

EARTHQUAKER DEVICES ROUND-UP

£159-£199

Looking for a secret sonic weapon for your 'board? Check out some ground-trembling boutique quirkiness from across the pond...

AKRON, Ohio – the rubber capital of the USA, no less – is home to boutique pedal maker, EarthQuaker Devices. The firm boasts a large and varied range of pedals, including no fewer than 12 different fuzzboxes. From pedals designed to replicate vintage Park and Shin-ei units, to more off-the-wall boxes, if it's scuzzy fun you want, EarthQuaker's got you covered.

It's not just its fuzz pedals that are causing a stir however – the company also offers a whole host of more esoteric boxes, and the four we're looking at today cover synth sounds, pitch-shifting and ambience. EarthQuaker says that all its pedals are entirely made by hand, and this foursome are certainly all nicely built and finished with lively graphics. Common features include solid metal jack sockets and true bypass operation, plus nine-volt power supply operation only. Let's get 'Quaking...



EARTHQUAKER BIT COMMANDER £159
Synthy square wave distorter

THE BIT Commander takes your guitar input and spits out monophonic square wave synth sounds. You get tones one and two octaves down and one octave up that you can blend together, plus you can add in some distortion with the Base knob and tweak it all tonally with a Filter knob. It can get a bit glitchy on lower notes, but if you're looking for lead tones with a bit of a nasty edge from the 7th fret upwards, the Bit Commander can supply them with consummate ease.

EARTHQUAKER ARPANOID £199
Scaling the sonic summit

ARPEGGIATORS HAVE been built into synths for years, and the Arpanoid is designed to access a similar effect from your guitar by taking what you play and transforming it into an ascending scale, a descending scale or one that ascends and descends continually. There are plenty of parameters to set – wet/dry blend, four major and four minor sequences, speed of the sequence, number of notes, direction from root to octave, and so on. It's all charmingly barmy – especially on random mode...



EARTHQUAKER RAINBOW MACHINE £199

Shift that pitch, man...

THE RAINBOW Machine generates polyphonic harmonies over a range from a 4th down to a 3rd up with all atonal intervals in between. You can add an upper octave to the harmony and set their levels relative to each other and the dry sound. There's also adjustment of the time lag between signals and the footswitchable Magic function that ramps up or down to your selected pitch creating sci-fi sounds. With slapback, doubling and some excellent detuning and chorus-like effects as well as standard harmonies, this can go from subtle to psychedelically bonkers.

EARTHQUAKER DISPATCH MASTER £169

Create space and save space, too!

REVERB AND delay are separate entities, but either or both together are often used to add some space to your sound. The Dispatch Master does just that, with a cool blend of nicely voiced versions of both effects for a range of ambient sounds. Turning the relevant knobs down also lets you have delay or reverb on their own. Separate pedals would give you more versatility, but this offers a great way to save pedalboard space while bringing in complex spacey ambience with one footswitch.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Analogue synth, polyphonic pitch arpeggiator, pitch shifter and digital delay/reverb

CONTROLS:

Bit Commander: sub, down 1, up 1, filter, level, base

Arpanoid: Rate, step, wet, dry, mode selector, up/down toggle switch

Rainbow Machine: secondary, pitch, primary, Magic, tone, tracking, Magic footswitch

Dispatch Master: reverb, repeats, mix, time

SOCKETS: Input, output, expression pedal input (Rainbow Machine only)

BYPASS: True bypass

POWER: 9V power supply (not supplied)

CONTACT: Rocky Road 01494 535333 earthquakerdevices.com

The Rainbow Machine can go from subtle to psychedelically bonkers

EARTHQUAKER BIT COMMANDER	
FEATURES	★★★★
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

EARTHQUAKER ARPANOID	
FEATURES	★★★★
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

EARTHQUAKER RAINBOW MACHINE	
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