

para eq

mkII

USER MANUAL



empress
effects

Introduction

When we released our original ParaEq back in 2009, it quickly became a favourite among musicians who were searching for something more than the typical oversimplified controls found on most Eq pedals. Now, based on our users' valuable feedback, we've taken everything great about our original ParaEq and made it even better.

The Empress ParaEq MKII is designed to be a tool for sweetening the tone of any instrument. We've designed the ParaEq MKII to give musicians a powerful, musical, high quality Eq in a conveniently small package. The signal path is comprised of the highest quality components chosen for their transparency, powerful tone shaping capabilities, and low operating noise. We've increased the headroom to 27V, similar to rack-mount equipment, to ensure clarity of sound no matter how hot the signal. Oh, and the whole package is now half the size. Who doesn't love a small package?!

With the Empress ParaEq MKII, your instrument will still sound like your instrument, only better.

- Jason Fee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Fee' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sample Applications

General Sweetening: Perhaps you really like the tone of your guitar but find it could be a little brighter with more high end detail. With the ParaEq MKII, adding a small boost in the range of 3 kHz to 5 kHz with a wide Q will add a bit more detail, while still retaining the sound of your instrument. In a similar manner, adding a wide Q boost to the low frequency range will warm up your instrument's sound.

Tone Correction: Say you've set your amp up in a venue and find that the acoustics of the stage are making it sound too boomy. By cutting some of the frequencies in the low mids (200Hz– 600Hz) with a medium width Q, you can minimize the negative effects of the room acoustics on your sound.

If you find your guitar isn't cutting through the rest of the band, you can boost the upper mid frequency range (1kHz–4 kHz) instead of simply turning up the volume of your amplifier, which could lead to you just drowning out the rest of the band.

Sample Applications

Feedback Zapping: With a DI'ed acoustic instrument, playing live at stage volumes can sometimes be a nightmare. Feedback through monitors can quickly ruin a great performance. By using the ParaEq MKII's mid and hi frequency bands and narrow width Q settings you'll be able to cut the frequencies causing the feedback while retaining much of your instruments sonic signature. The narrow width Q setting ensures the range of frequencies being reduced is very small, preventing your instrument from sounding dull or muddy.

Distortion Enhancement: Having the ParaEq MKII before your amplifier lets you use it to shape your distortion sounds in radical ways. For example, if you want the treble of your signal to distort a little more you can boost the high frequency band before it reaches your amplifier. This lets you add a little sonic slicing capability to your sound without muddying up your bottom end. The boost control on the ParaEq MKII is a great way to push an already cooking tube amplifier into musical overdrive.

Q Controls

The Q is a measurement of how much the Eq band affects a range of frequencies.

Tight or Narrow Q ($\wedge$): This setting is best for attacking problems. For example, if you have an acoustic instrument feeding back, a tight Q will allow you to cut the offending frequency without affecting the frequencies around it.

Medium Q ($\wedge$): This setting is great for general tone shaping. Most equalizers in instrument amplifiers are medium Q. Try using this setting to cut frequencies in the 300Hz-400Hz range if your amp is sounding a little muddy, or boosting in the 1kHz-5kHz range if your guitar is a little dark.

Wide Q ($\cap$): Wide Q settings are best when you want a really transparent change to the signal. For example, boosting at around 100Hz can add a bit of warmth, and a little boost in the 3k range can add detail and definition, all while retaining the original tone.

Frequency Region Descriptions

Here's a rundown of different frequencies that should be helpful when using the ParaEq MKII to achieve a specific end result.

Electric Guitar

80Hz – 150Hz: Boosting can add a subtle warmth and bigness to the sound. Cutting can bring down any rumble you're experiencing.

150Hz – 400Hz: Cutting in this region can remove a bit of mud, and boosting will bring out the warmth.

400Hz – 800Hz: Cutting in this region can make the sound more pristine. Boosting will add an aggressive edge to the sound.

800Hz – 2kHz: Boosting in this region will bring out the twang in your sound. Cutting will create a rounder, less aggressive tone.

Above 3kHz: Boosting in this region can add brightness and sheen. Cutting in this region can minimize noise and reduce harshness.

Frequency Region Descriptions

Bass Guitar

30Hz – 80Hz: The sub-bass region. Be careful when boosting in this range; your speakers might not be happy if you boost too much.

80Hz – 150Hz: The bass region. Boost and cut in this region to change the amount of bass in your sound.

150Hz – 500Hz: If your bass sounds too muddy, try cutting in this region. If it needs a little warmth, try boosting in this region.

500Hz – 900Hz: Boosting in this region can add mid-range growl to your tone. Cutting in this region can make things clean and pristine.

900Hz – 3kHz: Boosting in this region can bring out attack. Cutting in this region can help create a rounder tone.

Above 3kHz: Cutting can bring down the noise without much effect on the signal. Boosting can add a sense of air and space.

low freq, mid freq, high freq:

Selects the center frequencies around which you'd like to boost or cut for each band.

gain: Determines the amount of boost or cut applied to frequency band. At the 12:00 setting, there is no boost or cut applied. The range of boost or cut available for each frequency band is -15dB to +15dB.

boost: Controls the output level. It is a clean boost, perfect for providing gain before an effects chain to minimize noise or to overdrive the input of a tube amp. The available boost ranges from 0 dB to +30 dB and is toggled on/off with the boost stomp switch.

boost stomp switch: Toggles on/off the boost section of the pedal. When the LED is shining, the boost is applied to the signal.

Controls a



t a Glance



low q, mid q, high q: The q switches determine the range of frequencies affected by the equalizer on each band.

Wide q (∩) will affect a wide range of frequencies around the selected frequency. $q \approx 1$ affects about 1.5 octaves

Medium q (∧) will affect some frequencies around the selected frequency. This is a good place to start for overall tone shaping. $q \approx 2.5$ affects about 2/3 octave

Narrow q (∧) will only affect a very narrow range of frequencies around the selected frequency. $q \approx 4$ affects about 1/3 octave

There is a q control for each of the three frequency bands available on the ParaEq MKII.

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bypass stomp switch: When the LED is shining, the ParaEq MKII effect is applied to the signal. When off, the effect is being bypassed (true and buffered bypass available. See advanced configuration).

Frequency Region Descriptions

DI'd Acoustic Guitar

35Hz – 100Hz: Cutting in this region can help reduce rumble.

100Hz – 200Hz: This range is primarily responsible for the boominess of your acoustic guitar. Cutting or boosting here can help with low end projection.

400Hz – 500Hz: Boosting in this range can bring out warmth. Cutting in this range can help remove mud in your sound.

500Hz – 4kHz: This broad slice of the sonic spectrum is where most of your acoustic signal lives. Boosting here will make your guitar sound more aggressive, while cutting will help mellow it out.

4kHz – 8kHz: The brightness of your acoustic lives in this region. If your instrument sounds like you're hearing it through a wall, boost in this range. Cutting in this range will remove harshness.

5kHz and Above: Boosting in this range will bring out air in your sound, and cutting will reduce noise. Beware of feedback though!

Advanced Configuration

Advanced Configurations are used to control the bypass and boost states of the ParaEq MKII.

Entering the advanced configuration: Unplug the power from the ParaEq MKII. Plug the power back in while holding down both the boost and bypass stomp switches. The LEDs should flash momentarily to confirm that you are in the advanced configuration.

Modifying the advanced configuration: To toggle between true bypass and buffered bypass, use the bypass stomp. The bypass LED will display which mode you are in:

Bypass LED off = true bypass (default)
Bypass LED on = buffered bypass

To toggle between normal bypass mode and independent bypass mode use the boost stomp switch. With independent mode you can apply boost without having the equalization engaged. This makes it almost like having a separate Eq and boost pedal each with their own bypass switch.

Boost LED off = normal (default)
Boost LED on = independent

Exiting the advanced configuration: Hold down both the tap and bypass stomp switches. The bypass LEDs will blink momentarily to confirm the ParaEq MKII has exited the advanced configuration.

Quickstart

Sittin' in the Mix

Low cut to leave room for bass and drums in the mix. Mid boost at the guitar's sweet spot. Cutting those pesky shrill high frequencies.



Distortion Tamer

To tame high gain distortion, slight cut to the lows and boost to the mids and highs. Sharpens the frequency response to sound less "flat."

Airy Acoustic

Evens out the frequency response. Cuts high highs and low lows with a slight mid boost. Still sounds natural, but lighter.



Buttery Bass

Pulls out higher resonant frequencies while maintaining low end and maintaining enough mids to still bite.

My Settings



Specifications

Input Impedance: 1MΩ

Output Impedance: 100Ω

Frequency Response (-3dB): <5Hz, >40kHz

Distortion: <0.02%

Signal-to-Noise: >108dB

Headroom: +30dBu

Input Voltage: 9VDC +  -

Required Current: 300 mA

Power Input Connector: 2.1mm Barrel Connector

Height (enclosure only): 1.5"

Height (including controls): 2.5"

Length: 4.8"

Width: 2.6"

Weight: 1lbs

Powering the ParaEq MKII

Go to www.empresseffects.com/power for a full list of compatible power supplies.

Please note: The Empress ParaEq MKII requires at least 300mA of current to function properly. Any power supply rated at 9V DC, supplying negative tip polarity and at least 300mA of current should work.

Legal Stuff

FCC Compliance

Note: This equipment has been tested and found to comply with the limits for a Class B digital device, pursuant to part 15 of the FCC Rules. These limits are designed to provide reasonable protection against harmful interference in a residential installation. This equipment generates, uses and can radiate radio frequency energy and, if not installed and used in accordance with the instructions, may cause harmful interference to radio communications. However, there is no guarantee that interference will not occur in a particular installation. If this equipment does cause harmful interference to radio or television reception, which can be determined by turning the equipment off and on, the user is encouraged to try to correct the interference by one or more of the following measures:

- Reorient or relocate the receiving antenna.*
- Increase the separation between the equipment and receiver.*
- Connect the equipment into an outlet on a circuit different from that to which the receiver is connected.*
- Consult the dealer or an experienced radio/TV technician for help.*

Modifications not expressly approved by the manufacturer could void the user's authority to operate the equipment under FCC rules