

Quicktest



VIDEO DEMO


<http://bit.ly/guitarist391>

TC Electronic Flashback Triple Delay £235

Three delays running at the same time

CONTACT: TC Electronic **PHONE:** 0800 917 8926 **WEB:** www.tcelectronic.com

The Flashback Triple Delay offers up to three delays running simultaneously, and all synchronised, too, if you wish. Three footswitches recall settings stored for the corresponding delay engine (Delay 1, 2 and 3), that you set using the knobs. Besides being able to set the standard parameters of delay time, repeats and dry/wet mix, you can choose from 12 delay types – Tape, Tube, Space, Analog, Analog Mod, Reverse, Dynamic, 2290, 2290 Mod, Slap, LoFi and Ping Pong. In addition, the Triple Delay offers four different TonePrints as delay types – allowing you to load the pedal with sounds created by TC's roster of artists and/or create your own using the software TonePrint Editor. You also get a Tap Tempo footswitch linked to a subdivision selector that offers 11 different musical

intervals, and you can store a different one with each of the three presets. The multiple delays can be run in parallel, with the three mixed together at the output, or in serial where Delay 1 feeds into Delay 2 and the signal then feeds Delay 3. You can also connect an expression pedal to control a combination of parameters.

Sounds

While you can use the pedal as a source of three independent delays, the Triple Delay's unique selling point is that it offers massive potential for sound creation using layered delays. Mixing up different delay types and timing subdivisions means that with two or three of the delay engines active you can create intricate textural repeat patterns and immense ambient echoes, especially as you can

use sounds that you create in the TonePrint Editor, with its adjustable modulation options for dreamy soundscapes.

To create delays that are all synced and rhythmically-related you can program appropriate delay time values, you can feed the pedal with MIDI clock, or you can hit the tap tempo footswitch to tie them all together. How that latter feature operates, however, may not suit some users who utilise rhythmic delays in time with the music onstage. The tap tempo works only for the active delays: if all three are on and you hit tap tempo they will sync perfectly. Any that are bypassed will not be included and will not be in sync if you then switch them on. Obviously, that will be frustrating for some, but fine for those who, say, don't want slapback sounds to be affected by tap tempo. We would have

liked the option of selecting two different tap modes, and at the time of writing TC is looking into the feasibility of an update.

Verdict

Make no mistake, three delays in one pedal is awesome. The Triple Delay is brilliant at creating stacked delay sounds; it's great for recording and will keep you amused for hours. However, if you need to set a live tempo on the fly, then bring synced delays in and out, you'll have to re-tap each time or add a tap tempo MIDI clock generator. If it wasn't for that restricted functionality, this pedal would get a Guitarist Choice award. **[TC]**

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Guitarist says: Three delays working together in a single pedal offers huge sonic potential

St Blues Delta Blues Box 4 String 'Montesino' Cigar Box Guitar £249

A quality, 'ready rolled' cigar box guitar from the USA

CONTACT: Guitarguitar PHONE: 0800 456 1959 WEB: www.saintblues.com

While the rock world seems to be creating more and more extended-range instruments, those of us working in the acoustic world might well be looking for fewer strings. The four-string tenor guitar is making a bit of a comeback and there are a host of fewer-string 'folk' instruments that can all add texture and interest to your music, either live or recorded. And that's where this neat cigar box guitar (CBG) fits in. For many, a CBG is a simple, DIY instrument that's ideal for old-style gnarly blues and slide. There's nothing wrong with that, but St Blues has made this one properly, which extends its use considerably.

By design, a CBG is a simple beast. The long, thin neck has a Fender-style head, decent Grover tuners and a nicely cut bone nut. Fretting is very good and although the neck profile is pretty square, it is nicely finished. There's no bridge as such, just a bone saddle held in place by the string tension. But once set correctly, the overall intonation was really very good, making upper-fret chord voicing sound a lot more in-tune than many cheaper CBGs we've played.

This one is also electro, via a custom piezo transducer mounted in the cigar box body, with a side-mounted volume control and jack output. We even get proper strap buttons, too!

Sounds

Designed to be tuned to 'open G' (G, D, G, B), the St Blues is supplied with a custom D'Addario string set, a 0.045 wound bass string, a 0.026 wound, then 0.017 and 0.013

plain top strings. Of course, you don't have to stick to this tuning, or the string gauges; raising the top two strings was easy enough to produce a 'fifths' tuning – G, D, A, E, like a tenor guitar, banjo or mandolin. Whatever tuning you choose, you'll have to get used to the odd feel – strapped on, it's very unbalanced but light in weight, so it's actually quite easy to hold it in place and play, either standing or seated.

Unplugged, there's enough volume for practice and, plugged in, while the body becomes very microphonic, albeit handy for right-hand percussion; the sound is really quite acoustic-like with a little banjo-like ping and percussive attack. Lower tunings slacken the string tension and induce a slightly more Eastern flavour, or more African desert blues-like tonalities, especially into a lightly crunchy valve amp. If you're into your roots and world music, it's a very useful tool, not least if you play slide – the supplied setup is a little low for that, but the bridge saddle can either be shimmed or you can just move it upright.

Verdict

It's far from the cheapest cigar box guitar out there, but it's the best one we've come across in terms of build and playability. Certainly if you're interested in exploring a slightly left-of-mainstream musical world, it's far from a daft choice. Oh, and you have a choice of different brands of cigar box, too! [DB]

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Guitarist says: A cigar box guitar you should take seriously? We think so...



DigiTech Drop £129

Instant dropped tuning

CONTACT: Sound Technology PHONE: 01462 480000 WEB: www.digitech.com

VIDEO DEMO



<http://bit.ly/guitarist391>

The Drop is a dedicated polyphonic pitch-shifting pedal that allows you to drop your tuning from one semitone all the way down to a full octave, allowing instant dropped tunings even in the middle of a song. A spin-off from the Whammy DT, the Drop is compact and comes with its own 9V DC power supply.

In Use

You set the dropped tuning with a rotary knob that offers one to seven semitones or a full octave, with an extra setting that offers one octave down plus dry sound for an octaver effect. A toggle switch lets you set the footswitch so it operates either in normal bypass function or as

a latching switch to introduce the effect for as long as it is held down. Tracking is flawless and the pitch-shifted sound is glitch-free, albeit losing a little treble on the way. The momentary switch is really cool for either instantly adding an extra bit of fretboard range or toggling between two notes for effect, although there can be a little bit of footswitch noise.

Verdict

If you use down-tuned guitars heavily, the Drop is probably no substitute, but if you want to do the odd song in a set drop-tuned, with less hassle, it will do the job admirably, whether that's just dropping down to D or calling up A-tuned baritone



or bass. With the added octaver function and those momentary shifts, it's a very practical tool that's reasonably priced for the functionality it offers. [TC]

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Guitarist says: Pedalboard-friendly dropped tunings to extend your guitar's range down

Line 6 Sonic Port VX £139

Combined mic and guitar input device for iOS, Mac and Windows

CONTACT: Sound Technology PHONE: 01462 480000 WEB: www.digitech.com

Line 6's new Sonic Port VX is designed to provide everything you need for recording to an iOS device or a Windows computer. Not just a 16-bit/48kHz audio interface with a guitar input, the VX also incorporates both stereo and mono condenser mics with preamps, plus it includes a mini-jack stereo input. On top of that, you get another stereo mini-jack for headphones, plus left and right jack outputs to connect to a monitor system. The VX comes with Lightning and USB connector cables, is instantly compatible with iOS devices and Macs, and can work with Windows machines if you install the drivers. You also get Line 6's Mobile POD iOS app for free.

In Use

The VX can either screw onto a mic stand or camera tripod, or can sit on your tabletop on its own easily-angled stand. Simply choose between guitar, stereo mic or mono mic inputs, set the gain with the knurled wheel and you are away, maybe after setting the direct monitor switch for zero-latency monitoring. The guitar input

has 120dB of dynamic range, so translates your tone and playing dynamics really well, the stereo mic is cool for room recording – such as gigs and practices – while the mono mic is suited to capturing vocals or close-micing an acoustic guitar.

Verdict

Line 6's Sonic Port VX covers all of the bases, from connecting

your guitar to amp sims, through to recording. Easily portable and bus-powered, it will let you play or record wherever your laptop or iPad is. [TC]

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Guitarist says: Practical and portable do-it-all widget for computer and iOS recording



Guitarist
CHOICE



AER Compact 60/3 Slope £799

The Compact 60 gets a wedge-shaped makeover

CONTACT: Westside Distribution PHONE: 0141 248 4812 WEB: www.aer-amps.com

This wedge-shaped 'Slope' isn't a new amp as such, just a reconfigured version of the well-loved Compact 60, now in its third generation. It's a highly transportable, lightweight (6.5kg) two-channel acoustic amp with 60W of output from a single eight-inch twin-cone speaker. As usual, all the controls run along the top, back edge of the amp. Channel one has a standard jack input with three-band EQ, plus a colour switch (a mid-cut/treble-boost), high/low input selection and LED clip monitor. Channel two features an XLR/jack combi input, with line/mic input selection, LED clip monitor and two-band EQ. The four digital effects (two reverbs, delay and chorus) are global via the pan control, which also

allows you to mix in any external effects. Finally, we have an overall master output control. On the back are outputs for headphones, tuner, line and DI outs, plus an effects loop.

Sounds

Crisp, clean and highly detailed are all terms we associate with AER, and this is no exception: a superb acoustic amp. It's such a well-sorted amp that getting a sound from virtually any instrument we had to hand was easy. It doesn't have a huge number of bells and whistles in the EQ department, but the colour switch adds an instant modern edge to steel strings and the EQ overall sounds very guitar-specific.

It's worth mentioning the effects, too: two clean and

spacious reverbs – the second with a longer tail, a delay with a 320-millisecond repeat, ideal for adding a little 'air' to solos, for example, and a perfectly usable 'rock' chorus. Via a footswitch, you can switch the effects (either the internal effects or any you have in the external effects loop) on or off.

The wedge format proves highly useful. It's ideal as an onstage monitor (you don't have to suspend your amp on a mic stand or chair), as it's throwing the sound to your ear. On bigger stages, it proved handy to complement the onstage monitor mix. We used it as a personal monitor and adjusted the volume when things got louder without affecting the out-front balance or bothering the soundman. Having an

accurate, quality sound helps your playing, too – not always the case with a PA's monitors!

Overall, then, it's an easy amp to use, either as backline or a monitor, or both, with an excellent sound. Being picky, a channel mute would be handy on channel one if you're changing instruments a lot. Just a thought...

Verdict

Many of us are perfectly happy to plug into a PA and trust its EQ and monitors to produce the sound we want to hear. But if you want more control over your sound, an acoustic amp is definitely the way to go. Placement of any acoustic amp is always important to prevent feedback, but in this wedge format the Slope really could be a life-saver on stage as both a powerful amp and monitor in one. Be heard! [DB]

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Guitarist says: Reconfigured wedge version of AER's Compact 60/3: an essential stage buddy!