

Quicktest

Electro-Harmonix Neo Mistress **£59**

The smallest Mistress yet!

CONTACT: Electro-Harmonix PHONE: N/A WEB: www.ehx.com

**Guitarist
CHOICE**

The **Electric** Mistress is a truly iconic stompbox and, at the feet of master players such as David Gilmour and Andy Summers, it can produce some wonderful flanger tones.

E-HX's Nano range of small-sized, stripped-down versions of these and other classic units of yore offer an improved simplicity of use in comparison with their bigger brothers, but even the Stereo Electric Mistress, which we confess to using a great deal, offered both a chorus and a flanger.

The Neo Mistress is a straight-ahead flanger, doing away with the always-mysterious resonance and manual pots often included in the spec of such an effect in

favour of rate and feedback pots. It possesses the customary sturdy construction and enigmatic vibe.

Sounds

Where to start? The sound changes with every combination of the two pots and we were able to recreate just about all scenarios we could think of: the unmoving honk of Stereophonics' Dakota, the classic wobble of Message In A Bottle or the clean Hysteria-period Def Leppard shimmer. Most flangers are fun to experiment with, but we didn't find a tone we couldn't envisage a use for here. The one effect it doesn't seem to be able to do is an all-out jet flange, but all in all the Neo Mistress is incredibly versatile.

Verdict

Flangers are best used sparingly, thus you may not be too keen on spending a fortune to have one in your rig. But at under £60, this Mistress is certainly worth spending some quality time with. **[SB]**

The Bottom Line

We like: Ease of use; compact design; versatile
We dislike: At this price point, genuinely nothing

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



T-Rex Tonebug Sustainer **£109**

A bug for squashing...

CONTACT: Westside Distribution UK PHONE: 0141 248 4812 WEB: www.t-rex-effects.com

The latest in T-Rex's more affordable Tonebug series is the Sustainer, a pedal that compresses your signal then adds gain. Running from a battery or a standard 9V power supply, the Sustainer features two knobs to control the effect and a two-way switch to select slow or fast attack.

Sounds

The compression knob ramps up the amount of compression by simultaneously giving you a higher ratio and a lower threshold as the knob is turned. With fast attack selected the compression kicks in almost instantly, whereas the slow attack lets through a little more of your initial note or chord before compression begins.

At lower compression settings you can get pretty straightforward squeezing, which is useful for keeping chords and picking at consistent levels. Wind up the compression knob, though, and you can conjure up a distinct effect where the compressor initially clamps down on the note or chord you play, which is then followed by a swell in volume – a nice effect to keep chords hanging in the air or for Santana-style legato sustain on single notes, with



higher levels of the sustain knob helping them sing longer or take off into feedback.

Verdict

More sustain without dirtying up the tone is a desired goal of many players, and here's a pedal that can help achieve that while also capable of some standard compression tasks. **[TC]**

The Bottom Line

We like: Adds sustain; tonally neutral
We dislike: Not a massive contrast between fast and slow settings

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Peavey PXD Void IV Bass £408

Open your mind to the Void. Oh yes...

CONTACT: Peavey UK PHONE: 01536 461234 WEB: www.peavey.com

The Void IV is a full-scale bass with a metal-looking reverse body shape that features neck-through-body construction and an 18-volt active circuit. For a bit more class, the bound 'board is ebony and sports an aluminium 'fin' inlay at the 12th fret. Furthermore the unusual headstock is chamfered in the shaped 'V'-section to reveal the

wood beneath – all of which makes this a pretty unusual design. It's available in gloss red, white or black, plus matt black, has a brushed aluminium finish pickguard and comes with a Coffin Case gigbag.

Sounds

With an active three-band EQ layout and a pair of Peavey's

VFL pickups, the Void's circuitry has much in common with Peavey's popular Cirrus bass and it produces a good range of solid sounds. By using the blend control you can mix and match the VFL active pickups as you wish to unleash a varied tonal punch that is both funky and penetrating. It's an impressively powerful

instrument too – you can't fail to be heard and felt with this.

Verdict

A stylish addition to Peavey's bass range with striking looks that mean you can't help but be noticed, and a stunning range of powerful sounds. [RN]

The Bottom Line

We like: Individual style; powerful funky tones with volume to spare

We dislike: It's rather heavy and unbalanced

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Carparelli S4 £996

A blingtastic single-cut...

CONTACT: Big Hug Creative PHONE: 07515 543818 WEB: www.carparelliguitars.co.uk

Conceived by Canadian-based Mike Carparelli, this relatively new brand offers a diverse line of Korean- and domestic-made guitars, and the former are now available in the UK via distributor Big Hug Creative.

With echoes of Aria's PE single-cut about the sloping shoulder to cutaway line, this mahogany/flame maple-topped S4 otherwise follows the Les Paul recipe pretty closely. And it's dripping with flashy decoration: abalone centred block position markers and purfling around both the fingerboard and body edge married with gold plated hardware, including Schaller-style locking tuners, strap-locks and pickup covers.

The mahogany neck is slim-depthed, very different in feel to a vintage Gibson, but the heel is nicely trim and

contoured into the almost Yamaha SG-like cutaway. The finish is a little thick-looking in certain places and the frets need a final polish, but playability is slick, modern and shred friendly.

Sounds

There's plenty of kick forthcoming from the pretty high output bridge humbucker, which takes us straight into harder rock territories, but that's balanced by a more classic-sounding neck pickup. Both produce a lighter mid-range than some similar single-cuts we compared the S4 to. But we're definitely in the big, broad Les Paul ballpark, though to our ears the S4 lacks a little bit of character and subtlety, something that a good single-cut of this type should have in abundance.

Verdict

Nicely made and a good player, the S4 is nevertheless going to have its work cut out to dent the mid-price single-cut market dominated by the likes of Epiphone, ESP LTD, Schecter, Ibanez and PRS SE.

However, with more original designs on the way from the company, not to mention some interesting marketing strategies in the pipeline, Carparelli will be a brand to keep your eye on. [DB]

The Bottom Line

We like: Modern single-cut design; fast playability; reasonable tones

We dislike: A couple of constructional issues

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



IK Multimedia iRig Mic £49

A hand-held mic for your iOS device

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

The **iRig iMic** is a handheld unidirectional electret condenser microphone for iPhone, iPod touch and iPad. It plugs into the iOS devices' headphone socket via its 2m/6.5ft cable and in turn has its own mini-jack socket for your headphones. The mic has a switch with three settings to set the input gain for a variety of situations – from, say, a soft spoken voice to a loud guitar amp – and comes with a mic clip and a carrying pouch.

In Use

IK Multimedia has three free apps that support the iRig Mic – AmpliTube free, VocaLive free

(a real time effects processor suite for singers), and iRig Recorder free for quick audio recording and processing, but it also works with GarageBand and other recording apps.

Plugging in an iPad and starting up GarageBand it's soon apparent where to set the iRig Mic's gain switch – basically in the position where you are getting a healthy signal without distortion, easy really. We manage to record a pretty decent vocal take, as well as acoustic guitar and a bit of hand held percussion. While the iRig Mic isn't going to replace a high-end condenser for serious recording it's brilliantly



convenient for getting a signal into an iOS device without fuss.

Verdict

If you want a mic with the form factor of a standard vocal mic such as, for example, an SM58, that you can plug directly into your iOS device, then the iRig Mic has it covered. [TC]

The Bottom Line

We like: Rugged construction; plug-in-and-play simplicity

We dislike: Not much at this price point

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Stone Deaf PDF-1 £135

UK box that boosts, filters and distorts

CONTACT: Stone Deaf FX EMAIL: luke@stonedeaffx.com WEB: www.stonedeaffx.com

It's 'Parametric Distortion Filter', just in case you were wondering, and a quick look at Stone Deaf's user list hints at what we're dealing with here – Chris Shiflet (Foo Fighters), Josh Klinghoffer (RHCP) and Josh Homme (QOTSA/Them Crooked Vultures)...

But what does it do? Well, the PDF-1 gives you up to 20dB of volume boost (height) with a parametric EQ filter (freq) that sweeps 65Hz to 3KHz. The bandwidth control is a five-position switch that focuses the point of the frequency sweep from wide (fat) to narrow (thin). The clean/dirty switch offers you a medium, fuzz-tinged distortion in the latter position and finally, in addition to the main output, there is an unaffected aux out to send a clean signal to a separate amp: useful. Inside we have a quality 3PDT true bypass switch, a

dual-stacked pot for 'freq' and generally high build quality.

Sounds

If you want a basic, no-brainer distortion, this is not it. The EQ and filtering controls on the PDF-1 offer a colossal breadth of tones many of which, in isolation at least, can sound pretty terrible. The point of all this tweakability is that it enables you to fine tune your sound to really sit perfectly within a mix, or indeed leap out from it at a specific frequency range. You can have thin, pseudo transistor radio sounds, rasping edgy grind and vocal wah-like sounds. The more you put the bandwidth towards thin, the more pronounced the effect of the filter, so all the way over to fat is where you'll find the full blooded tones. Any of them will fit right in with the bands named above.



Verdict

This is a very different take on a distortion/boost, aimed at rock players who want to get their sound dialled in perfectly to a band mix. It has all the filter flexibility you need, with clean boost and an optional edgy rock distortion sound. We like. [MT]

The Bottom Line

We like: Powerful filtering; aggressive distortion; good clean boost

We dislike: At this price, nowt

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★