

DIGITECH POLARA £109

The Polara express to great atmosphere

BEING part of American behemoth Harman Professional has its advantages: just ask DigiTech, which has the license to use sister company Lexicon's studio-grade reverbs. The latest in its line is the Polara, which bridges the gap between the discontinued HardWire RV-7 and the HardWire Supernatural, by serving up the usual reverb suspects alongside ambient settings.

With no pre-delay control, DigiTech has kept the Polara simple: select a mode, dial in the liveliness and decay, and you're away. The spring setting is solid if a little overexcitable, while the hall and room sounds capture those spaces with a pristine sheen. Plate

is a dream for Jeff Buckley-style arpeggiated chords, while fans of My Bloody Valentine will swoon over the reverse mode. The atmospheric settings are pleasant, but won't usurp the Supernatural as king of ambient 'verbs: the modulated 'verb's flanger and halo's shimmer are surprisingly subtle – and although cranking the liveliness makes the effects more prominent, we'd like a more extreme synth pad-like sound.

There's lots of competition in the compact reverb market, but with seven diverse types, the Polara more than holds its own. While ambient fans may be left wanting, anyone after a versatile compact reverb won't be disappointed.

Michael Brown



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Reverb pedal

CONTROLS: Level, type, liveliness, decay, tails switch

SOCKETS: 2x input, 2x output, power

BYPASS: True-bypass

POWER: 9V power supply only (not included)

CONTACT: Sound Technology
01462 480000 www.digitech.com

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

WAY HUGE SAUCY BOX OVERDRIVE £112

The special Sauce of blended drive

ON occasion, we have extolled the benefits of overdrives with clean blend controls; adding a hint of clean to a driven tone brings a clarity that you won't get from your common-or-garden dirt box. Now, legendary pedal designer George Tripps and his Way Huge boffins reckon they've nailed the secret recipe behind blended sounds.

Rather than a standalone clean blend control, as you'd find on, say, the Voodoo Lab Sparkle Drive or T-Rex Diva Drive, the Saucy Box offers what its designers deem the 'optimum ratio' of its discrete clean and overdrive signals, which changes when you twist the drive knob. Combined with the sensible tone control range, it makes getting great tones easy as pie.

The Saucy Box's gain has a spongy, saturated feel, like an old

valve combo pushed to the brim. And that's where the clean blend plays its part: while it never makes its presence overtly obvious, it's always there, preventing even the highest drives from sounding muffled or indistinct. The tone knob takes you from syrupy Bonamassa-style leads to Plexi-style bite, while the rich harmonic overtones that accompany sustained notes will have you hitting open chords over and over.

While it's one for vintage overdrive nuts rather than gain fiends, the Saucy Box has one of the most amp-like feels we've heard from a stompbox in recent years; it feels like a drive where you can dig in and feel the pedal bite back – and for us, that means Way Huge got the blend just right.

Michael Brown



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Overdrive pedal

CONTROLS: Volume, tone, drive

SOCKETS: Input, output, power

BYPASS: True-bypass

POWER: 9V battery, 9V power supply (not included)

CONTACT: Westside Distribution
01412 484812 www.jimdonlop.com

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