



SPRING REVERB PEDALS

The sharp, tight slapback echoes of spring reverbs, such as the classic Fender 6G15 outboard reverb tank defined the sound of surf guitar.

Before the spread of tape echo units, reverb was the first real 'sound effect' available that drastically altered the guitar signal, as tremolo is really just a change of the signal amplitude, and distortion and fuzz merely clip the signal. Lots of weird and wonderful guitar effects would follow, of course, but spring reverb is ground zero – and it remains a crucial addition for country, surf and indie guitarists to this day.

In this month's pedal round-up, we've pulled together a few of our favourite recent spring reverb releases to see which of them come the closest to that authentic slapback that we're seeking.

TC Electronic Drip £36

FAR FROM BASIC

Given the build quality of the TC Drip, the price point is little short of astonishing, doubly so given that, when we pop the back off, we discover that it's packing an Analog Devices SHARC IC for its processing. In terms of sounds, it's got a standard volume and dwell control, as well as a tone control to take the edge off of brighter reflections – particularly useful when we're using a Tele-style bridge pickup. The core reverb sounds are solid, but it has to be said, they're also increasingly digital the more the dwell control is turned up. Maxed out, you can get some larger-than-life reverb sounds, but there's still a clinical edge to the reflections.

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★

Catalinbread Topanga £161

CLASSIC VIBES



The Topanga is an excellent, feature-packed spring reverb that brings great reverb sounds to the table and some good extras as well. Chief among these is a preamp that means with the dwell down and the pedal on a more subtle setting, with the volume up it can be used to drive your amp. The downside is that if you have distortion pedals in front, you need to carefully adjust its output levels so it doesn't dramatically jump when your distortion is on. With the dwell and mix pulled back and the tone rolled off, it's pure surf heaven, but smash the dwell up and it's great for ambient noodling, too.

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★



Spring reverb is the classic reverb sound, but it usually came from a true mechanical spring – can these compact pedals deliver?

Fuzzrocious Afterlife

£160

REGENERATE YOUR REVERB

Of all the pedals here, the Afterlife is the least traditional. Boasting an additional output for the wet signal, a switch for alternating between two dwell lengths and a separate volume control for the fully wet out, it can also be driven easily to oscillation using the two dwell lengths and the second footswitch. It sounds fantastic with a stereo setup, and it's hard to beat how lush it sounds in this configuration. Into a single amp it isn't as impressive. Amongst the choice of excellent features, not all the basics are covered, making it an exotic option for guitarists who want more than basic reverb.

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★

Source Audio True Spring

£219



THE REAL DEAL

Source Audio have long been experts in delivering brilliant digital effects, and it should come as no surprise this sounds fantastic. In addition to standard mix, volume, tone and dwell controls, the True Spring also brings a toggle switch for short, long and tank modes. In reality, there's not a massive difference between the short and long settings, and there are no acrobatics performed with the DSP to make wildly unrealistic sounds possible at extreme settings. Rather, this focuses on nailing the core sound, pure and simple. It's got stereo outs, but it's crucially a heavy-hitter in mono.

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★

AT A GLANCE

BYPASS:
True bypass

POWER:
TC Drip: 9V battery,
9V power supply
Catalinbread, Fuzzrocious, Source
Audio: 9V DC Centre-negative

CONTACT:
TC Electronic tcelectronic.com
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