

Szymon Kwiatkowski

G LAB Dual Vintage Overdrive

Double satisfaction

I have to admit I'm more and more satisfied with marketing activities of G LAB brand. Maybe we can just observe the first steps of Polish guitar electronics manufacturer aiming to conquer the worldwide market? I mean not only that the mother of this brand, ELZAB company, is listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange but first of all the huge dose of innovation and well-considered design of this equipment. This positive technical idea is going together with well-considered promotion - large scale presentation of the products to the musical environment.



Last year we've observed debut of the Guitar System Controller together with the Wah-Pad, now we can acquire the new device. The GSC is a device focused on helping a guitar player to control his stompboxes collection, specially during playing concerts. The next step and product is the G LAB Dual Vintage Overdrive. We find at this device given function creating a guitar tone. But what is important and typical for G "LABoratory" products — they haven't forgot the extension of connectivity to an amp options and connections with external modules. Will we check what is the matter?

Four blocks

The Dual Vintage Overdrive, in spite of its name, is generally the three channel device. And it doesn't concern to three footswitches on the top panel of the device however in this case it is the right indication. More important is that beside two Overdrive channels on which the concept of the device is based, we can use the "clean" channel which works as a preamp, introducing delicate vintage tone to our amp. The construction is very similar to the GCS. We've got here solid, one millimetre metal sheet casing and monochrome colouring — white colour controls and backlighted footswitches. Descriptions are also white painted so the legibility is out of questions. Distinctive are four blocks on

the effect top panel: clean channel, equalizer, overdriven channel first and second. However you can't treat them in the same way. Except of the equalizer which allows to adjust the tone almost in each configuration, you can set two functions to each of three footswitches. To configure whole device are used four DIP switches hidden inside side partition of the casing. Using a ballpen (we don't suspect guitar players of having so long nails) we set settings we are interested in. How the particular settings are working is shown on the attached diagrams (Fig. 1-4). The effect can work as a traditional overdrive, boosting the signal up to the overdrive level with clean channel or solo boost working mode, as well as a guitar preamp with three working modes (three footswitches).

Overdrive or preamp?

I think that considering all its features the name Dual Vintage Overdrive is not proper and the last word I would change to Preamp word. The overdrive characteristics, we will return to this issue later, is typical for OD or Fuzz devices, so is based on (at least in hearing sphere, not necessarily in design) strong exceeding of allowed amplitude. More it deserves the preamp name for the reasonably wide range of gain which is different for selected channel settings and which can be smoothly controlled by a potentiometer or boosted by the dedicated

footswitch. Such solution has got some advantages. The first, and considered as the most important, is to receive vintage effect tone, resembling early LED ZEPPELIN or DEEP PURPLE songs, being associated with a speaker overdriving, or even broken from its elastic fitting membrane when a GAIN potentiometer gives full overdriving. The second advantage, also important, is ability to strong saturate a preamp while using a tube amp for playing. The value of such usage is higher amount of harmonics emitted by a tube which is strong saturated by a signal. So the DVO functioning as a preamp is still important, specially that it can be set in such way to supply different levels of gain. For configuration is used mentioned inconspicuous DIP switch at the opening of the left side of the casing. Hidden but how important! Additionally using on board equalizer we set our preferable tone. The adjustment range will not down your but is sufficient for the non tube device. So we can see that there adds the attribute of G LAB products — great number of settings and applications as well as variety of possible connections.

How to connect?

To use this device in the traditional way enough is to connect it between a guitar and an amp then set any working mode of footswitches. You connect it to an amp serially or parallel using an amp's loop.

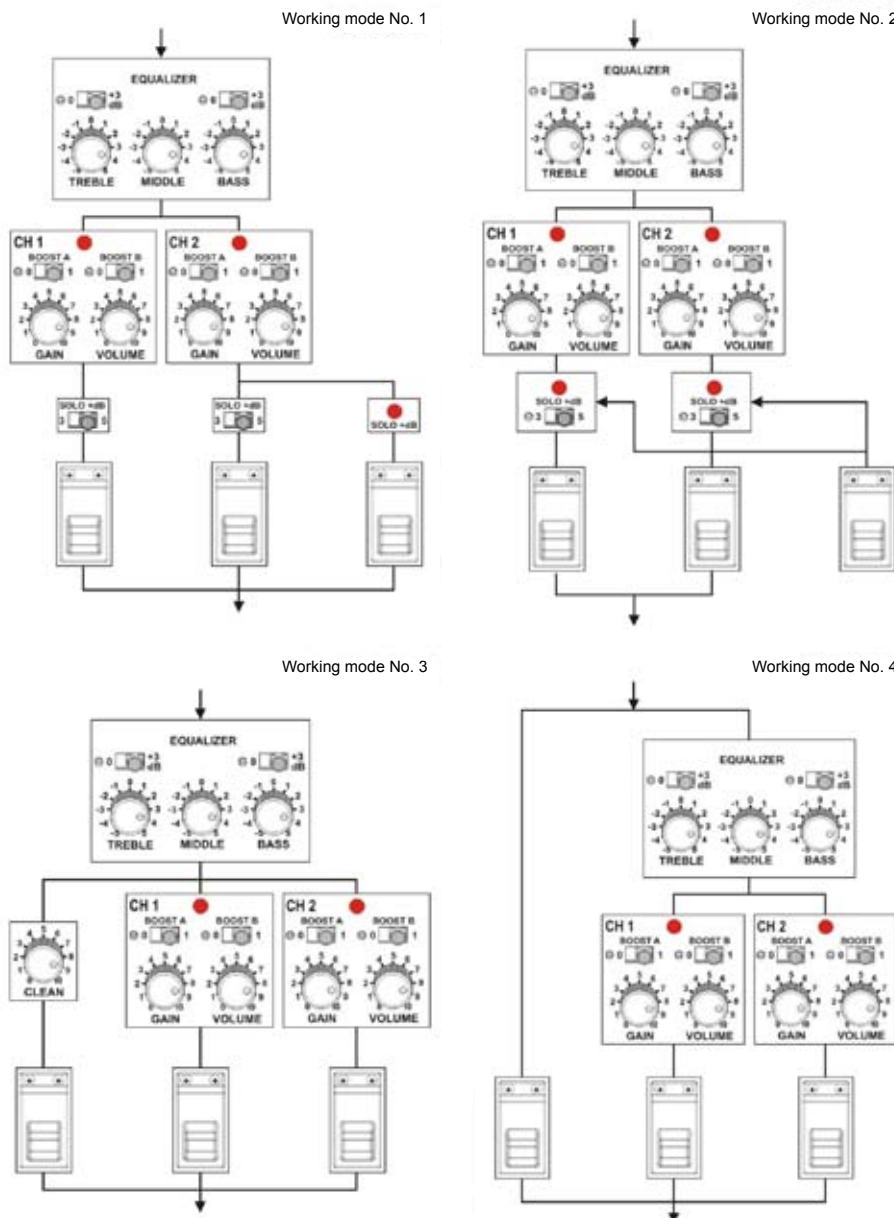


Fig. 1-4. Operations of particular modes of working.

And another curious detail - special switching cable for parallel work with an amp. G LAB is manufacturing these cables and I think that buying such a one should be a good idea! In this way we connect using just one cable SEND/RETURN amp loop sockets with OUT DVO output, and clean guitar signal we supply from the PRE OUT DVO output directly to an amp input. Independence of an amp tones from overdriven DVO channels is the advantage of such solution. Tones from DVO are independent from an amp tone settings (except of PRESENCE control if available). Interesting way of using a loop however OD type effect connected to a loop seems to be a guitar blasphemy. Despite of that you can tempt yourself into using this stompbox as the preamp for additional colourisation of the signal pre power amp. Connecting with the GSC and connecting with a tuner using silent tuning function are just typical conveniences installed by G LAB.

This is vintage!

So what we can hear after connecting the Dual Vintage Overdrive? Construction and electronic solutions suggest modern tone met now commonly everywhere. And you're mistaken - vintage is vintage! Adjusting the GAIN even to the maximal level we can hear the tone rich of harmonics with strong "smooth" characteristics. The effect is interesting, you can try to use it in ambient type music. This is available at maximal set overdrive. The ideal setting for the first and the second channel is the beginning part of the range. At this setting you will hear blues taste, and at high signal converters - dynamic crunch. Very nice increases sensitivity to your articulation and dynamics of your playing ideally relates to the effect which obey it in this way of overdrive controlling. Sensitive to the force of playing and string hits level of initiation allows to adjust the overdrive adequately. It is not really



The design style of Dual Vintage Overdrive is similar to the previous G LAB product - Guitar System Controller.

controlling the overdrive level by the force of hitting the string but something very similar. The DVO is sensitive. It offers solo boost assigned to No. 3 footswitch and two gain boosts for each channel. Absolutely not bad! The interesting function of the equalizer should be noticed. The equalizer works independently from set mode of working. It changes the tone even of the clean channel! And BASS and TREBLE controls have been enriched by 3 dB boosts post overdriving. In this way we can modify our tone in a contour style which is preferred to be used while playing with an overdrive effect.

Summarisation

The first appointment with the Dual Vintage Overdrive can be a tough job. To set the working mode will require to look at the manual or at the label on the bottom of the effect, however similar to the GSC - setting the equipment according to preferences is done "ones and properly". According to the tone the effect will meet with requirements of musicians searching slightly or medium overdriven tone. There are good sounding blues accords, rock triple sound riffs and blues solo playing. The tone is performed rather more at treble and middle, to receive more bass it will need more "plus" correction at your amp equalizer. But do not forget that DVO is vintage - and the tone should be like this. You can like such combination of the modern technology with the traditional „manners”.



Price:
419 zł

Producer:
ELZAB S.A.
41-813 Zabrze
ul. Kruczkowskiego 39
tel. 032 272 20 21
glab@glab.com.pl
www.glab.com.pl