

VS

Words: Ed Mitchell

**MORPHEUS BOMBER
VS DIGITECH WHAMMY DT**

Here's a double whammy of pedals that'll pull the rumble of dragsters and squeal of orgasmic rodents from your hardtail guitar...



THE craze for extreme divebombing that began in the 80s meant everyone wanted the tuning stability and string-dumping performance of a double-locking Floyd Rose. If that meant chopping holes in a vintage Les Paul Custom in order to fit one, well tough. Aping a revving dragster sound, such as on the intro of Mötley Crüe's *Kickstart My Heart*, was apparently much more important than worrying about wrecking the tone and value of a classic.

Launched in 1991, the DigiTech Whammy allowed owners of hardtail guitars to emulate the sound of a Floyd-loaded rock behemoth without routing out their pride and joy. More importantly, the pedal became a

trademark of aural terrorists such as ex-White Stripe Jack White and Tom Morello. The latter used his Whammy for the extreme bends and squeals on Rage Against The Machine's *Killing In The Name* and *Like A Stone* with Audioslave.

The latest incarnation of the Ferrari-red Whammy is the DT, a pimped polyphonic version with a smorgasbord of harmony and drop tuning modes. You'd think the Whammy's brilliant reputation would place it automatically in pole position, but the more affordable and equally polyphonic Morpheus Bomber is looming large in its rear view mirror. The race is on. It's time to put our foot down and get to it.



MORPHEUS BOMBER £239

Is this Whammy alternative even better than the real thing?

IF YOU don't try to do the revving dragster thing with the Bomber's Dive Bomb setting when you first plug it in, you're taking life too seriously. Coaxing extreme string dives from a hardtail Telecaster or Les Paul is fantastic. Push the Bomber's treadle all the way down and it sounds as if your strings are lying on the fingerboard like wet spaghetti. Even once you've exhausted this effect, the Bomber is so easy to navigate that you'll be pulling off other familiar pitch shift sounds in seconds. For instance, the two-octave upshift setting (displayed as 2 Oct) is perfect for Tom Morello-style squeals and The Edge's octave stabs in the intro of U2's *Even Better Than The Real Thing*.

In addition to the aforementioned Dive Bomb and two-octaves-up effects, five down-shift modes are packed inside that tough steel case: one and two octaves, a fifth, fourth and second. There are also three more up modes: an octave, a second and a fifth. Going an octave down transforms your guitar into a bass; while an octave up produces a Nashville (or high-string) tuning vibe for a great 12-string effect when combined with a regular six-string, either on a recording or played by a bandmate (you can't blend the dry and processed sounds).

Speaking of country music, if you hit a note with the Bomber's 2nd Up mode selected then push the treadle forward to raise its pitch by two semitones you'll get a pretty convincing pedal steel

guitar effect. Like DigiTech's Whammy DT, the Bomber is polyphonic. This means that you can play more than one note at the same time and it won't sound weird. Lower the pitch of the strings with the foot treadle and all your notes will still be in tune with each other. That's great if you decide to dump the pitch to play heavy bottom-string riffs or fat-sounding chords.

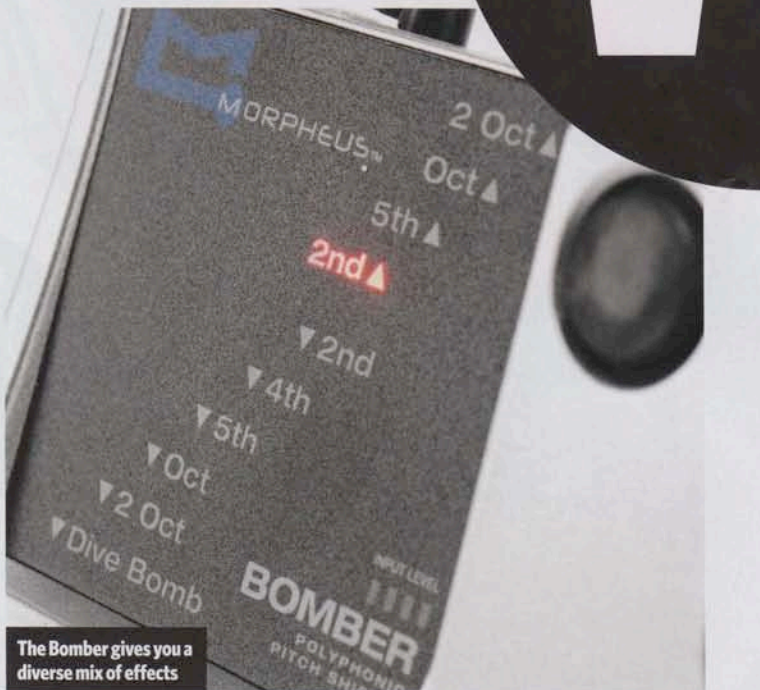
It doesn't just have to be about wild bends either: choose the two-octaves-up setting for a sound that's probably best described as a helium-doped mouse having an orgasm. Run it through a phaser or rotating speaker effect, chop out some chords and doublestops, and it mutates into a brilliantly squeaky 60s organ sound. Add the 'mouse organ' to the fake bass and 12-string sounds, and the Bomber reveals itself to be a versatile pedal. Of course, the DigiTech Whammy DT can do all those tricks too.

If you are looking for a gig-proof, easy-to-use, polyphonic pitchshifter pedal, the Morpheus Bomber certainly fits the bill. But wait – with the Whammy DT already selling for as little as £235 online, we reckon dealers will have to sweeten the Bomber's price tag to tempt you away from the spec sheet, brand heritage and pricing of the DigiTech pedal.

AT A GLANCE

- TYPE:** Polyphonic pitch shifter
- EFFECTS:** Pitch shifting, dive bombing
- PATCHES:** N/A
- CONTROLS:** Effect on/off, pitch interval select, expression pedal, trim level
- SOCKETS:** Guitar in, line out, USB out, mains adaptor
- POWER:** 12V DC adaptor (supplied)
- CONTACT:** Sonic 8 03302 020160 morpheusefx.com

SUMMARY	FEATURES	■■■■■
	SOUND QUALITY	■■■■■
	VALUE FOR MONEY	■■■■■
	BUILD QUALITY	■■■■■
	USEABILITY	■■■■■
	OVERALL RATING	★★★★★



The Bomber gives you a diverse mix of effects





DIGITECH WHAMMY DT £289

Is the original still the best?

THE Whammy has long been the go-to pedal when it comes to pitchbending. The DT is the latest incarnation and features all of the modes that made its predecessors such a hit. Everything to the left of the treadle works exactly as DigiTech's Whammy, with its Harmony section, Detune effect and the classic Whammy mode, including Tom Morello's much-loved two-octave-up setting. One major complaint that most players have with previous Whammy versions is its non-true bypass switching. DigiTech has addressed this with the DT.

The big news, however, is the Drop Tune mode, enabling you to polyphonically raise or lower your pitch by seven semitones. There are one-octave-up and down settings in there too. The result? You can play in drop tunings without having to change the setup of your guitar. Note that Morpheus sells two standalone polyphonic pedals to achieve these effects: the Capo and Droptune, which cost around £163 each. We just thought you should know...

The DT's Drop Tune department features an effect on/off switch and another labelled Momentary. The latter enables you to quickly flip between the shifted and dry sounds for cool hammer-on and pull-off effects. You can also combine the Drop Tune settings with the Harmony, Detune and Whammy effects. Detune here means a two-tier sick-sounding

chorus effect, the intensity of each setting is made obvious from the descriptions: Shallow and Deep. Like the Morpheus, the DT can simulate a 12-string guitar (select Oct+Dry from the drop tune menu), slap-happy *Seinfeld*-style bass (1 Oct Dn) and a demented vintage organ sound (2 Oct Up). Creating a 12-string sound is more authentic here, because the processed signal is combined with the original. While the Bomber features a USB socket for software updates, the DT is

MIDI compatible to allow control via other units. For hands-free scrolling of the Whammy, Harmony and Drop Tune intervals, you'll need the FS3X footswitch. It retails at £54, but you can find one online for £26.

There's nothing between the pair of pedals in terms of sound quality and construction, but DT's spec blasts it way ahead of the more simplistic Bomber, for only £50 more. This is the best incarnation yet of a modern classic that has seen service with the likes of Tom Morello,

Matt Bellamy, Dimebag and Steve Vai, and it's enormous. The new polyphonic version builds on the possibilities of traditional Whammy effects, and the updates are well worth upgrading for. Get one underfoot pronto.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Polyphonic pitchshifter
EFFECTS: Polyphonic pitch shifting, dive bombing, harmony, capo tuning
PATCHES: N/A
CONTROLS: Effect on/off, effect selector, expression pedal, drop tune on/off, drop tune effect select, momentary switch
SOCKETS: Guitar in, line out, MIDI input, input for optional FS3X footswitch (£54), mains adaptor
POWER: 9VC DC adaptor (supplied)
CONTACT: Sound Technology 01462 480000 digitech.com

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	
SOUND QUALITY	
VALUE FOR MONEY	
BUILD QUALITY	
USEABILITY	
OVERALL RATING	★★★★

The Whammy DT takes a classic into a new era