



Information super tone-way

EQD'S Swiss Things is a *traffic cop* for your pedalboard

BY WADE BURDEN

THE SWISS Things seems like a strange offering from Earthquaker Devices. EQD usually puts out several pedals for NAMM. This year, they only put out one, and it's kind of a gadget at that. It may seem hard to get excited about a utility piece that makes no noise, but Jamie and Julie Stillman know what they are doing. Jamie dreams up the pedals, Julie dreams up the business plan - and I don't think anyone can argue with their success. EQD is a force in the boutique pedal world. And in a market that has to cater to every whim of the praise and worship player, Jamie and his pedals have remained decidedly rock and roll. So if they say I need this pedal, then I am more than willing to take a look at it.

The Swiss Things does a lot, so

let's start with the "looper" aspect. I've been playing with true-bypass strips, or "loopers" since about 2006. In the past, I've run either 6 or 13 loops depending on which of my boards I was using. I would isolate each individual pedal, removing it from my signal path when it wasn't in use. This does three things for me. 1) It keeps my signal path as short as possible and eliminates the "tone suck" of older pedals like the Sovtek Big Muff. 2) It just makes the pedalboard tap dance so much easier to have all of your bypass switches in a row right up front. 3) If a pedal breaks, or a patch cable shorts out, it's very easy to isolate that loop without losing your whole board.

If you travel with a pedalboard, sooner or later a patch cable is going to crap out on you, and

your board will be out of commission until you can find that dead patch cable. I've been thinking for a while now that all I really need is two loops: one for a drive and a boost and a couple of fuzz pedals, and one for my delay and trem. So when the Swiss Things came my way, I was ready to give it a try.

Swiss Things eliminates the need to give up an entire row of your pedalboard for a true-bypass strip. Instead, it has two loops. Loop 1 is an unbuffered loop for your buffer sensitive pedals like drive and fuzz. Loop 2 is a buffered loop for your all your fancy delays and modulation pedals. It also has "Flexi" switching, which allows you to tap a loop's bypass switch to turn it on or off; or you can hold a loop's bypass switch down,

and whatever pedals are turned on in that loop will be momentarily on in your signal path until you release the foot switch.

What else does the Swiss Things do? Pretty much everything. It has an A/B/Y switch so you can run two amps if you want without phase or excessive hum issues. It has a Tuner input so you can run a tuner without it being in your signal path. Tired of volume pedal tone suck? The Swiss Things will let you use an expression pedal as a volume pedal, eliminating the infamous signal loss associated with passive volume pedals. The Volume Pedal input runs the volume between Loop 1 and Loop 2, so you can lower the volume without lowering the gain of your pedals in Loop 1, or without killing your delay and modulation trails in Loop 2. And possibly my favorite feature: the Swiss Things has a built-in 20db of clean solo boost ready at the tap of a footswitch.

But probably the most important thing the Swiss Things does for you is eliminate the math on

where to put buffers. If you have too many true-bypass pedals in a row, or too many vintage buffered-bypass pedals, you are going to need a buffer to give your signal a push. As mentioned earlier, Loop 1 is unbuffered; meaning that your sensitive fuzz pedal will see all of the guitar signal sent its way. Loop 2 is buffered, meaning that any signal loss from Loop 1 will be fixed before your signal sees Loop 2. Even if you have a ton of pedals in Loop 1 degrading your signal but Loop 2 isn't active, you're safe. You get any lost signal strength back with a high-quality buffer at the output.

Earthquaker Devices call the Swiss Things a "pedalboard reconciler" and that makes sense. It allows you to organize your rig into an efficient signal path. It can instantly solve a ton of problems for you, and takes up little more space than your average delay pedal. It is a Swiss Army knife for your pedal board: Organizer, Looper, A/B/Y, Solo Boost, Buffer, Tuner/volume pedal isolation. The Swiss Things handles

every single frustrating and boring problem you're going to run into, allowing you more time to do the fun stuff like making weird noises. The only question is, is it worth it to lose the real estate on your board? I can't answer that for you. But I can tell you that I rebuilt my board around the Swiss things, and at least for me, it's here to stay. 🌀

**EARTHQUAKER DEVICES
SWISS THINGS**

Controls: Boost knob, A/B, Loop 1, Loop 2, Both and Boost foot switches, multiple ins/outs
Price: \$249

