

FENDER

Fender pedals

Distortion, reverb and delay
for your delectation

Words Trevor Curwen Photography Phil Barker

This year's NAMM show proved fruitful for Fender pedals as they launched six new options and look to be developing more through a team headed up by designer Stan Cotey.

This issue we look at three of the designs, which all follow the same rugged format featuring a curvy anodised aluminium top complete with metallic sheen. All run from a battery or a 9V power adapter and feature an easy battery change with a magnetically latched hinged flap at the end that simply pulls down and flips back when you let go. Another innovation is the use of a lightpipe in the knobs, in combination with a blue LED, so you can see where the knob is set when on a darkened stage. Thoughtfully, though, this feature can be switched off if you find it distracting. Another cool feature is offset input and output jacks allowing closer spacing of pedals so your plugs aren't butting up against each other when the pedals are side by side.



Pugilist Distortion

£87

Because it's called the Pugilist you might expect it to deliver brutal distortion, but while it can definitely do that there's a subtler side to this pedal. What it offers are dual gain engines (A and B) linked to a Blend knob so you can have 100 per cent A or B or a mix of both. This is a brilliant feature as there's a wide variation of tone available from blending the two channels especially as each has its own adjustable Gain and Tone.

Channel A offers a slightly milder distortion than B so you can use a touch of A with brightened tone to add clarity and pick attack to the saturated sound of B or have a mixture of both reminiscent of playing through two amps. You can also choose to run the two engines in series where full-on high-gain sound with rich harmonics is pretty much guaranteed. The Pugilist is also capable of raunchy overdrive at lower levels of gain. **G**

VERDICT Providing plenty of variation on the distortion/drive theme, a pedal with two engines at this price is a steal

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Distortion pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Tone A, Gain A, Tone B, Gain B, Blend, Level, Series/Blend switch, Bass Boost switch, LEDs On/Off switch, Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS:

Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adapter (not supplied) 88mA

DIMENSIONS: 100 (w) x 125 (d) x 62mm (h)

Guitarist CHOICE

9/10



Marine Layer Reverb

£110

Unless it's specifically a spring emulation, the modern reverb pedal has to feature several reverbs to compete and that's the pattern that the Marine Layer follows with six reverb types – three algorithms (Hall, Room and Special) with two variations of each (1 and 2). There are knobs for Pre-Delay, Reverb Time and Level plus a Damping knob that attenuates the high frequencies alongside a Filter switch that can be used in conjunction with it.

The two Hall variations offer the largest reverbs while there are also two rooms, one representing a standard-sized space, the other something more tightly defined. The Special settings offer more modern treatments. One is a shimmer reverb with octave shifting, the other features modulated reverb, both giving the impression of a shifting cushion of ambience. It's all good but we'd rather have a spring and plate simulation in place of the extra room and hall. **G**

VERDICT: A competent reverb that may have missed a trick by not offering more varied options

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Reverb pedal
FEATURES: Buffered bypass, trails feature leaving reverb tails to decay naturally on bypass
CONTROLS: Pre-Delay, Reverb Time, Damping, Level, Reverb Type switch (Hall/Room/Special), Variation switch (1/2), Filter switch (On/Off), LEDs On/Off switch, Dry Kill On/Off switch, Bypass footswitch
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adapter (not supplied) 115mA

DIMENSIONS: 100 (w) x 125 (d) x 62mm (h)

7/10



Mirror Image Delay

£110

The Mirror Image offers two variations each on three delay types – Digital, Analog and Tape. The delay time, feedback and level controls are adjustable but you can also add in modulation if desired with adjustable depth and rate so there's a tasty combination of delay and chorus. In addition to this you can add extra dotted-eighth delay to the main quarter note at approx 75 per cent of the main one's volume for a multi-tap vibe and facilitating some rhythmic repeats.

The main digital delay will cover many delay requirements with its 20 to 900ms range while digital 2 offers much shorter delay times for a double tracking effect and also does a cool slapback. The other settings cover simulations of BBD and tape delays, (albeit with no self-oscillation), focusing on the less-than-pristine repeats of each genre – the second variation of each offering a more lo-fi version. **G**

VERDICT: A solid, workmanlike pedal that could take care of all your delay needs at a decent price

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Delay pedal
FEATURES: Buffered bypass, trails feature leaving repeats to decay naturally on bypass

CONTROLS: Time, Depth, Rate, Feedback, Level, Delay Type switch (Digital/Analog/Tape), Variation switch (1/2), Dotted 1/8 switch (On/Off), LEDs On/Off switch, Dry Kill On/Off switch, Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adapter (not supplied) 138mA

DIMENSIONS: 100 (w) x 125 (d) x 62mm (h)

8/10