

# EARTHQUAKER DEVICES

## DATA CORRUPTER

REVIEW BY **S.P. BURKE**

STREET PRICE **\$225.00**



The mad scientists over at Akron's own EarthQuaker Devices are the kings of weirdly specialized effects. Want proof? Look no further than the classification of certain effects on their product listing. Oh, you get the usual litany of overdrives and reverb-delays (including the Dispatch Master, a personal favorite) but then you have descriptions like "Polyphonic Arpeggiator," "Dynamic Dirt Doubler," or "Chorus" (well okay that last one's self-explanatory). The Data Corrupter may take the cake though with "Modulated Monophonic PLL Harmonizer."

In short, the Data Corrupter is a guitar synth. The three knobs at the top control the three voices with Square Wave, Subharmonic, and Oscillator. The Square Wave fuzzes up your signal, then the synth tone is modulated with the Oscillator. The Subharmonic and Oscillator both have their own individual settings for octaves and intervals between the two signals, and in-between the Frequency Modulator gives you pitch vibrato controls. The Data Corrupter is truly unique and like all EarthQuaker effects is made with one-at-a-

time handmade care (still doesn't come with a power supply though which is a pet peeve of mine), but some of their pitch-shifting and modulation effects can get so esoteric it sometimes can be hard for a meat-and-potatoes player like me to find footing. Still, I love me a good analog synth sound, so I decided to tread lightly.

I decided to start with the main perimeters rolled down and slowly upped the knob on the Square Wave Fuzz. Thankfully, I was rewarded with a thick-as-bricks fuzz tone that was so powerful I quickly had

to back off on the Level lest my practice amp get overwhelmed. The glitching as I bent and flubbed notes were a blast. I felt like we were off to the races.

The tonality started to diversify as I started dialing in the Subharmonic, with the groove maintained no matter the notes nor octave-interval setting I had, but MAN did we go from zero to 60 when I started dialing in the Oscillator. If the Subharmonic is the bass, the Oscillator is definitely the treble. The speed of the oscillation and timbre of the pitch felt squealing and chaotic no matter what setting I had or how I played. It honestly started to give me a headache and I felt I wasn't really in control anymore, so I actually dialed that back while focusing more on the Square and Subharmonic waves since I seemed to prefer those.

The Glide setting actually really helped here after dialing the Oscillator back because of how it moved

sustained notes from one octave to the other. The Vibrato also provided some fun laser effects as I upped the rate of modulation. Pairing the Square Fuzz with my Jazz Bass also got some thick dubby goodness that reminded me of early Muse.

In the end, I found myself slightly at a loss about how to recommend the Data Corrupter. EarthQuaker's pitch and modulation pedals are truly unique but their practical applications are definitely going to vary from player to player. This isn't helped by the list of recommendations EarthQuaker has on its website to get the best sound from the Data Corrupter (use the neck

pickup, play single notes and not chords, and others). For my part, I prefer to plug and play. Having to work around the chaotic perimeters of a pedal that literally gives me a headache at certain settings feels like tying my hands.

## THINGS WE LIKE

Square Wave fuzz and Subharmonic settings are good synthy fun.

## CONCERNS

Watch out for that Oscillator! It's a mad beast!

