

# HEAPS

**From big stars to boys and girls. A long-awaited explosion, distortion, and reverberation "Effect all those who stir the guitar!"**

Hundreds of thousands and tens of millions of people from around the world have come to play "Like a longing guitar hero!" 50 years of the famous president and effector maker, "Strain".

2019.11.2



**"1967. At that time, Hendrix was hot enough to burn, and everyone wanted to make a sound like Hendrix!"**

In the room where Jimi Hen's poster was affixed, guitar boys who played chords by sweating their foreheads, smearing blood on their fingers, clenching their teeth and clenching their teeth. Guitarists who went to the studio to become the next successful person. The gods of guitar who drunk tens of thousands of people at the stadium. **From professional pros to beginners, a guitar effector has been practicing magic for half a century at the feet of everyone holding a guitar.** In response to the thought of the guitar boy's blue-smelled straight ball, "I want to play the guitar like Jimi Hen".



## **A guitar priest dreamed of a psychedelic and powerful variety effector maker**

Even a late-night radio with a great disc jockey can be used. It can be a music video introduced in a recorded music program. It can be the live front row with a stage in front of your eyes and nose. Wow wow wow. Guyin. Vavan. The moment when boys and girls sold their souls to rock would be when the electric guitar's roaring, barking, screaming, and distorting voices hit their brains. And the true identity that produces this electric guitar wah wow wow, guyin, and fan is "guitar effector".

A guitar effector is a device that electrically changes sound by being connected between a guitar and an amplifier. He is a "sound magician" who distorts, swells and reverberates the original clean sound of a guitar. A mischievous girl who makes me feel better even if the guitar is not good. There are various types of effectors such as overdrive, distortion, distortion system called fuzz, spatial system such as delay and reverb, and modulation system that shakes sound such as flanger and chorus. Guitarists create their own guitar sounds by combining and using them according to their songs and preferences.

Since the 1940s, the act of distorting the guitar sound by increasing the volume of the amplifier above a certain level and adding an excessive output voltage (overdrive) has already been popular among guitarists, and it has been peculiar to damage the amplifier on purpose. Tsuwa Mono, which creates the tone of, has also appeared. In the 1960s, guitar effectors began to be produced in earnest. Ventures of rock band used handmade fuzz box (effector) in 62, then "Maestro", "VOX", "Univox" under guitar maker Gibson, "boss" in Japan (BOSS) "and other manufacturers have developed effectors that produce sounds that change seven times with a single switch.



Among them, a strange person who was exceptionally different was “ [Electro Harmonics \(EHX, commonly known as Elehamo\)](#) ” that appeared in 1968 . A body with colorful and psychedelic graphics, a unique name given to each model (unforgettable once you hear it), a mysterious logo with a lamb's head motif, a price range that is more affordable than other manufacturers, and Above all, the quality and breadth of the sound. It was the world's leading effector manufacturer that sold thousands of loud sounds that were often described as flashy, frightening, kinky, and strange, to the mass market. The strong character of the creator, Mike Matthews, must have also played several roles.

There are many Elehammo lovers in the industry. Especially for fans of the “Big Muff Pie” (significantly known as “Big Muff”), from the world's treasure-class guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix, Carlos Santana, and David Gilmore (Pink Floyd) U2), Joe Perry (Aerosmith), Ace Fraley (Kiss), and 90s-00s modern rock masters, Kurt Cobain (Nirvana), Jack White (White Stripes) and Billy Corgan ( Smashing Pumpkins) ...

50 years of “Made in New York”. Visit the headquarters of Elehammo, located in Long Island City, Queens Ward from the time of its founding, and the factory where 130 people work. **“The guitar effector for everyone who has realized the guitar priest“ I want to be Jimi Hen ”has been distorted in conversation with the famous founder Mike (78).**







## **A guitar hero masterpiece is in everyone's hand `` made for everyone, not just professionals ''**

“The guitar effector market at that time was very small. Binson's Ecolex with Maestro's fuzz tone. There are now thousands of competitors.” Mike, who “bites” many cigars every day like drinking coffee, began the story before the establishment of Elehammo. “Come there and Rolling Stones” “Satisfaction” came out. The rough and distorted riff that Stones guitarist Keith Richards performed in the song pierced everyone's brains. The Maestro effector “Fuzz Tone” was used. “So everyone wanted Maestro's fuzz tone.”

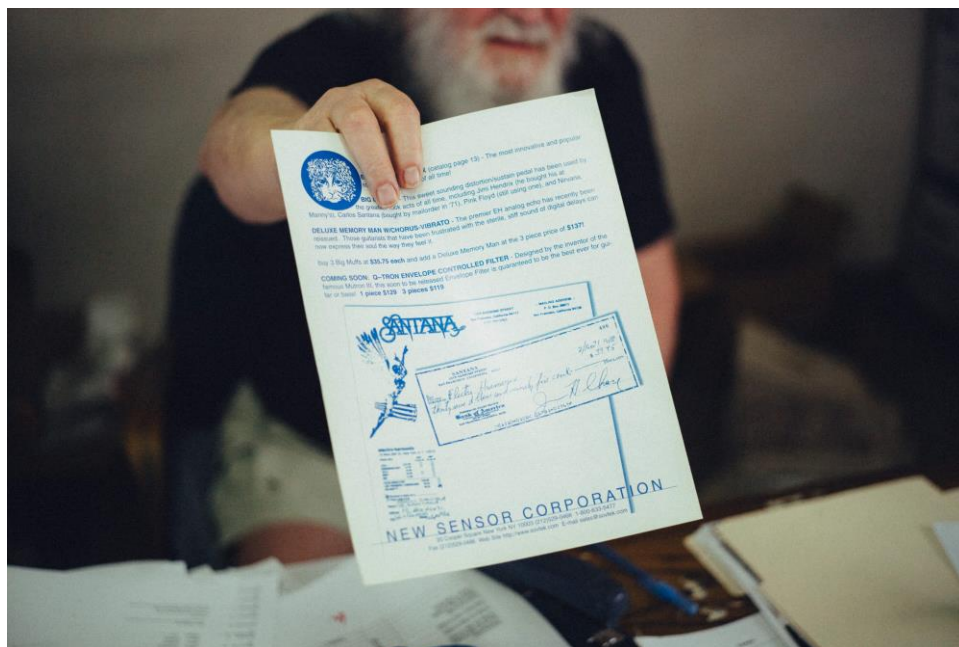
At that time, Mike, who worked for a major computer company IBM, was a music enthusiast who worked as a professional R & B-style keyboard player and worked as a promoter for rock musicians such as Chuck Berry and Birds. He became friends with Jimmy James (later Jimi Hendrix) who happened to see him at work, and went to his studio. “In 1967, Hendrix was hot enough to burn, and everyone wanted to make a sound like Hendrix. At that time, everyone wanted to become Elvis Presley, Keith Richards, and Jimi Hendrix. !!



Founder Mike Matthews.







A photo of a check sent by legendary guitarist Santana to Mike to buy Elehammo.

“Even with a maximum of 10 guitar amps, it distorted only moderately,” so I wanted to make it more exciting. Aiming for the sound of Jimi Hendrix, the prototype is completed through trial and error with engineers. “When I plugged in my guitar and switched it on, I heard a huge sound that I could die!” There was something like this as I proceeded with the production. “One day, when I went to a recording studio, Hendrix was using a prototype!” The first product booster “LPB-1” was born, and Elehammo was founded in 1968.

When the “Big Muff Pie” was sold in the early 1970s, Santana, a legendary guitarist who united rock and Latin, bought a check by himself to Mike. However, the interesting thing about Elehammo was not limited to the “famous instrument” of the professional guitarist.

**“We ’re at the heart of Electro Harmonics, not for professional stars, but for everyone. There ’s a big star in the music world, mid-career players, and even a hobby. Because there are guys who stir the guitar because anything is fine. ”** We put products in any musical instrument store where everyone can go, including Manny Music and Sam Ash, etc., which were in the musical instrument store street “Music Row” that once existed in Manhattan’s 48th Street, and mail order in catalogs I did. “The Big Muff was \$ 39 at that time (about \$ 252.40 at the moment), and it was easier to reach than other manufacturers. Elehammo was “known for being able to provide good sound at an affordable price.” Mike tells us about the trick. **“Because I was turning a lot (production / sales) after all, and I was also a “ tough negotiator ”for the product supplier. I tried to make it as cheap as possible.”**







**Give your personality a sound and looks. Playfulness that is easy to pick up even if you are not an expert**

“Electric Mistress” “Memory Man” “Super Ego” “Holy Grail” “Soul Food” “Enigma” “Cock Fight”

"Cathedral (Cathedral)" "Iron Lang (Iron Lung)". All are brand names of Elehamo. Each model is given a name like a squadron hero or a character from a comic. “Big Muff” has a “muffled sound” theory and a

“female genital” theory, and there is also a model called “Memory Boy” following Memory Man. Is it the son of Memoryman?











My name is Mike. “I gave it a name. If you came up with a more interesting name, hire it.” When asked how he gave the esoteric name, “I just came up with it, but sometimes I made it straight and simple.”

What was groundbreaking with a strong name is the flashy and psychedelic graphics that decorate the body. The previous effectors, such as the Maestro fuzz tone and the univox uni-vibr pedal, were black square

boxes. The design based on black and silver is still cool, but it feels like there is a “general atmosphere” that only an expert can use. Coming there, Jerehamo's appearance is noisy and healthy. “Well, I tried to stand out”

Big canopy with a large bento box, “Canyon (because it can reproduce the echo like a mountain)” with a canyon drawn like a grand canyon, “Crayons” with drawing crayons for some reason, psychedelic in the hippie era “Small stone” is characterized by font and color. Looks like you don't have to play a guitar. The collection of guitar priests would have tickled. “The design of Elehamo has been in charge by the world's leading designer, David Cockwell, since the 70s. In the past, I had decided exactly what each product would be designed for, but for each function, As long as the product type is decided, the details such as functions are left to the engineer. ”

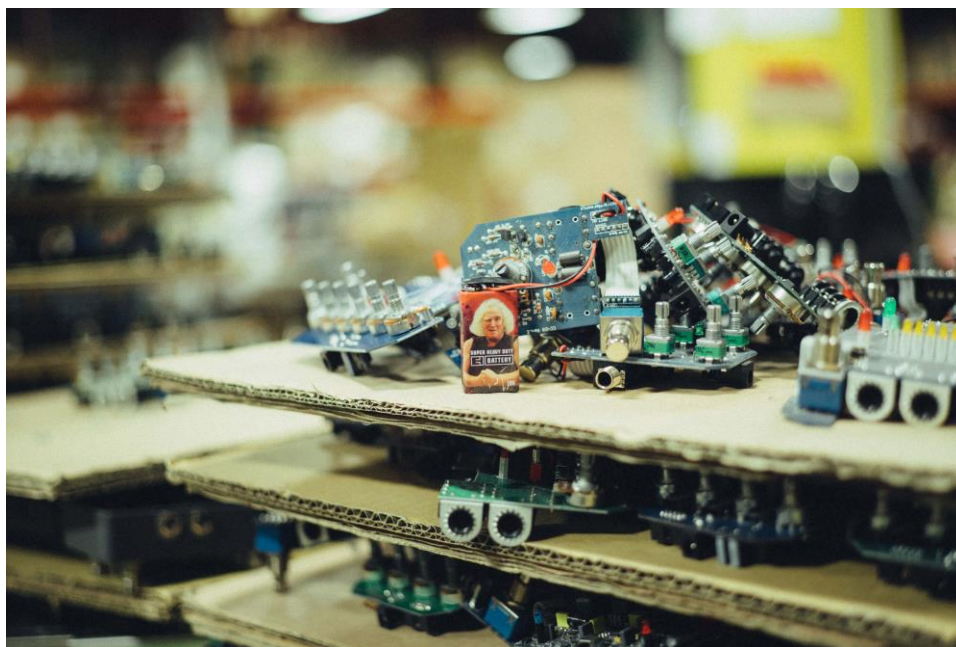


“Big Muff”, a guitarist's longing for Elehammo's signboard effector









**“There are many fans who are not musicians, because it ’s a crazy company.”**

“Now, the musical instruments and equipment business is stagnant. Children will be crazy about video games and the Internet. There are no longer sex symbols and star-like guitarists who want to imitate.” . Still, Elehammo now produces 150 types of effectors, and Bigmuff is still selling 3000 units every month, and it is at the foot of the world's professionals and future guitarists. The next development seems to be Bluetooth headphones and earphones, and is planning to enter the market. The resulting product is “scheduled to sell in all markets (from musical instrument stores to consumer electronics retailers).” Even after 50 years, “distribution to the public” remains the same.

**“The masses in the mass market often hear about Elehammo. We have a lot of fans other than musicians because it ’s a crazy company because of its history.”** When the vintage market reignited in the 90s, Mike went to Russia to buy a local former munitions factory. There was production, and there was some confusion with Russian gangs (this one was covered in TV news).

[Employees](#) often appear on the website and SNS, such as a heroic heroic story like this, "characterized" products that even beginners of guitar and effectors want to touch, unique sounds that cannot be imitated by effectors of other manufacturers, [A microphone that you can do as much as you like with a handmade product demo video](#) . Even if you are not a musician, there are plenty of reasons to love Elehammo. In addition, the



promo video that many famous musicians appear and talk about love of Elehamo, the power to hold down the strings of the guitar kid's strings also becomes stunning.

Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan is one of the big fans of Erehamo.

? Fans who like big muff too much and carve as tattoos on their bodies.

A frightening microphone.

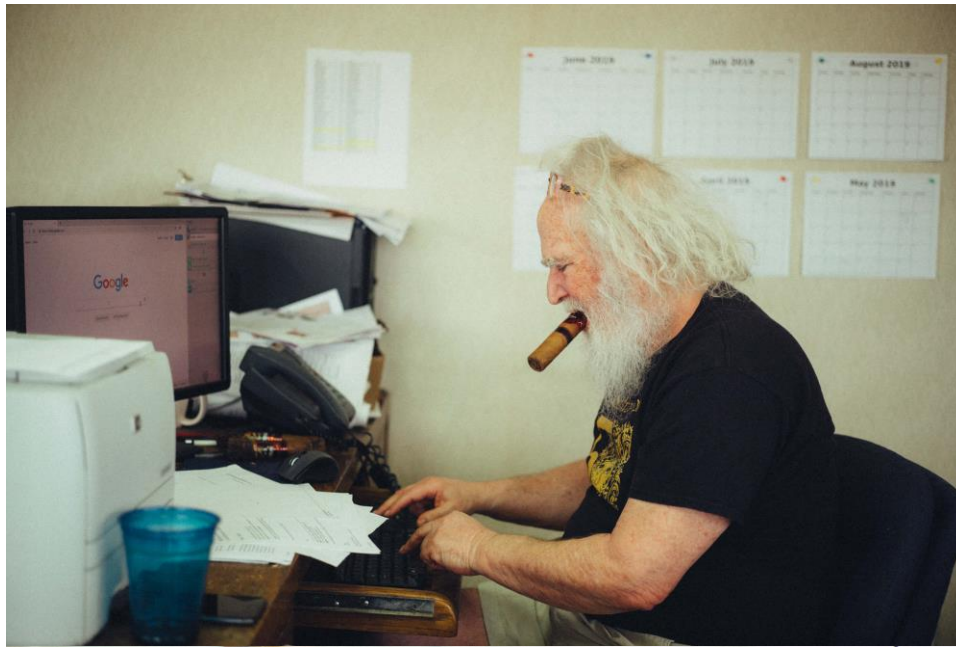
[@ehx](#)

"Twenty years ago, I met John Frusciante of Red Hot Chili Peppers at an instrument trade show. He thanked him. He showed me an effector. " Elehamo's effector, the guitar kid's "big dream", was fulfilled.

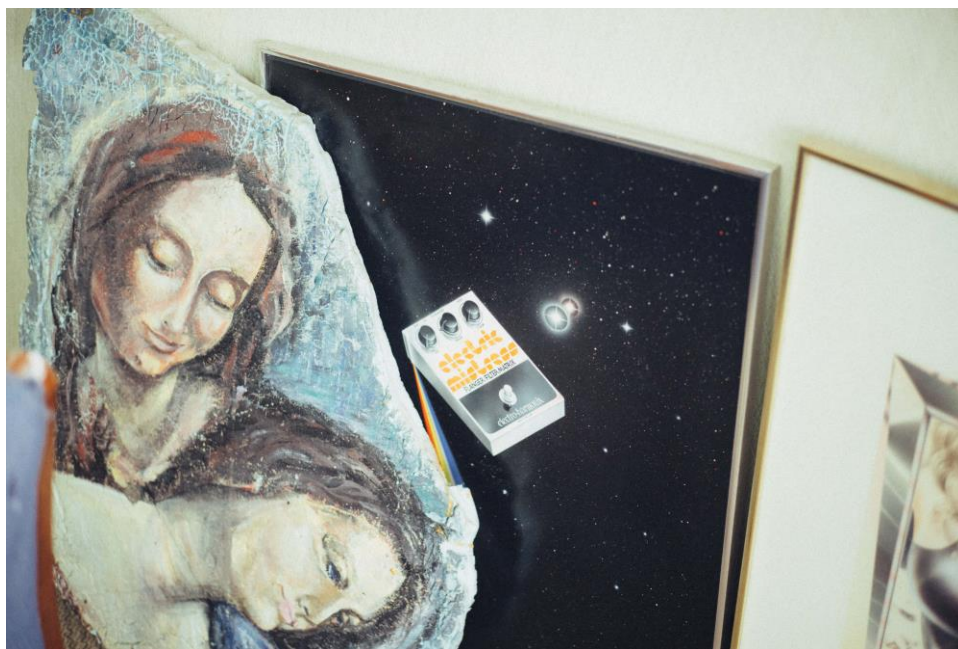
For half a century, from the professional to the amateur, the guitarist's rock sound has spread widely. When I asked Mike what he thought of this feat, the roaring answer, like the Elehamo Kitelec explosion amp, bounced back. "It 's not just what Erehamo could have done! But we 've definitely done awesome things like fucking!"

Interview with Mike Matthews









Photos by Kohei Kawashima

Text by Risa Akita

Content Direction & Edit: HEAPS Magazine