

T-REX ROOM-MATE & MUDHONEY II £340 & £215
EFFECTS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NEIL GODWIN



T-Rex Room-Mate & Mudhoney II £340 & £215

The Danish firm introduces two new pedals with rather familiar names... *by Trevor Curwen*

What we have here will be familiar to anyone with experience of the classy range of pedals made by Danish effects firm T-Rex. However, while the names may be the same, these are both new pedals. The Room-Mate is an updated version of the valve-driven reverb pedal that has been around for a few years, while the Mudhoney II takes the basic premise of the original Mudhoney distortion pedal and doubles it to put two distortion effects into a single box.

Room-Mate

Combining old and new technology with its valve and digitally generated reverb, the latest incarnation of the Room-Mate offers four different reverb types chosen with a mode knob. New to this revised model is a spring reverb emulation, replacing the emulated plate reverb in previous incarnations. You also get room reverb, hall reverb and a setting called LFO that dishes up reverb and chorus together.

Also new is a decay knob, which adjusts the length of the reverb tail in all four modes. The other two large knobs on the front panel are the mix knob, which sets the ratio of effected to dry sound, and the level knob, which controls the overall output level. The input to the pedal is controlled by a much smaller knob, a set-and-forget affair that you can adjust to your particular signal chain. As a prompt to set the level correctly, the pedal's green on/off LED will turn red if the input signal is too high and likely to cause distortion. Another small knob offers reduction of the high frequencies in the reverb tail.

With a valve to be powered, the Room-Mate needs a 12V DC supply and comes with a suitable adaptor. As well as the standard single input and output the pedal also offers mono in/stereo out operation.

Sounds

The Room-Mate serves up smooth reverb that wraps

naturally around your sound, whether you just dial in a touch of ambience with the mix knob or turn it up for a more obvious effect – juxtaposing that knob's position with that of the decay knob allows plenty of leeway in just how 'reverbed' you want your sound to be. A crucial

factor in any reverb is how the top-end dies off and the hiccup control plays its part here in creating a smoother, less splashy sound, although it is subtle and perhaps doesn't go far enough. The room and hall modes can create the sense of space their name suggests

The Room-Mate serves up smooth reverb that wraps around your sound



The Room-Mate's green on/off LED will turn red if the input signal is too high

The rivals

Room-Mate

The **ToneBug Reverb** (£145) offers T-Rex quality at a more affordable price. **Electro-Harmonix** offers several reverbs – the **Cathedral** (£139) being the newest. **Line 6's ToneCore** range utilises digital modelling and offers the **Verbzilla** (£119), while if you fancy genuine spring reverb in a pedal you may wish to check out the **Vanamps Solemate** (£279).

Mudhoney II

There are several dual distortion pedals around. The **Blackstar HT Dual** (£159) offers two channels of valve-powered distortion. **Radial** has the **Bones** series (£177) of solid-state pedals: the Hollywood, London and Texas. **Foxrox** takes a flexible approach with the **ZIM** (\$259) – you can order different circuit cards for each channel. With its 'more' gain boost switch, the **Vox Satchurator** (£112) is also a contender.

(although high decay settings on the hall can sound weird), while the LFO mode is a gorgeous hybrid of chorus and reverb that sounds really lush, especially in stereo.

What about the new spring mode? Well, it does a pretty good job of emulating the real thing – in a side-by-side test with a couple of Fender amp reverbs and a Peavey Valverb rackmount valve-powered spring reverb unit, the T-Rex stands up well and is as close as we've heard thus far from a digital stompbox.

Mudhoney II

The Mudhoney II offers two identical distortion channels each with their own footswitch and set of controls consisting of large level and gain knobs, a smaller tone knob that lights up when the channel is active and a two-way normal/boost switch that selects either moderate or high-gain for the channel. The idea with the Mudhoney II is that you can set up two different distortion sounds to be called up individually at will. You can't use both channels together – if channel one is active and you press the channel two footswitch, channel two will be selected and channel one turned off and vice versa.

Power comes from a 9V battery or a power adaptor. The battery compartment, with its



The Mudhoney II allows you to set two distortion sounds to be used at will

The Mudhoney II's real strength lies in smooth, valve-like overdrive

hinged plastic cover located on the bass of a pedal, is solidly secure but can be quickly levered open with the corner of a guitar pick should your battery die onstage.

Sounds

The number of controls on the Mudhoney II suggests a huge amount of versatility lurking within and, plugged-in, the pedal doesn't disappoint with the two channels offering various methods of use in a live setting. With gain at minimum, boost selected and level up, the Mudhoney II offers a small amount of clean boost that some may find useful but the pedal's real strength lies in smooth, valve-like overdrive. With boost off, the gain knob runs from mild break-up and crunch, through all shades of natural overdrive with good note definition and excellent sensitivity to playing dynamics – dig in harder and you'll get more dirt. It's the sound of your amp, but more distorted, and if you set different amounts of gain for each channel you can effectively turn a single-channel amp into a three-channel one. If you'd like more top to cut through, the tone control covers just the right frequency range for that extra edge. Whereas, without the boost engaged you're in similar territory to a Tube Screamer, bring it in and the overdrive gets thicker moving towards harmonically rich, full-on classic distortion, confirming the Mudhoney II's versatility.

Verdict

Reverb pedals may not be seen as an essential item for some, but they're extremely useful, not just for creating specific effects but also for tailoring the sound to suit the acoustics of a particular playing space, and the Room-Mate is probably as good sounding and versatile a pedal as you'd find for the role. What's more, with its new spring emulation, players who regularly utilise the built-in spring reverb in their Fender amp will find it a pragmatic substitute for those occasions where, through space restrictions or the like, they are faced with the prospect of playing through an unfamiliar non-reverb amp at a gig.

Putting two distortions in a single box is a great idea that adds versatility to a pedalboard without increasing the number of audio and power cables needed. The concept works best if such a pedal can provide two scenarios – the first being to provide exactly the same tone but with two different amounts of gain, the second being to provide two sounds that are sufficiently different from each other to provide real contrast within a song or a set. The Mudhoney II, with its practical array of controls, can do both. Overdrive? Distortion? Call it what you will but the Mudhoney's capacity for dialling in the dirt will not disappoint.

So then, two excellent pedals with loads to recommend them, albeit with a high price tag. **G**

Guitarist
CHOICE



T-Rex Mudhoney II

PRICE: £215

TYPE: Twin-channel distortion pedal

ORIGIN: Denmark

CONNECTIONS: Standard jack input and output

CONTROLS: Level 1, level 2, gain 1, gain 2, tone 1, tone 2, normal/boost switch 1, normal/boost switch 2

POWER: 9V battery, 9V DC power

BATTERY LIFE: 6-9 hours

DIMENSIONS: 120 (d) x 100 (w) x 55mm (h)

Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



T-Rex Room-Mate

PRICE: £340

ORIGIN: Denmark

TYPE: Valve-driven reverb pedal

CONNECTIONS: Standard jack input and jack outputs (L and R)

CONTROLS: Mix, level, decay, hi cut, gain, four-way mode switch

MODES: Spring, room, hall, LFO

POWER: 12V DC power from supplied adaptor

DIMENSIONS: 120 (d) x 100 (w) x 55mm (h)

Westside Distribution

0141 248 4812

www.t-rex-effects.com

Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

The Bottom Line

T-Rex Room-Mate

We like: Smooth sound; plenty of control; realistic spring emulation

We dislike: We would have liked a plate reverb in there too; it's pricey

Guitarist says: A classy reverb for your rig in nicely compact package

T-Rex Mudhoney II

We like: Two sounds in one pedal; loads of variation for each channel

We dislike: Again, pricey
Guitarist says: This is effectively two overdrive/distortion pedals for the price of one pedalboard slot