

HOTONE SKYLINE SERIES

ROUND-UP

£54.99

Thanks to tiny enclosures, tank-like build quality and expansive tones, the sky's the limit with these bijoux stompers

Words: Michael Brown

LIKE our amps, stompboxes just keep shrinking – and surely they can't get much smaller than the Skyline series from newcomer Hotone. Each of these petite pedals is hardly bigger than a couple of nine-volt batteries, but that doesn't mean the spec sheet is any shorter. These pocket powerhouses feature surprisingly weighty zinc alloy enclosures, with a metal rod to protect the knobs from your size 10s, while the switching is true bypass. You'll know when a pedal's on, though, because the big upper knob includes two super-bright LEDs, plus the two smaller white knobs are noctilucant – in other words, they glow in the dark for easy onstage knob-turning. But although the tiny size means that there's no battery power, these pedals are made for 'boards – there's even a hunk of Velcro in every box. The Skyline range is massive, so we've picked out the Eko delay, Trem tremolo, Grass overdrive and Chunk distortion to step on – but will their tones take us to heaven and back?



HOTONE CHUNK

£54.99

A big chunk o' rough

YOU'D expect a pretty hefty drive from a pedal called Chunk, and you won't be disappointed by this red-hot distortion. This stomper delivers massive British rock tones from halfway on the gain dial, while the hot button engages a little extra boost and midrange to cut through the mix. Lighter overdriven tones have a slightly fizzy decay, so the sounds aren't all that versatile, but the tightly focused tone control is perfect for dialling in scorching single-coil and high-gain humbucker tones. For classic Maiden leads and sleazy Slash riffs, the Chunk is what you want.

HOTONE EKO

£54.99

Digital does analogue

THE Eko is a digital delay voiced to emulate classic analogue echoes – that means maximum delay times are limited to 500ms, while the repeats are dark and gradually degrade in quality. Like a real analogue delay, longer delay times get a little noisy, but the moody repeats never detract from what you're actually playing. You can engage the modulation button to lend your echoes a splash of chorus-y warble for those psychedelic moments, then up the repeats for self-oscillation and arcade-like sound effects. From subtle ambience to wild noises, the Eko's got you covered.

**Total
Guitar
BEST BUY**



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Distortion, delay, overdrive and tremolo pedals

TYPE: Chunk: gain, volume, tone, hot button; Eko: time, echo, repeat, modulation button; Grass: gain, volume, voice, bright button; Trem: speed, depth, colour, hard switch

SOCKETS: Input, output, power

BYPASS: True bypass

POWER: 9V power supply only (not included)

CONTACT: MusicPsych
0207 607 6005
www.hotoneaudio.com

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

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

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

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

HOTONE

GRASS £54.99

Green, green Grass of tone

WITH an overdrive tone based on what some guitarists consider the holy grail of amp brands, Dumble, the Grass has some pretty big shoes to fill. Fortunately, its smooth dirt capably transports you into boutique overdrive territory. This is no transparent stomper, though; the Grass is hotter than you might expect, and higher gain levels can capably handle classic rock with a bridge humbucker. The voice control is well focused, too, allowing you to fine-tune the high-end to your liking, while the bright button adjusts for darker amps and guitars. Best of all, the Grass's punchy, midrange-focused tone only sounds better as it gets louder, making it an awesome gig-friendly overdrive.

HOTONE

TREM £54.99

Teensy Twin-olo

THE Fender Twin's optical tremolo circuit is one of the most sought-after tremolo sounds of all time, and Hotone's Trem is inspired by this classic effect. The default soft tremolo gives you slow waves to Spaghetti Western shimmer via the speed control, while the hard button engages a sharper chop for on-off helicopter slicing. Unlike a lot of similar effects, there's no volume drop with the Trem, although its EQ-tweaking colour knob isn't all that useful. Still, if you want to squeeze a tremolo onto an already packed 'board, this is the one to opt for.

