

Quicktest



Line 6 AMPLIFi TT £149

Latest version of the combined amp modeller and music player

CONTACT: Line 6 PHONE: 01788 566566 WEB: www.line6.com

We've already taken a look at Line 6's AMPLIFi in combo and floor-pedal forms, but now there's a desktop version, TT. The AMPLIFi is designed to aid you when you're practising guitar by not only providing a wide range of modelled amp and effects sounds, but streaming music to play along with over Bluetooth.

The TT has the look of a mini amp head with front panel knobs for drive, bass, mid, treble and reverb. You can use it with headphones, or use the rear jack outputs to connect it to your stereo system or powered monitors. Alternatively, an amp output sends out the processed guitar sound optimised for a guitar amp, operating in conjunction with streamed

audio sent through the stereo outputs. Furthermore, there's an optical output to connect to a home theatre setup and the TT also functions as a two in/two out USB audio interface for computer recording.

In Use

By itself, the TT gives you front panel access to four presets in its internal memory. To use it to its full potential, though, you need to the free AMPLIFi Remote app for iOS and Android (certain devices, version 3.2 or later). This gives access to many more presets (100 onboard and an unlimited number in the cloud) each with up to eight simultaneous effects. There are plenty of good presets that encourage you to play, but

creating your own is dead easy from an iPad touchscreen, making use of the available 70-plus amps, 100-plus effects and 20-plus speaker cabinets, all with plenty of tweakability.

You can stream any song from your music library and blend your guitar with the music using a front panel mix knob. Half-speed playback is available and dialling in a guitar tone to match any song is made easy by a tone-matching facility that utilises a wifi connection to automatically find a relevant tone. You can also search for tones by song title, guitarist or band – there's a growing amount on the cloud and you can submit your own programmed tones for others to download and use.

Verdict

Of the three AMPLIFi form factors, this is the most affordable and perhaps the most practical, in that it can be moved around easily and is compact enough to sit discreetly on a shelf or tabletop, allowing practice in any room where you can plug in its power adaptor. With comprehensive connectivity, music playback and a range of sounds to suit many music types, the TT is one very useful gadget to have around the house. **[TC]**

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Guitarist says: A feature-packed practice and recording tool that's compact enough to fit neatly into the home environment

Noiise FLUX:FX by Adrian Belew \$19.99

Touchscreen audio manipulation app

CONTACT: Noiise PHONE: N/A WEB: flux.noii.se

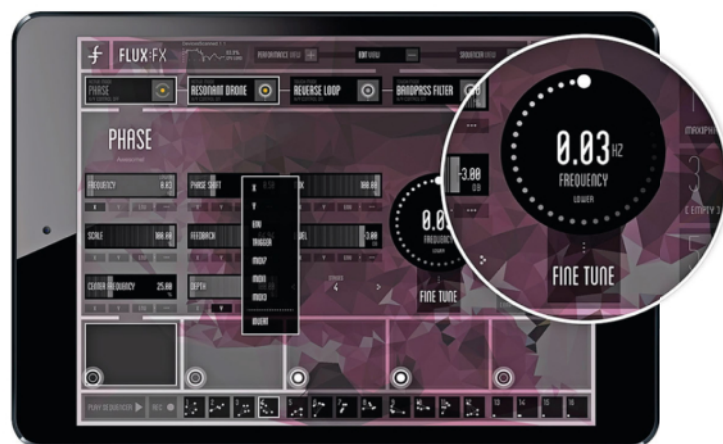
FLUX:FX is an effects app for iPad that may be of special interest to guitarists because it was partly designed by quirky guitar mangler Adrian Belew – he of King Crimson, Talking Heads, David Bowie and Frank Zappa, to name but a few.

The basic premise of **FLUX:FX** is that you feed your live or recorded signal through a bunch of effects that you can ‘play’ in real-time by using your finger on an iPad screen, primarily by swiping, dragging or tapping on an XY pad, although there’s also a sequencer that can record the patterns of modulation, for consistent automated effects.

Sounds

There are 31 effects types onboard (distortion, fuzz, flange, tape echo, reverb, and so on) all with a massive range of finely-tweakable parameters – up to five can be placed in any order in a signal chain.

Whether you just plug your guitar into the app and use it on its own, incorporate it as extra effects in a favourite amp sim, or use it in your DAW, an unbelievable amount of sonic sorcery can be carried out. A huge range of static sounds are available anyway, but getting a spare finger onto the XY pad lets you really mash things up, such as sliding from tasteful



ambience to screaming mayhem in an instant.

Verdict

It’s not for traditionalists, but if you want to push the sonic envelope, throw your audience a curveball or animate your recordings, **FLUX:FX** is \$20 well spent. **[TC]**

Guitarist CHOICE

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Guitarist says: Audio sculpture tool for experimental guitarists and recordists

DigiTech Mosaic £109

12-string sounds with no extra strings

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

If it plays an integral part in your original music, or if you play in a covers band that does a lot of Byrds and Beatles, taking a 12-string guitar to gigs is pretty much a necessity. However, a different approach is needed for players who favour a little 12-string texture alongside six-string, and since toting a double-neck EDS-1275 isn’t for everyone, it’s usually down to effects to approximate the sound. DigiTech might just have made that effects choice a no-brainer with this new Mosaic 12-string pedal.

Sounds

The Mosaic uses polyphonic pitch shifting and intelligent doubling algorithms to create its sound. With processing

applied to all strings (rather than just adding an octave to the lower four and doubling up the B and E, like on a physical 12-string), the top two strings, although sounding doubled, do have a certain amount of higher octave there, but that’s no problem. Overall, the jingle-jangle flavour of a 12-string is here in spades, instantly delivered on both single notes and chords with excellent tracking. The level knob adds these extra notes to your dry sound, while a tone knob adjusts their high frequency content. Between the two, there’s plenty of variation from a subtle Nashville tuning ‘ghosting’, through that typical chime and sparkle, to brash and in your face.



VIDEO DEMO

<http://bit.ly/guitarist392>

Guitarist CHOICE

Verdict

Roger McGuinn won’t leave his Ricky at home for this, but the Mosaic represents a great way to get 12-string sounds into a set without swapping guitars. **[TC]**

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Guitarist says: A pedal that some players will have been praying for, providing instant 12-string flavour with no faffing

J Rockett Archer £149

A strong scent of Centaur, but is it too Klose for comfort?

CONTACT: Zoom UK PHONE: 08432 080999 WEB: www.rockettpedals.com



Sort of looks familiar, doesn't it? If you've ever lusted after the fabled Klon Centaur Professional Overdrive you'll no doubt recognise the vibe of this stompbox immediately.

J Rockett Audio Designs is the company that worked with Klon designer Bill Finnegan on the first versions of the post-Centaur KTR model. In short, Finnegan resolutely won't build any more Centaurs, so Rockett Pedals has gone ahead with this, the Archer overdrive/boost.

One immediate surprise with the Archer is how small it is. One of the great downsides of the Centaur – apart from the

comedy used prices – is that no matter how cool it looks, it does take up a lot of pedalboard space. Not so here: slightly smaller than a Boss compact pedal and secured in a solid steel box, the Archer fully befits its Tour Series status in that it's super practical and, by looks of things, seems virtually bombproof. Ins and outs are all on the front edge including the Boss-style nine-volt barrel jack; if you want to change the battery, you have to undo four very easy-to-lose screws.

The internals aren't exactly the same as the Klon Centaur but the two-op amp/

germanium clipping diodes/voltage charge pump/buffered circuit format is present and correct. There's no physical dual-ganged gain pot, while the components are surface-mounted on a custom circuit board, including the jacks, pots and mains adaptor socket. The switch sits on its own separate board – easy to replace if it goes on the fritz.

External controls are exactly the same as those on the Klon Centaur: output, treble and gain that in their various settings give you everything from a clean boost to a mid-gained overdrive, to whit...

Sounds

If you head over to the *Guitarist* YouTube channel you'll be able to watch a slightly tongue-in-cheek comparison of the Archer and a Klon Centaur (as part of the Tones For Tache Series). The bottom line is that they sound very similar indeed – perhaps the Archer is a tad more throaty/thicker than the Centaur and that our particular Centaur does aggressive, biting treble slightly 'better'. We're really talking a gnat's whisker of difference, however. They're very, very similar.

The bigger story is that as a clean boost into a decent valve amp, a booster for other pedals or a low-gain overdrive, the Archer offers a remarkably amp-like experience that adds width and fatness to any kind of guitar. While there's a definite midrange kick, it's nothing like an Ibanez Tube Screamer in either EQ or compression. Quite the opposite in fact, as it seems to open everything out in terms of dynamics. There's also definite bite, but not the edge (nor gain) you'd expect of a Fulltone OCD, for example.

Verdict

The Archer is a great-sounding overdrive-boost that's simple, highly practical and solidly built. There's a slight bad taste that it's essentially a clone of a previous design, but given that the originals aren't made any more and we players are crying out for them, perhaps JRAD deserves a break. There are other Klon clones out there (look out for a coming feature), but none with such a direct connection to the original. [MT]

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Guitarist says: Want the Klon sound but don't want another mortgage? This is for you





<http://bit.ly/guitarist392>



Effectrode Mercury Fuzz & PC-2A Tube Compressor £235 & £249

Valve-driven fuzzbox and an improved compressor

CONTACT: Effectrode PHONE: 01782 372210 WEB: www.effectrode.com

Effectrode specialises in valve-driven stompboxes and has just released the Mercury Fuzz, a limited-edition pedal based around NOS components – a Philips subminiature valve and vintage germanium diodes. The Mercury follows on from the now sold out Helios valve-driven fuzz, but uses a different valve, one that Effectrode designer Phil Taylor says delivers “fatter, more robust sounding fuzz”.

We took a look at the PC-2A compressor as part of a What You Need To Know About feature last year, but since then the pedal has been revised. In effect, it's been fine-tuned for extra performance partly in line with some suggestions from David Gilmour's guitar tech. This valve-driven optical compressor pedal has always been a solid design, well-respected and used by many pros, but now it uses a different (higher-spec'd) NOS Philips

valve and a faster photocell for a quicker attack time and has an added 'knee' trimpot in the side-chain, allowing control of the smoothness of the onset of compression.

Sounds

Powered from a supplied 12-volt adaptor, the Mercury sports standard volume and fuzz knobs. At lower levels of the fuzz knob there are some tasty overdrive sounds, but whack it up and you get a lovely fat creamy fuzz sound with plenty of sustain and harmonic content. The sound is naturally vibrant but there's an internal Bright trimpot to roll off or accentuate top end above 2kHz, offering subtle shading. For a different fuzz voice, there's an external Heat switch that allows the second valve stage to be operated at a reduced plate voltage (known as starving the valve). Flick this switch and the fuzz gets harder, tighter and less

squashy, the actual sound depending on how low a plate voltage you dial in with a second internal trim pot, offering a range of alternatives that add to the pedal's versatility.

What you get with the new PC-2A is more transparency – and it keeps your signal level consistent in the most natural way and can thicken up the sound, adding extra punch and sustain. A limit/compress switch switches between light smoothing and a more intense squashy compression, dialled in by the peak reduction knob, while the gain knob sets the output level. Overall, you get smooth studio-style compression that's a pleasure to play through.

Both pedals have excellent silent switching with no thumps or pops, but the necessary circuitry does cause a momentary volume dip, which may require some careful synchronisation for those who

wish to kick them in for solos. However, seeing as these are the sort of tone-building pedals you'd keep on all the time, that may well be an irrelevance.

Verdict

A classy pair. Residing in the upper echelons of the stompbox hierarchy, Effectrode pedals cost a fair whack but if you are willing to spend over £200 on a pedal, we reckon that the price tag is justified – you're not only getting hand-built pedals, ruggedly put together for heavy road use, but you're also getting original valve-driven designs that aren't mere clones. [TC]

GUITARIST RATING

Effectrode	
Mercury Fuzz	★★★★★
Effectrode PC-2A	
Tube Compressor	★★★★★

Guitarist says: Quality valve-driven pedals that could become an essential part of your tone



Mooer Reecho Pro & ShimVerb Pro £115 & £109

The Chinese pedal giant doubles up

CONTACT: Strings And Things **PHONE:** 01273 440442 **WEB:** www.mooeraudio.co.uk

Although best known for cheap and cheerful mini pedals loaded with familiar circuits, Mooer has been quietly beaver away on a series of larger, feature-heavy units. These twin-footswitch stereo stompboxes have been showcased at numerous trade shows, but the first pair to hit the UK are the Reecho Pro delay and ShimVerb Pro reverb, which boast a number of features that belie their reasonable price points.

The Reecho Pro is Mooer's answer to the likes of the Boss DD-20, offering six delay types (digital, analogue, echo, tape echo, tube echo and galaxy) and three effects (mod, dynamic and reverse), which can be assigned to any of the delay types. You also get a separate ping-pong button for use in stereo, low and high cut filters, plus a built-in looper.

As the name suggests, the ShimVerb Pro focuses on shimmer reverbs, where the 'verb trails are pitch-shifted to create a synth-like halo behind every note. It packs a choice of five intervals (+3, +4, +5, +7 and +9), which can be combined with any of the five reverb types (room, hall, church, plate and spring), while a separate button activates the octave-up shift.

The pitch-shifting is activated via a separate footswitch, and, like the Reecho Pro, you can save a preset by holding both switches together. Both pedals operate from a nine-volt power supply only, include stereo inputs and outputs, and offer a choice of true or buffered bypass using the trails switch.

Sounds

Not only does the Reecho Pro offer impressive emulations of classic delay effects, but also

incredible versatility; the ability to apply effects to any delay type, as well as filter the repeats, gives you a lot to toy with. There's no adjustment on the modulation, but its wash of chorus is well voiced, while the tape sounds compete capably with more expensive units. Galaxy, meanwhile, adds a volume swell to repeats, removing your pick attack for a string-type sound. However, the Reecho adds a slight hiss to your signal – a shame given the tonal integrity of the repeats.

The ShimVerb is more of an acquired taste. Its pitch-shifting isn't the most convincing we've heard from a reverb in this price bracket – DigiTech and Zoom do it better – but its versatility does afford some creative harmonies that you'll struggle to replicate on anything other than seriously high-end units. And while the non-shimmer

settings are perfectly usable, the reverb types don't sound too distinct from one another, with the decay length providing the only clear differentiator.

Verdict

With the Reecho Pro and ShimVerb Pro, Mooer has presented a pair of well-spec'd pedals packing some genuinely good ideas at an impressive price point. And while a couple of niggles prevent them from being essential additions to your 'board, these Pros prove that there's more to Mooer than mini pedals. **[MB]**

GUITARIST RATING

Mooer Reecho Pro ★★★★★
Mooer ShimVerb Pro ★★★★★

Guitarist says: A pair of feature-heavy, twin-footswitch boxes that don't quite deliver on sound, but are big on ideas