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Source Audio LLC  
120 Cummings Park, Woburn, MA 01801  
(781) 932-8080 or at [www.sourceaudio.net](http://www.sourceaudio.net).

Unauthorized service, repair, or modification will void this Limited Warranty.

## **DISCLAIMER AND LIMITATION OF WARRANTY**

DO NOT OPEN THE EFFECTS PEDAL UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE. THIS WILL VOID THE WARRANTY.

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# soundblox<sup>®</sup> 2

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# ORBITAL MODULATOR

## USER'S GUIDE

SA226

# WELCOME

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Thank you for purchasing the Soundblox 2 Orbital Modulator. This powerful multi-effects unit features a dynamic collection of meticulously crafted modulation effects, including classic renditions of phaser, flanger, and chorus, plus an amazing set of contemporary modulation options. With nine adjustable parameters, including TREMOLO, MIX, LoRetain, and LFO Wave Shape, this pedal goes well beyond the sonic limitations of traditional modulation effects pedals.

The Orbital Modulator lives in our durable, cast-aluminum Soundblox 2 housing, providing rack-mount power and flexibility in a compact, easy-to-use stompbox. It also works with all of our Hot Hand© Effect Controllers or the Source Audio Dual Expression Pedal.

The Quick Start guide will help you with the basics. For more in-depth information about the Soundblox 2 Orbital Modulator, move on to the following sections.

Enjoy!

-The Source Audio team



If possible, dispose of the device at a recycling center. Do not dispose of the device with the household waste.

For full compliance with EN 61000-4-6 standard, input cable must be less than 3 meters in length.

# OVERVIEW

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**DIVERSE SOUND PALETTE:** Features 12 different flanger, phaser, and chorus effects.

**DEEP CONTROL SET:** Access to control parameters typically found on only professional rack systems.

**FACTORY DEFAULT SETTINGS:** Easily accessible control settings personally selected by Source Audio's chief scientist, Bob Chidlaw.

**TREMOLO:** Mix tremolo effects into any of the Orbital Modulator's effect types for the added dimension of amplitude modulation.

**STATE-OF-THE-ART DSP:** Our proprietary 56-bit Digital Signal Processor, the SA601, and crystal clear 24-bit converters.

**COMPACT DESIGN:** A compact, rugged, cast-aluminum housing.

**UNIVERSAL BYPASS™:** Select either analog buffered or relay-based True Bypass.

**2 USER PRESETS:** Easy-to-program user presets recallable via two footswitches.

**MULTI-FUNCTION INPUT:** A multi-purpose control input for use with Hot Hand, the Source Audio Dual Expression Pedal, or MIDI.

# QUICK START

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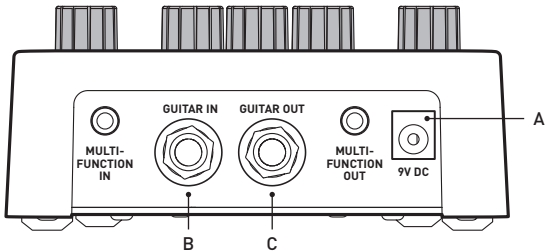
## 1. POWER

To power the unit, connect the included DC adapter power supply to the 9V jack (A) on the back panel.

**Note:** Using a non-Source Audio supply could damage the unit. Please be very cautious when using 3rd party power supplies.

## 2. GUITAR/AUDIO CONNECTIONS

Using standard ¼" mono cables, plug your guitar, bass, or other instrument into the GUITAR IN (B) jack and from the GUITAR OUT (C) jack to your amp or other audio device.

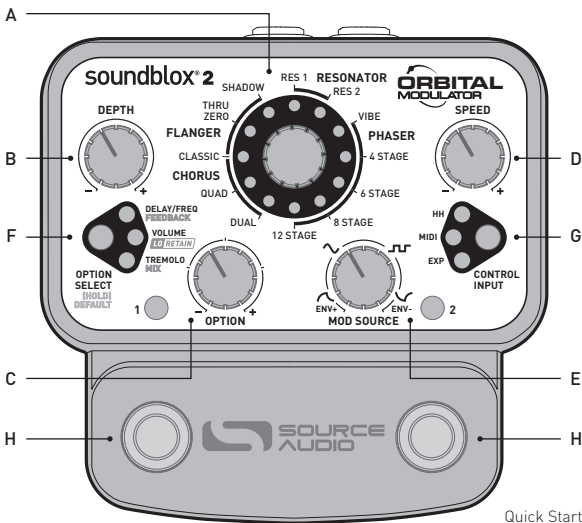


## 3. BRIEF KNOB, FOOTSWITCH, AND BUTTON DESCRIPTIONS

(see *Controls* section for more details)

- **EFFECT KNOB (A):** Selects the effect type.
- **DEPTH (B):** Controls the modulation depth of the effect.

- **OPTION (C):** Adjusts the parameter selected by the OPTION SELECT button.
- **SPEED (D):** Adjusts the rate of the LFO (Low Frequency Oscillator), the attack/decay rate of the envelope follower, or the smoothing of Hot Hand.
- **MOD SOURCE (E):** Selects between sine LFO, square LFO, or envelope follower.
- **OPTION SELECT (F):** Selects which parameter will be controlled by the OPTION knob.
- **CONTROL INPUT (G):** Selects which external controller type will be used.
- **FOOTSWITCHES (H):** Enables/Disables presets. Press and hold either footswitch to save an edited preset.



# CONNECTIONS

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**GUITAR IN (A):** Connect your guitar, bass, or other instrument via a MONO ¼" cable.

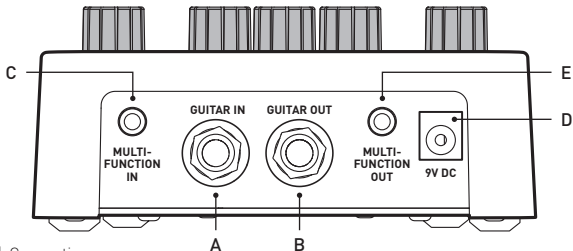
**GUITAR OUT (B):** Connects to your amp, pedal, or other audio device via a MONO ¼" cable.

**MULTI-FUNCTION IN (C) (optional):** The multi-function input is a flexible control input for use with external controllers. It accepts digital or analog signals which allow the Orbital Modulator to interface with the following accessories:

- SA110/SA115 Hot Hand Wireless Adapter
- SA111 Hot Hand Wired Sensor
- SA161 Source Audio Dual Expression Pedal
- Source Audio Soundblox 2 MIDI Adapter

**MULTI-FUNCTION OUT (D) (optional):** Use a Source Audio daisy-chain cable to connect this jack to the sensor/multi-function input of another Soundblox pedal.

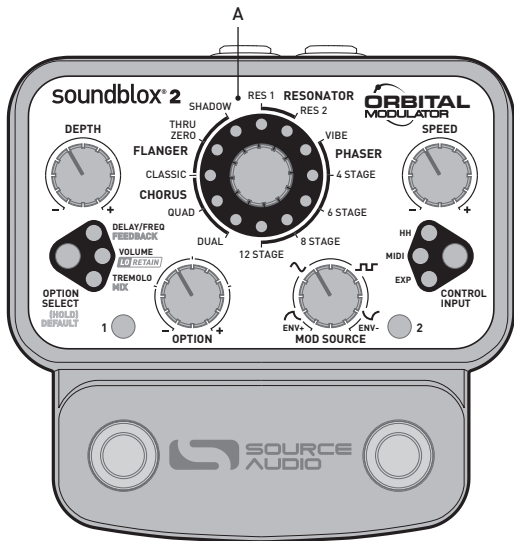
**9V DC (D):** Connects to the included 9 Volt DC power supply.



# CONTROLS: KNOBS

## EFFECT (A) (not labeled)

The EFFECT knob selects which effect type will be used. For information on the individual settings, see the Effect Types section.



- Continued

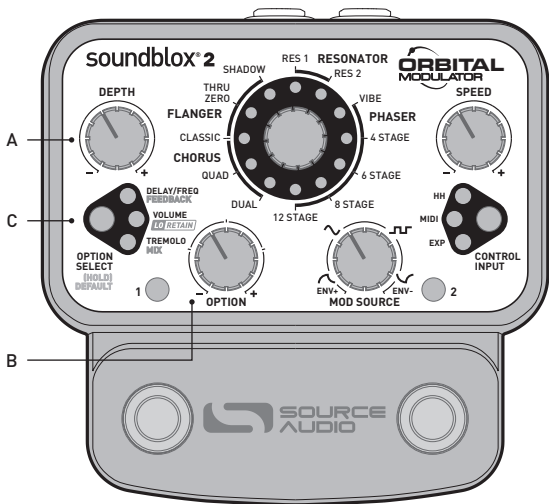


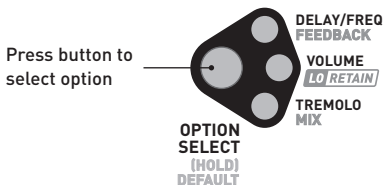
## DEPTH Knob (A)

The DEPTH knob adjusts the range of the modulating signals.

## OPTION Knob (B)

The OPTION knob controls six different parameters. Press the OPTION SELECT button (C) (located just above the OPTION knob) to cycle through all six choices. The selected parameter is indicated by the three red/green LEDs. Green indicates the upper parameter (black print), and red the lower parameter (white print).



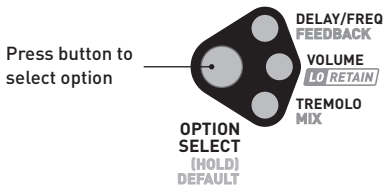


- **DELAY/FREQUENCY (Green LED):** When Flanger or Chorus effects are selected the DELAY knob adjusts the delay time between the dry and modulating signals. Because of the similarity between flangers and choruses, a flanger can easily be adjusted to resemble a chorus and vice-versa. As a rule of thumb, short delay times create flange effects while long delays produce chorus effects. Set the DELAY knob between 7 and 11 o'clock for flange effects and between 3 and 5 o'clock for chorus.

When phaser effects are selected, this knob adjusts the frequency center point of the phase modulation. Turn the FREQUENCY knob clock-wise to modulate the phaser over higher frequencies and give the effect a brighter sound.

- **FEEDBACK (Red LED):** The FEEDBACK knob controls the amount of wet signal fed back into the effect. Much like the harmonic feedback created between a guitar pick-up and an amplifier, increasing the FEEDBACK on the Orbital Modulator creates a more resonant and ringing response, giving the effect more prominence.

- Continued



- **VOLUME (Green LED):** The VOLUME knob adjusts the output level, ranging from zero gain to +6dB. Unity gain is found at roughly 12 o'clock.
- **LoRETAIN (Red LED):** The LoRETAIN function adjusts the frequency below which the original signal remains unaffected. This function is especially useful for bass players—increasing the LoRETAIN insures a solid low-end foundation while maintaining the characteristics of the chosen effect. Guitarists may also find it useful—if the FEEDBACK control is cranked up, increasing LoRETAIN will prevent excessive volume fluctuations in the lower frequencies.
- **TREMOLO (Green LED):** The TREMOLO knob adjusts amplitude modulation. Unlike traditional tremolo, the Orbital Modulator's amplitude modulation is embedded within the flanger, phaser, and chorus effects, creating a wide range of very unique and three-dimensional modulation effects. But the TREMOLO function, if dialed in correctly, will also create sounds reminiscent of classic amplifier generated tremolo or replicate the sound of a rotating speaker (see the EFFECT TYPES section for more detail).




- **MIX (Red LED):** The MIX knob controls the ratio between the wet and dry signals. This knob is split into two regions: normal and inverted wet signals. The 12 o'clock position produces a 100% dry signal—as the knob is turned clockwise from 12 o'clock the wet signal gradually increases as the dry signal decreases until reaching a 100% wet mix at its right-most position. The process is repeated with an inverted wet signal in the counter-clockwise direction. The inverted wet signal interchanges the positions of the peaks and valleys in the frequency response and tends to reduce bottom end. The marks at approximately 10 and 2 o'clock around the MIX knob indicate the point of a 50/50 wet/dry mix. Set the MIX knob to a 50/50 ratio for the most prominent phase or flange effects.

**Factory Defaults:** Given the number of different functions available on the OPTION KNOB, it can be useful to “zero” all of the controls to a default value. We pre-loaded the Orbital Modulator with unique default settings that are a good starting point for each effect type (note: the CLASSIC effect type defaults to a flanger setting). You can recall these values at any time by pressing and holding the OPTION SELECT button until its three LEDs blink two times.

**Note:** To learn the knob positions of the default settings, go to the SB2 Orbital Modulator product page on our website and download the PDF titled, *SB2 Orbital Modulator Preset Suggestions*.

## MOD SOURCE Knob (A)

When Hot Hand, MIDI, or an expression pedal are not being used, the Orbital Modulator features three different types of modulation control: Envelope Follower, Sine Wave LFO, and Square Wave LFO. The MOD SOURCE knob controls a gradual blend between them, so setting this knob between two of the modulation graphics will create a sound with elements of both modulation forms.

- **Sine Wave LFO** (): An envelope follower responds to the amplitude (or volume) of the incoming signal and creates a control signal, which modulates the wet signal in the same manner as an auto-wah. The MOD SOURCE knob can set the modulation direction either forward () or backward ().

## SPEED Knob (B)

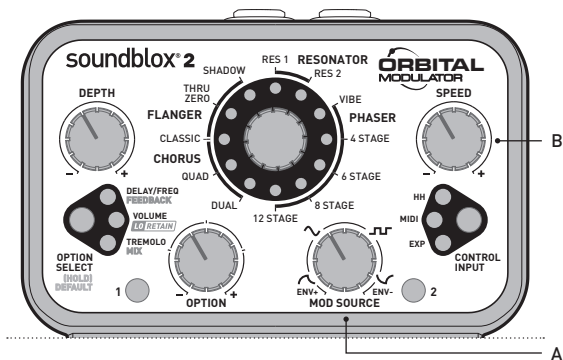
Depending on the modulation source, the SPEED knob controls either the rate of the LFO, the attack and decay times of the envelope follower, or the smoothing of Hot Hand.

When using LFO modulation, turning the SPEED knob clock-wise will increase the modulation rate.

When using an envelope follower, turning the SPEED knob clock-wise increases the envelope attack, which determines how quickly the envelope rises after the input level increases—the decay rate is the amount

of time it takes for the envelope to drop back when the input signal decreases. The decay is fixed to a rate twice as slow as the attack.

While Hot Hand is engaged, the SPEED knob controls the amount of smoothing. Turning the SPEED knob clock-wise increases the smoothing and makes Hot Hand less responsive and less jittery sounding.



## Discovering Preset Knob Positions

Since the Orbital Modulator preset values can differ from the physical knob positions, it may be useful to determine the positions of the preset knob values. To start the process, put the pedal in bypass and set all knobs to the full counter-clockwise position. Next, enable the preset and slowly turn each knob up one at a time until the preset indicator LED begins to blink rapidly. The rapid blinking indicates that the current position of the knob matches the saved value.

# CONTROLS: FOOTSWITCHES

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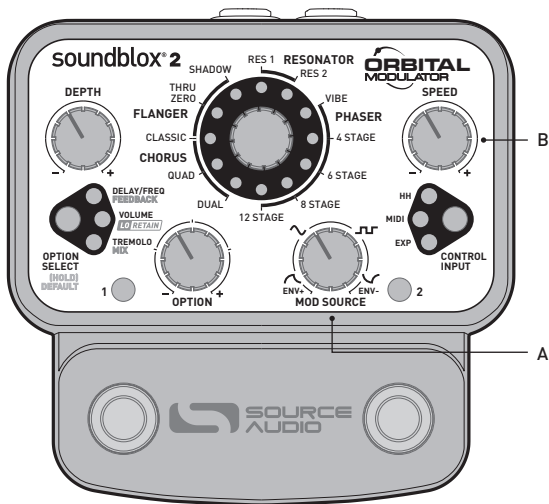
There are two footswitches on the Orbital Modulator. The left footswitch corresponds to preset 1 and the right footswitch corresponds to preset 2. Pressing either of the footswitches will engage the respective preset. Pressing the same footswitch again will put the effect back into bypass mode. Pressing the other footswitch will engage the other preset without going into bypass. The illumination of the LEDs labeled "1" and "2" indicate which preset is currently enabled. While the effect is in bypass mode both LEDs remain off.

When a preset is enabled and any sort of adjustment is made, the indicator LED for that preset will begin to blink, showing that the preset has been edited. After a preset has been edited, save it by pressing and holding either footswitch. The corresponding LED will blink quickly to indicate that the preset has been saved. Once changes are saved, the LED will illuminate continuously. An edited preset can be saved to either of the two preset locations. For example if preset 1 has been selected and edited, it can be saved to preset location 2 by pressing and holding the right footswitch.

**Note:** Changes made to a preset will be lost if you go into bypass or switch to another preset without saving.

## TAP TEMPO MODE

The Orbital Modulator's LFO rate can also be adjusted on-the-fly via TAP TEMPO. To enter TAP TEMPO mode put the pedal into bypass, then press and hold the footswitch (and corresponding preset) to which you would like TAP TEMPO applied. When the preset LED opposite the pressed footswitch begins to blink, the pedal is in TAP TEMPO mode. The footswitch below the blinking LED now controls the LFO rate. Tap the footswitch at least two times in rhythm to set a new LFO speed. The LFO rate is reflected in the blinking LED—the time between each blink represents one cycle of the LFO. Follow the same procedure to disengage TAP TEMPO.





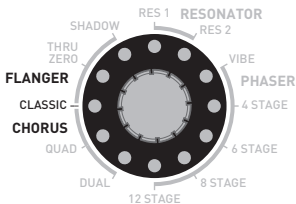
# EFFECT TYPES

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Here are some brief descriptions of the EFFECT SELECTOR knob settings on the Soundblox 2 Orbital Modulator.

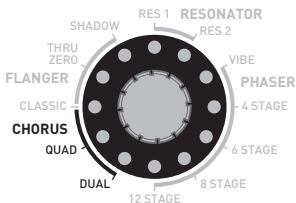
## FLANGER & CHORUS

**CLASSIC:** Flanger and chorus effects are very similar—both combine the original dry signal with additional modulating clone signals. For this reason, we've positioned the CLASSIC effect type, which uses a single modulating signal, in both the FLANGER and CHORUS effect categories. As a rule, short delay times between the dry and modulated signals create the traditional jet-engine “whoosh” associated with flangers while longer delay times create lush chorus effects. When using CLASSIC, set the DELAY knob between 7 and 11 o'clock for a flange effect and between 3 and 5 o'clock for chorus.



## CHORUS

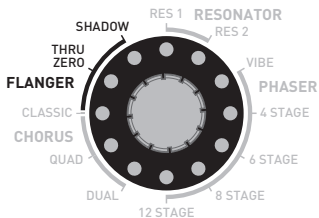
**DUAL and QUAD:** The DUAL and QUAD effect types are multi-voiced choruses. Both produce a more animated and lavish chorus than the CLASSIC effect type. The DUAL CHORUS has two modulating delay signals and the QUAD has four.



## FLANGER

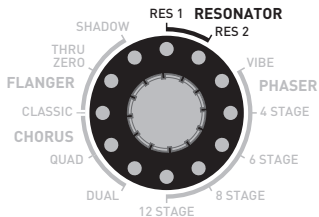
**THRU ZERO:** The THRU ZERO effect type is our version of “through zero flange” (a.k.a. tape flange). In the world of pre-recorded music this dramatic effect is achieved when the modulating signal actually passes through and moves ahead of the original signal—obviously, this is a difficult feat to pull-off during a live performance (without the assistance of a time machine). The OM achieves this effect with two delay lines. The first is a very short, but stationary delay line, which functions as the dry signal—the other signal modulates. As the modulating signal passes through and moves ahead of the stationary tap we hear the classic through zero twist (a split second of complete phase cancellation) as the frequency response inverts.

**SHADOW:** The SHADOW flanger effect type features two modulating signals. This set-up generates a more animated flange effect, with the primary flange closely shadowed by a subtle, more resonant reflection.



## RESONATOR

**RES 1 and RES 2:** The RESONATOR flangers, labeled RES 1 and RES 2, both have four modulating signals. These highly resonant flangers create a distinctly hollow sound with ringing overtones.



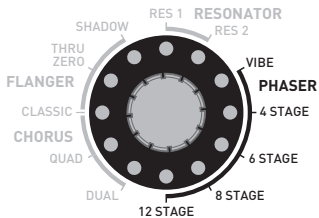
## PHASER

The classic phaser is similar to a flanger, both require two identical signals running in parallel, but while the flanger's modulating frequency peaks create the well-known "whoosh" sound, a phaser generates

modulating frequency notches, which create a subtle, undulating sound similar to that found in a rotating Leslie speaker.

**VIBE:** The VIBE effect type was modeled after the Shin-Ei Univibe, the original rotating speaker simulator (i.e. the original phaser pedal). This effect contains 2 relatively wide frequency notches spaced farther from one another than a typical phaser.

**VARIABLE STAGE PHASERS:** As a rule, every pair of phase shift stages creates one notch in the frequency response, so the 4, 6, 8, and 12 STAGE PHASERS produce 2, 3, 4, and 6 frequency notches, respectively. As you progress from the 4 to the 12 STAGE PHASERS, the effect will sound more complex and pronounced.

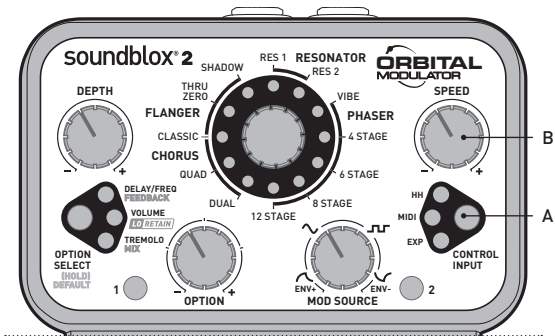


## TREMOLO

Though TREMOLO is not one of the effects listed around the EFFECT SELECTOR knob, turning up the Orbital Modulator's TREMOLO knob can produce several traditional or non-traditional tremolo effects. For a basic tremolo, set the MOD SOURCE to a standard sine wave, dial the EFFECT SELECTOR to CLASSIC, turn the DEPTH and DELAY all the way down and the MIX to 100% wet, then set the TREMOLO somewhere between 9 and 11 o'clock. For some more unique tremolo effects, try dialing in more DEPTH and experiment with the different effect types.

# EXTERNAL CONTROL

One of the Core Features of the Soundblox 2 line of effects is the MULTI-FUNCTION Input. The MULTI-FUNCTION input is an intelligent control input that accepts both digital and analog control signals. It replaces the SENSOR input on previous Soundblox pedals. The MULTI-FUNCTION input connects to wired or wireless Hot Hand accessories, the Source Audio Expression Pedal, or a future Source Audio MIDI interface that will enable full MIDI I/O access to the pedal.



## Selecting an external control input:

Press the CONTROL INPUT button (A) to cycle between the external control options. There are four possible settings:

- **OFF (no illuminated LEDs):** External control is disabled in this mode and the MOD SOURCE knob remains active.

- **EXP:** Expression Pedal for use with the SA161 Source Audio Dual Expression Pedal. By default, the expression pedal controls modulation, but the expression pedal can also be assigned to control any other knob parameter.
- **MIDI:** MIDI control mode. Select to enable MIDI I/O through the Soundblox 2 MIDI Interface
- **HH:** Hot Hand mode. Select to enable Hot Hand control. Like EXP mode, Hot Hand defaults to modulation or is assignable to any knob parameter.

## CONTROL ASSIGN

By default, the expression pedal and Hot Hand inputs control modulation. This can easily be changed to control any of the adjustable knob parameters. To assign control to a knob parameter, follow the instructions below:

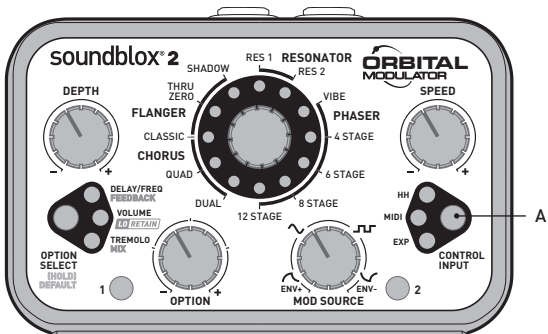
1. Select the desired external control option: EXP for expression pedal, HH for Hot Hand.
2. Press and hold the CONTROL INPUT button (A) until the LED begins to blink slowly.
3. Set the low position of the desired knob, for example SPEED (B), to the lowest setting you would like to use.
4. Press the CONTROL INPUT button again, the LED will now blink more rapidly.
5. Set the desired high position you would like to use.
6. Press the CONTROL INPUT button to complete the assignment. The LED will blink 3 times to indicate the process is complete.

**Note:** Different control assignments can be programmed to a preset. Don't forget to save your settings!

## Exiting control assign mode

In the event that you have saved a preset with external control assigned to one of the knob parameters, but wish to return to the default, external modulation control, follow the instructions below:

1. Engage the desired preset.
2. Deselect all the external control options with the CONTROL INPUT button (A) (no CONTROL INPUT LEDs should be illuminated).
3. Press and hold the CONTROL INPUT button until all three LEDs blink two times, then release the button.
4. Select the desired external control option (Expression pedal (EXP), Hot Hand (HH), or MIDI).
5. Save the preset. The external controller will now control the effect's modulation.



## **MIDI CONTROL**

The Orbital can be controlled via generic MIDI messages. To access MIDI functionality, the pedal requires the Source Audio Neuro Hub (sold separately - please check [www.sourceaudio.net](http://www.sourceaudio.net) for availability). The Hub expands your connections to further the control of up to five Soundblox2 or Ones Series pedals. The Hub has 5-pin MIDI DIN In and Out jacks, a USB port, Sensor In (for Hot Hand) and a 1/4" expression input.

Save up to 128 multi pedal presets (or "scenes") complete with assigned expression control. Easily recall complex presets with a single MIDI program change messages. The Hub also receives MIDI clock or continuous controller (CC) messages.

For more information on using your Soundblox 2 pedals with MIDI, and for MIDI mappings, please visit our website at [www.sourceaudio.net](http://www.sourceaudio.net)



## **USE WITH HOT HAND**

All Soundblox pedals are compatible with our Hot Hand accessories. Hot Hand units consist of a ring-mounted accelerometer that detects motion and controls effect parameters. To enable Hot Hand functionality, connect the Hot Hand receiver or base station to the MULTI-FUNCTION IN and select HH mode with the CONTROL INPUT button. The pedal will now accept input signals from Hot Hand and use them to control standard modulation or the assigned parameter.

The Orbital Modulator can also be calibrated to change the midpoint of the Hot Hand control range. To do this, follow the calibration procedure below. Note that calibration is only used for Hot Hand mode and calibration is NOT required before use.

### **To perform a calibration:**

1. Select a preset by pressing a footswitch.
2. Enable Hot Hand control by selecting HH mode with the CONTROL INPUT button.
3. Press and hold the CONTROL INPUT button until the HH red LED begins to blink slowly (note: this is the same as the control assign procedure).
4. Put the Hot Hand sensor into the desired calibration position.
5. Press the footswitch for the currently selected preset.
6. The HH LED will blink when the calibration is complete.

If you have trouble with calibration and need to get back to the default setting, place the sensor on a flat, level surface with the blue LED facing down and run the calibration procedure again.

# UNIVERSAL BYPASS™

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Most effect pedals offer either true or buffered bypass. Soundblox 2 offers Universal Bypass, which allows you to select between the two. We recommend that you choose between the Orbital Modulator's active analog (a.k.a. buffered bypass) and relay-based true bypass (a.k.a. true bypass) based on what is needed in your pedalboard's signal chain (Ideally, the first pedal in a signal chain should be a buffered input followed by true bypass in the rest of the signal chain).

By default, the Soundblox 2 Orbital Modulator is set to use the relay-based true bypass. To switch the pedal to buffered bypass press and hold the right footswitch when powering up the pedal. Continue to hold the footswitch until the corresponding LED blinks 3 times. The pedal is now in buffered bypass. To switch back to true bypass, replicate this process with the left footswitch.

Both bypass methods have pros and cons associated with them. Buffered bypass provides a consistent input impedance so that if the input is susceptible (like a guitar pickup) to variations in input impedance there won't be a noticeable change in tone. True bypass has the benefit of providing a dedicated hardwire bypass signal path; however, it can cause clicks/pops and typically requires a mechanically complex 3P3T (3-pole, 3-throw) switch. Soundblox 2's special relay-based true bypass eliminates the need for the 3P3T switch and thus the popping/clicking problem.

# SPECIFICATIONS

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## Dimensions

- L: 4.5 inches
- W: 4.5 inches
- H: 2.25 inches (including knobs)

## Weight

- 1.00 lbs

## Power

- 140mA @ 9V DC (max 180mA with Hot Hand Wireless Adapter)
- Negative tip power jack

## Audio Performance

- Maximum input level: 2.0 Vrms (+6 dBV)
- Input impedance: 1 M $\Omega$ m
- Output impedance: 1 k $\Omega$ m
- 115dB DNR audio path
- 24-bit audio conversion
- 56-bit digital data path
- Universal Bypass™ (buffered or relay-based true bypass)

# TROUBLESHOOTING

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## Noise:

Power Source	Ensure that the proper power supply is being used.
Near noise source	Move pedal away from power supplies and other equipment.
Other equipment	Remove other effects from signal chain, see if noise persists.
Bad cables	Swap out audio cables.

## Hot Hand doesn't work:

Low power	Ensure that the proper power supply is being used.
Not calibrated properly	Calibrate the Hot Hand — see page 24.
Not connected properly	Check Hot Hand connections.

**Unit appears dead/no LEDs lit:**

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Wrong power supply	Use correct power supply as defined on page 4.
Input plug not connected	Ensure that input cable is connected to the GUITAR input.
Corroded input cable plug	Check input cable plug for corrosion on sleeve, swap out cable if necessary.

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## LIMITED WARRANTY

Source Audio, LLC (hereinafter "Source Audio") warrants that your new Source Audio Soundblox 2 Dimension Reverb, when purchased at an authorized Source Audio dealer in the United States of America ("USA"), shall be free from defects in materials and workmanship under normal use for a period of two (2) years from the date of purchase by the original purchaser. This Limited Warranty does not extend to the batteries which are purchased as is. Please contact your dealer for information on warranty and service outside of the USA.

Under this Limited Warranty, Source Audio's sole obligation and the purchaser's sole remedy shall be repair, replacement, or upgrade, at Source Audio's sole discretion, of any product that, if properly used and maintained, proves to be defective upon inspection by Source Audio. Source Audio reserves the right to update any unit returned for repair and to change or to improve the design of the product at any time without notice. Source Audio reserves the right to use reconditioned parts and assemblies as warranty replacements for authorized repairs. Any product repaired, replaced, or upgraded pursuant to this Limited Warranty will be warranted for the remainder of the original warranty period.

This Limited Warranty is extended to the original retail purchaser. This Limited Warranty can be transferred to anyone who may subsequently purchase this product provided that such transfer is made within the applicable warranty period and Source Audio is provided with all of the following information: (i) all warranty registration information (as set forth on the registration card) for the new owner, (ii) proof of the transfer, within thirty (30) days of the transfer, and (iii) a photocopy of the original sales receipt. Warranty coverage shall be determined by Source Audio in its sole discretion. This is your sole warranty. Source Audio does not authorize any third party, including any dealer or sales representative, to assume any liability on behalf of Source Audio or to make any warranty on behalf of Source Audio.