



Danelectro FAB pedals £19.99 each

With more mojo, style and flair than your average stompers, Dano's new trio are dare-devil drivers by Benji Bartlett

DANELECTRO FAB OVERDRIVE

PRICE: £19.99

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Overdrive effect pedal

CONTROLS: Level, tone, overdrive

CONNECTIONS: In, out (Amp), 9V power input

MIDI: No

POWER: 9V battery or optional DC adaptor

OPTIONS: None

RANGE OPTIONS:

Danelectro's pedal range is impressive. The Mini effects range includes the T-Bone distortion (£29) and the Pastrami overdrive, plus many other options

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FAB DISTORTION

As Overdrive except...

TYPE: Distortion effect pedal

CONTROLS: Level, tone, gain

FAB METAL

As Overdrive except...

TYPE: Metal distortion effect pedal

CONTROLS: Level, tone, distortion

Danelectro's pedal output has always been impressive. Whether it's the sheer cuteness of the mini pedal range or the genuinely impressive sounds of the Reel Echo tape delay emulator, it's rare that something born of the Dano camp fails to inspire. This latest trio of drive pedals that make up the FAB range aim to put boutique-style overdrive and distortion sounds at the feet of musicians whose shoes are more likely to be a pair of trainers than the gator-skinned, Cuban heeled boots of rock stardom. Clocking in at an astonishing £19.99 a piece, these plastic-cased pedals have jumped through a few cost-saving hoops to bring you fat tone without the high price tag. You can choose from three different gain structures, Overdrive, Distortion or the more extreme Metal, to suit your requirements.

The one-piece moulded plastic housing is cleverly designed to keep the component cost of these pedals at a minimum by allowing all the sockets for input, output and 9V power input to be mounted directly to the tiny PCB that fits snugly inside.

FAB by name, fab by nature: Danelectro's new range offers fantastic value



**Can a £20 pedal be capable of anything worth hearing?
Yes – a £20 pedal can knock your bloomin' socks off**



DANO FAB PEDALS	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

■ **WE LIKED** Fantastic sounds; simplicity; cool blue LEDs; price

■ **WE DISLIKED** Battery access – a flip-top cover would have been better

To gain access to the battery compartment you must first remove the rubber-coated metal bottom plate, which is held in place with a single screw that can be turned with the edge of a coin. Beneath the plate we can see a clever little arrangement incorporating a pivoted plastic framework that transfers your stomping action to the PCB's micro switch for function on/off. It's all very neat and tidy indeed.

The control layout is the same for each pedal with the overall level of the effect to the left, the tone control in the middle and the gain control on the right. The gain knob is named either Overdrive, Gain or Distortion depending on which particular FAB incarnation you happen to be treading on. And when you do tread on one, the FAB pedal will let you know you have done so with a groovy neon blue LED.

SOUNDS: Kicking off with the metallic grey FAB Overdrive, we weren't really expecting too much. Can a £20 pedal be capable of anything worth hearing? With our pride still causing indigestion after a large slice of humble pie we have to confess that – yes – a £20 pedal can knock your bloomin' socks off. The tone on offer here is fully developed and rich with the sort of singing overtones and ripe juicy drive that makes it impossible to put your guitar down. It covers hollow, chunky, honky and smooth gain with ease via a very usable range on the tone control.

The control layout is the same on each of the three pedals and a blue LED indicates operation




The FAB Distortion takes things up a gear and moves us away from the bluesy classic rock of the Overdrive and into Foo Fighters and QOTSA territory. With ample gain, ballsy, stack-like guts and tones ranging from AC/DC to the Manics, this is probably the most versatile of the trio.

Finally, the FAB Metal pedal takes us deep down into the depths of distortion, through forbidden gardens of gain and right up to Satan's doorknocker. If your bag is Pantera, Slayer, Black Label Society or basically anything that would make your parents cry, the FAB Metal does the lot. Filthy distortion with bags of thick, fat chunky tone is the order of the day here and, as the name implies, a lot of metal!

Verdict

The look and price of these pedals is very enticing before you even plug them in, but unless a pedal's got it going on in the sound department there'd be little point in it looking pretty, right? We were simply blown away with these three FAB pedals. The quality of distortion and overdrive tones on offer,

together with the overall simplicity of the design, make for a wonderfully appealing package. With the controls out of harm's way round back, they're solid enough to be included on your pedal board and, with three distinct characters to choose from, there's a FAB drive pedal here to suit every player. At this price you could even buy all three and guarantee that you'll have a drive sound for every occasion. If Danelectro introduces other pedals in this price range that sound this good it might make the whole process of sonic exploration a lot less painful on the pocket. For the time being though, we're very happy these FAB pedals live up to their name: they are indeed absolutely fabulous. 

The rivals

DigiTech Distortion	
Series	£39-£49
Marshall Jackhammer	
JH-1	£45
BOSS DS-1	£39

You'll have to search pretty damn hard to find any pedals as cheap as these Danos, but in terms of choice and tone then DigiTech's new batch of distortion pedals fit the bill as an alternative. There are five pedals to choose from ranging from the Hot Head to Grunge, Bad Monkey, Screamin' Blues and Death Metal. As well as sounding impressive, each pedal also features a speaker-emulated line-out for recording. Marshall's Jackhammer JH-1 is a bomb-proof gain factory with a parametric mid-range with dual concentric pots for tone shaping and both overdrive and distortion modes. Last, but by no means least, BOSS's DS-1 distortion is the industry standard classic distortion as used by Steve Vai

Danelectro FAB Overdrive

Guitarist RATING ★★★★★

Danelectro FAB Distortion

Guitarist RATING ★★★★★

Danelectro FAB Metal

Guitarist RATING ★★★★★