



Marshall EH-1, RF-1 & RG-1 pedals £65, £60 & £60

A trio of brand new Marshall stompboxes that each promise six voices for the price of one... by Chris Vinnicombe

The rivals

ECHOHEAD
Danelectro Fab Echo £24.99
BOSS DD-3 Digital Delay £99
Line 6 Echo Park £112
If it's old-school delay you're after, then the Fab Echo can oblige, and the price is nothing short of fantastic. The BOSS DD-3 has been around for quite some time now, but proves to be a perennial favourite on pedalboards across the globe, not least those of many professionals. The Line 6 offers fantastic-sounding delay models derived from its larger sibling DL-4, and a built in tap tempo function for good measure

We first encountered Marshall's stompboxes for the new millennium in January 2000, as the large black housings of old were superseded by the sleek, rounded gunmetal units that have sold by the bucketload ever since. Fast forward to 2006 and the race seems to be on among mainstream manufacturers to see just how many functions can be crammed into a single stompbox, and now Marshall has launched this new trio of digital stompboxes packing six individual voices each.

Six years on, the metal footswitches are now a little larger and more confidence inspiring than those used initially, but otherwise the housings are virtually identical. The units themselves feel satisfyingly weighty and hard-wearing, and we still think that the battery access panel that can be opened with a coin is a great idea; so many pedals these days require a Phillips screwdriver to change batteries, but in the case of these

Marshall you know that should you encounter battery failure at that gig in the arse end of nowhere, somebody will at least have a coin in their pocket.

EH-1 ECHOHEAD

The Echohead's delay time, feedback and level controls shape the signal exactly as one would expect, but the real power lies in the pedal's six-position mode control. Between position one's hi-fi digital delay and position six's psychedelic mod filter, sounds range from simple clean repeats to retro-styled analogue and tape delay simulations, along with more specialist effects such as multi-tap, modulated and reverse delays.

Alongside the instrument input is a jack socket for the connection of a momentary footswitch which functions as a tap tempo control. In addition, a pair of output jacks offers more than simply stereo operation. When the pedal is connected in mono to output one, a passive bypass circuit kills the

effect completely when it is disengaged. Connecting to output two alone is also mono, but this time when you disengage the effect, any remaining repeats will 'spill over' and naturally decay over whatever else you are playing. This is useful and gives you the option to segue less abruptly between sections of a track that require different sounds than if the delay repeats were simply cut dead.

With both outputs connected, the EH-1 gives you stereo operation and ping-pong delay, as in this configuration the delay time of output two, the right channel, is half that of output one. There is no way for the spill over to be activated in stereo mode, but that said, the configuration options and sonic flexibility are still impressive for a stompbox with such a small footprint.

RF-1 REFLECTOR

Considering what an integral effect it has been to the recorded sound of the



The modulation-packed Regenerator offers chorus, flanger, phaser, step phaser and vintage vibe



shape of the Regenerator, as its six-position mode selector gives us access to a pair of chorus voices, a vintage-voiced flanger, phaser, step phaser and vintage vibe. The step phaser function is essentially a step filter effect that may be familiar to those used to a unit such as the Roger Linn AdrenaLinn. Rather than providing a smooth modulation curve, the signal is chopped into more dramatic 'steps' that pulse and bubble in a synthesiser-like manner. Like the ReflectoR, there's a connection for an expression pedal to control modulation speed, while when both outputs are connected in stereo, the second output is phase inverted to increase the sense of space.

SOUNDS: Flipping through the modes, it quickly becomes clear that the Echohead contains more than enough sonic connotations for most people's delay needs. For a touch of light slapback for rockabilly, the tape echo setting is voiced very well indeed, while reverse evokes those blissed-out peace and love moments with aplomb. However, it's worth noting that because the level control doesn't allow for a 100 per cent wet signal you'll always be able to hear the attack of the original notes. The analogue simulation is solid enough, with the requisite murky edge as repeats degrade, but fans of this kind of delay may find the kind of aural chaos usually on tap when the time and feedback knobs are manipulated to be a little disappointing and not as musical as the equivalent sounds on some digital modellers, or indeed those delivered by an authentic analogue chip. That said, fans of more pristine delay voicings are more than

catered for by the hi-fi and multi tap modes on offer.

Switching to the ReflectoR, many players' first port of call will inevitably be to see whether the unit provides an authentic-sounding replacement for an amplifier's onboard spring reverb. Happily, both spring modes are suitably splashy, and the damping control allows you to roll off or add top-end sheen to the sound as per your requirements. The other reverb voices are more idiosyncratic, but all are musical and useful in their own right. The addition of an expression pedal, meanwhile, allows for lovely reverb swells that work particularly well with ghostly slide atmospherics. We noticed a slight graininess throughout the modes that works well with an electric guitar but, to our ears, may preclude the RF-1 from studio use with other instruments.

In the dark early days of guitar multi-effects, many 'jack of all trade' pedals inevitably surrendered to the cliché and proved to be masters of none, and in truth the performance of the Regenerator is something of a mixed bag. Far and away the sonic

highlight here is the vintage vibe mode that recalls numerous classic recordings and, in combination with an expression pedal, is truly inspiring to play through. Similarly the bubbling step phaser is something of a welcome anomaly at this price point, and for some it will be worth the admission price alone. At the other end of the spectrum, we were left cold by chorus, flanger and phaser effects that lacked any real individuality or character, and inevitably didn't compare favourably to the voices on offer from many standalone units.

The Regenerator's bubbling step phaser is something of a welcome anomaly at this price point, and for some it will be worth the admission price alone

electric guitar over the years, there are a surprisingly small number of dedicated reverb pedals on the market. Most of you will own, or have owned, an amplifier with a spring reverb circuit, but many players who use old-school single channel valve heads will find their basic set-up reverb-less without some kind of additional effect. The RF-1's reverb time, damping and level controls allow you to shape and equalise the virtual space, while again a six-mode selector allows you to choose from hall, plate, room, two spring voicings and reverse-reverb sounds. The pedal's twin outputs operate in a similar way to the Echohead's, with 'spill over' obtained from output two in mono only. Instead of the option of a tap tempo control, this time an expression pedal can be connected to increase or decrease the reverb time on the fly.

RG-1 REGENERATOR

Marshall has attempted to provide a one-stop modulation solution in the

The rivals

REFLECTOR

Electro-Harmonix Holy Grail	£79
DigiTech DigiVerb	£89
EBS DynaVerb	£143

The Holy Grail was launched a few years ago and is now the baby of a range of reverb pedals. As befits E-HX pedals, there is a sizeable helping of psychedelia on offer thanks to the spacey 'flerb' setting. DigiTech's DigiVerb has seven different reverb types onboard, while the EBS unit allows you to choose between eight stereo digital reverb effects and offers studio-quality performance

REGENERATOR

Behringer FX100 Digital Multi-FX	£31
Line 6 MM4	£229
Carl Martin Quattro	£339

Behringer looks set to rewrite the rulebook when it launches the FX100, combining various modulations plus a pitchshifter and delay in a single compact stompbox. Line 6's MM4 is a modulation fan's amusement park of a pedal with models of some of the most iconic stompboxes in history of and the ability to store and recall four customisable preset sounds. Check out the Carl Martin Quattro on page 133 for top-drawer multi-effects sexiness

MARSHALL EH-1 ECHOHEAD

PRICE: £65
ORIGIN: China
TYPE: Digital delay pedal
FEATURES: Six-position mode selector toggles between hi-fi, analogue, tape echo, multi tap, reverse and mod filter delay sounds
CONTROLS: Mode, delay time, feedback, level
CONNECTIONS: Instrument input, tap tempo input, twin outputs for stereo operation
MIDI: No
POWER: One nine-volt PP3 battery or mains adaptor
OPTIONS: Marshall's PEDL-10040 tap tempo footswitch is £16
Marshall Amplification
01908 375411
www.marshallamps.com

MARSHALL EH-1, RF-1 & RG-1 PEDALS £65, £60 & £60

EFFECTS  GUITARIST INTERACTIVE



ECHOHEAD	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
WE LIKED Large array of quality delay sounds; versatile connection options	
WE DISLIKED Not the most authentic analogue simulation out there	

REFLECTOR	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
WE LIKED Quality spring reverb emulation; great with an expression pedal	
WE DISLIKED Slight graininess throughout may preclude serious studio use	

REGENERATOR	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
WE LIKED Vintage vibe and step phaser	
WE DISLIKED The other modulation voices struggle to compete and don't hold their own next to dedicated stompboxes	

MARSHALL EH-1 REFLECTOR
As the EH-1 except...
PRICE: £60
TYPE: Digital reverb pedal
FEATURES: Six-position mode selector toggles between hall, plate, room, spring 1, spring 2, and reverse reverb voicings
CONTROLS: Mode, reverb time, damping, level
CONNECTIONS: Instrument input, expression pedal input, twin outputs for stereo operation

MARSHALL RG-1 REGENERATOR
As the RF-1 except...
TYPE: Digital modulation pedal
FEATURES: Six-position mode selector toggles between vintage chorus, modern chorus, flanger, phaser, step phaser and vintage vibe effects
CONTROLS: Mode, speed, depth, regen

➔ **Verdict**
The Echohead is a reflection of just how much processing power can be packed into a £65 stompbox these days, and it would make a solid all-round choice for someone who is looking either for a first delay pedal to experiment with or a versatile delay with a small footprint. The basic sounds don't quite scale the heights achieved by Line 6 units, but then there's still considerable daylight between the price of the Echohead and the Echo Park.
In a live setting, the Reflector is a great substitute for an amplifier's spring reverb circuit. It's certainly not the cleanest-sounding reverb stompbox out there, so despite its stereo outputs, we didn't feel that the pedal would sufficiently cater for the reverb needs of a home studio.
The Regenerator is probably the

least expensive solution for a step filter and vintage-style Uni-Vibe sound. It's a shame that the other more basic modulation voices didn't live up to our expectations, but then we'd generally expect to pay more than £60 for a good standalone phaser or chorus, so we'd recommend giving the Regenerator a spin nonetheless. **B**

Marshall EH-1 Echohead
Guitarist RATING ★★★★★
Marshall RF-1 Reflector
Guitarist RATING ★★★★★
Marshall RG-1 Regenerator
Guitarist RATING ★★★★★

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