

Quicktest

Visual Sound Dual Tap Delay £249

Two delays in one pedal...

CONTACT: Headline Music PHONE: 01223 874301 WEB: www.visualsound.net



Like many other Visual Sound pedals, this is a two-in-one design, although with channel one's modulation control you can add in chorus too. Aside from that, the two delay channels are identical: maximum one-second delay time and controls for time division, delay time, repeats and effect level plus a manual/tap switch and mini tone control. Three hefty footswitches operate each channel's on/off status (both can be used simultaneously) and the tap tempo.

It's a mono delay but we have two outputs – mono, plus an output to a second amp, which can be switched to effected or dry. You can also mute repeat trails when the effect is off. There's an external tap/click input socket too, for a new external click track box (to be launched next year) allowing the unit to sync to an external source or transmit BPM.

Sounds

Classed as a 'hybrid analog/digital circuit' we hear the

clarity of digital with the tone turned up, with the option of more analogue sounds with reduced tone and potential for self-oscillating mayhem if that's your bag. It's dead easy to use, but complex 'multi-head' repeats can be achieved with both channels on and different time division settings.

Verdict

To say the pedal market is swamped with delay pedals is an understatement. This is one for old-school occasional delayists; there's no programmability, but if you need a little slap back for a couple of songs or a more modern tempo-locked modulation, it's all here. [DB]

The Bottom Line

We like: Build and sound quality; ease-of-use

We dislike: Shame the external click track box isn't ready yet; price

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Dunlop DVP1 Volume Pedal £134

A simple but effective solution

CONTACT: JHS PHONE: 0113 286 5381 WEB: www.jimdunlop.com

This recent addition to the Dunlop effects range revamps the basic volume pedal by making use of some clever thinking and similarly smart styling. The latter concerns a beefy but smooth casing in space-age brush-finished aluminium, with chunky looks matched by measurements that easily accommodate a size 10 boot. An accordingly long treadle section is topped with a tyre-like, heavy patterned rubber insert that gives you some serious grip underfoot. The pedal's substantial weight helps keep it firmly in place, with further anchorage provided by the rubber-covered baseplate.

Volume changes are made using a conventional passive pot, but the partner treadle mechanism employs Dunlop's new Steel Band Drive, designed for minimum maintenance and friction-free performance. A rear-mounted tension screw adjusts sweep action stiffness, while all connections are at the opposite end of the case, comprising

input and output jacks plus an independent tuner feed.

In Use

The well-chosen components ensure that there's no noticeable signal degradation, while appropriate level amendments are smoothly progressive from off to the full-on position.

Verdict

Dunlop's DVP1 is an obvious competitor to the BOSS FV-500H, but lacks the latter's minimum volume facility. Despite this deficit, it's a viable alternative that combines fuss-free performance with confidence-inducing durability, although the asking price could be considered quite steep for such a simple pedal. [PD]

The Bottom Line

We like: Top-notch construction; operation

We dislike: It's a bit pricey

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Fender CN 240-SCE £370

Lowly priced nylon-string for the steel-string player

CONTACT: Fender GBI PHONE: 01342 331700 WEB: www.fender.com

This Chinese-made cutaway electro is in the Classical series. It's no classical guitar in the concert sense, but with a nut width of 45mm, it'll suit steel-string or electric players. It's tidily made with a (slightly streaked) solid cedar top, laminate rosewood back and

sides, clean edge binding and Spanish heeled mahogany neck with a well-fretted, lightly cambered rosewood 'board and a 646mm scale length – a little on the short side for a nylon.

Powering comes from Fishman, its small-knobbed preamp featuring a three-band

EQ, volume and a small but clear tuner. The tuner engage button mutes your output, but be aware that there's no auto shutdown if used unplugged.

Sounds

The short scale and smaller neck give the guitar a

comfortable, almost student feel. The acoustic sound is on the quiet side, but with a trim low-end sounds quite balanced and more 'Spanish' than many at this price point. Amp'd too there's plenty of output, a clean and balanced tonality, if a little crisp, but with a little EQ tweaking it's perfectly acceptable for both performance and capturing a Spanish/Latin flavour for your home demos.

Verdict

This is a reasonably affordable hybrid steel-meets-nylon electro-acoustic that will suit any first timers, or someone wanting to add nylon-string colour for recording. **[DB]**

The Bottom Line

We like: Excellent build-to-price ratio

We dislike: Will feel small and cramped for conventional nylon-string players

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Coopersonic Germaniac Vintage Fuzz £99

A fuzzbox for sonic terrorists

CONTACT: Coopersonic PHONE: 0115 9178575 WEB: www.coopersonic.com

The earliest fuzz pedal circuitry was based around Germanium transistors and several boutique manufacturers still produce pedals using them. As its name undoubtedly gives away, the Germaniac from Nottingham-based Coopersonic is one such stompbox, being based around a single germanium transistor. Featuring true bypass it can be powered from a battery or standard 9V adaptor.

Sounds

Disregarding the mania knob for the time being, the Germaniac functions as a basic two-knob fuzzbox with the level knob setting the overall

output volume and the fuzz knob piling on sixties-style snotty-nosed garage fuzz, brash and rude with a top-end that cuts through. If you start messing with the mania knob, things start to get extreme. Not a lot happens until the knob gets towards the halfway point but advancing it creates greater degrees of instability until self-oscillation sets in and you can get a range of wild chainsaw noises and analogue synth-style drones without even touching your guitar (although you can manipulate these with your volume control). It's not all mayhem though – juxtaposition

of the mania and fuzz knobs can yield some sweet spots for a thicker and harmonically rich fuzz tone.

Verdict

A fuzzbox that goes beyond the normal into sonic mania, if you like your fuzz to be on the edge or you need some wild noises on stage, the Germaniac may be for you. **[TC]**



The Bottom Line

We like: Raucous sixties-style fuzz; extreme noise generation; solid build

We dislike: Four-screw battery access

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

IK Multimedia AmpliTube 3.7 & Custom Shop add-ons from €9

A new update and some added toys to play with...

CONTACT: IK Multimedia PHONE: 0800 0934 066 WEB: www.ikmultimedia.com



IK Multimedia continually expands AmpliTube 3 and has just released version 3.7 for free download. Each upgrade may include bug fixes or add new features for all users (3.7 adds OSX Lion compatibility among others) but a big part of it is to add models that you can try out and perhaps purchase from the Custom Shop. This time there are four new amps, one cab and two microphones.

Sounds

Jet City is the latest company to license models for AmpliTube, offering the JCA20H and JCA100H, both with a nice line in Soldano-designed overdrive. For metallers the German Gain

model is based on the Engl Fireball and has a massive array of controls that can conjure up powerful leads as well as heavy rhythms. IK has also filled a gap in its vintage Brit kit list with the HiAmp, based on the HiWatt DR103.

Finally, a couple of high-end valve condensers (modelled on the Neumann CMV563 and Brauner VM1) bring a touch of class to the selection, offering more options for tailoring your end sound if you feel the need.

Verdict

At 20 credits each (from €9, depending on how you buy credits) this has something to appeal to a variety of players for the price of a few pints. [TC]

The Bottom Line

We like: Nice variety of new models to try out

We dislike: It could get quite expensive if you wanted to purchase all of the add-ons

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

TwinStomp S21 Overdrive £189

Brit maker offers two-in-one

CONTACT: TwinStomp PHONE: 01746 780984 WEB: www.twinstomp.co.uk

This Shropshire company's Booster impressed us back in January 2008, for its ability to push valve amps into sweet, harmonic overdrive. More widely appealing, however, will be the new S21 Overdrive, with two independent drive circuits, generated off an RC4558P chip.

The S21's casing – complete with pedalboard-fixing eyelets – is hewn from stainless steel, giving a very industrial feel right down to the stamped markings. Inside it's all good news with quality triple-pole double-throw switches (needed for true bypass when using LEDs), high quality metal jacks and pots: it's built to last. The on/off switch is a good idea too – no need to unplug to save the battery, just switch it off.

Top marks also for the easy-access battery compartment, for which TwinStomp has a patent application.

Controls are the same for both overdrives – drive, tone and output level, but sadly it's either or: you can't cascade drive one into drive two.

Sounds

Channel one adds a round-sounding, soft-clip overdrive and gives good sustain with a healthy thickening in the mid range; it does a good cleanish boost too. Gibson/Marshall players can think classic British rock, into more driven, Gary Moore-type blues – just be sure to run the tone high to avoid muddiness with humbuckers.



Guitarist
CHOICE

Fender amps and guitars enjoy the extra mids. Channel two has a similar level of drive, but is much more strident in the upper mids and highs: great for cutting through.

Verdict

The S21 is every bit as 'boutique' as anything else out there in terms of tone and build. Versatile and good value, it's a brilliant, professional-grade all-round overdrive. [MT]

The Bottom Line

We like: Bomb-proof build; simple to use; great sounds; made in the UK; easy battery access

We dislike: Physically heavy

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★