to the left, it dumps the lows by as low as -6dB while concomitantly bumping highs with up to +6dB. And vice versa. Left in the middle, it leaves the clean signal unchanged. When the MIX knob is trimmed right to the max, the pedal may be used as a frequency booster. Use the DRY EQ to make either minor or bold corrections to your push, and use the pedal's LEVEL to set the output as loud as needed. However, this is not the only way the DRY EQ can be used.

This control adds more versatility when the pedal is used with different instruments, such as bass, or over-bright single coil guitars, or dark-sounding humbucker guitars. There you can recover some of the lows lost in the overdrive engine, or add sparking highs if needed. Be creative. Start by blending half DRY and half WET with the knob centered at noon, the slightly tilt the EQ one way or the other, to better hear its response. Fine-tune it afterward to appropriately balance the mix of clean and overdriven signals.

**CLIP SWITCH** – This control is part of the gain stage and is responsible for carving the gain structure which gives the pedal its particular voicing. The clipping switch has three positions. In the upper position, the **CLASSIC** clipping is set with silicon diodes. This mostly resembles the original 808 tones, and can only be described as creamy saturated overdrive. In the middle position, a variation is introduced, setting the clipping to **ASYMMETRIC**. The tone becomes airier, less saturated. The overall level rises a bit and, if the GAIN is dialed in more clockwise, the tone soon resembles a naughty drive. It cuts better in the mix and becomes more aggressive. Use this along with the DRY/WET MIX and the DRY EQ for more tonal variation. Finally, in the lower position of the switch, the clipping is set to **CUSTOM** – using our choice of Red LEDs. A noticeable rise in volume takes place. With the GAIN to the minimum, the output is almost clean, breaking up only on higher strokes. Again, the MIX and DRY EQ controls may be very helpful to voice your particular tone. The more GAIN is dialed in, the more mean and aggressive the sound gets.

You could use the Ziffer as your solo tone machine as Jordan Ziff does, but, if you want to go further, you may use two stacked Ziffers - one set for a creamy overdrive in CLASSIC clipping mode, while engaging the second one set for CUSTOM clipping only during your solo passages. You may need to rebalance the output level a little,

and sometimes trim down the TONE if the voicing is too aggressive. This clipping mode is better suited for boosting raw-sounding amps or even for lead tones. But really, there are no rules. Experiment with your setup and be prepared to discover even more tones and drives.

**DEEP SWITCH** – The deep switch has two options. In the upper position, it sets the **CLASSIC** tone and the feel you would expect from an overdrive. When set in the **DEEP** lower position, the frequency response of the gain engine is changed, introducing lower end frequencies without muddying the sound. This mode may be used as an enhancer at all times, but it is particularly useful for bass instruments and thin-sounding single coils.

**INPUT** – Here you will connect either an instrument directly, or the output of another effect, or a signal taken from the amplifier's SEND FX-loop.

**OUTPUT** – From here you will send the signal to the next effect pedal, or an amplifier's input, or the RETURN FX-loop of an amplifier. The output signal can also be recorded directly into a Hi-Z interface input. When not engaged (or powered), the pedal is in True Bypass.

**DC POWER CONNECTOR** – The pedal is powered as soon as the Power Plug is inserted into the DC Power Connector. It remains powered even when the footswitch is in the bypass position. **Use only good filtered and regulated power supplies**, with a voltage of 9-18 VDC, with center negative polarity. Use a DC Power Plug Ø 5.1 / 2.1 mm, with a 12mm long barrel because the power connector is recessed inside the enclosure (which also has tapered sidewalls, keeping the plug a little out).



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### MANUAL

Last modified: June 13, 2022



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