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1 CATALINBREAD DIRTY LITTLE SECRET £137

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Drive pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Treble, Middle, Bass, Master, Preamp, internal mode switch, internal Presence trimpot, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V-18V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 65 (w) x 112 (d) x 47mm (h)

Andertons

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One of the Portland, Oregon-based company's most popular pedals, the Dirty Little Secret is now in its third incarnation and delivers Marshall-like tone, whatever amp you're using. An internal switch sets the pedal to either Super Lead or Super Bass mode: the first, based on a later 'plexi' model having more gain and a different tonestack with more upper mids; the second more akin to early Marshalls or the Bassman it was based on, with less prominent midrange and lower gain.

Internally, a presence pot dials in the top end to suit your rig. The tone knobs offer the sort of organic control you'd get with an amp and both modes sound excellent, providing a range of drive with familiar British tonal signature. The Super Lead mode offers enough gain to take you into JCM territory, while the Super Bass takes a fuzz pedal really well for some classic 60s rock sounds. **[TC]**

VERDICT A versatile tone-building dirt box with two distinct M-style flavours

8/10

2 CATALINBREAD TOPANGA £159

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Spring reverb pedal

FEATURES: Switchable true or buffered bypass, secret modulation mode, full wet capability

CONTROLS: Dwell, Tone, Mix, Volume, internal gain pot, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V-18V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 65 (w) x 112 (d) x 47mm (h)

From the early 1960s, Fender's 6G15 outboard spring reverb unit set the standard for the effect, in particular defining the sound of surf guitar, and is still available if you have £800-plus and don't mind the large enclosure on top of your amp. For a cheaper, more streamlined rig, Catalinbread has released the Topanga, which is designed to replicate those 6G15 sounds with similar Dwell, Tone and Mix knobs plus a volume knob that can add a flavour of the original's valves to boost your amp's front end. There's also a modulation mode, awkwardly entered by powering up with the tone knob at minimum, plus full wet capability at the extreme of the Mix knob.

You can get Fender amp-style reverb from this, but it's the channelling of the crazed splashiness and presence boost of an outboard spring tank that make this stand out among reverb pedals. **[TC]**



VERDICT Many pedals simulate spring reverb, but few get this close to a Fender outboard unit

9/10

3 CATALINBREAD PAREIDOLIA £153

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Harmonic tremolo pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Depth, Speed, Volume, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V-18V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 65 (w) x 112 (d) x 47mm (h)

Over the years, Fender had three basic designs of tremolo circuit built into its amps and the most aurally intriguing is the 'harmonic tremolo' (based around a dual-band filtering effect) once briefly found in early-60s 'Brownface' amps. The Pareidolia offers a re-creation, delivered via standard tremolo depth and rate knobs, coupled with a volume knob that hits unity gain at about midway, so can give your amp a nice kick (turn the depth down and you can use it as a pure boost). An LED pulses in time with rate and intensifies its colour change as depth is increased.

Sound-wise, what you get is tremolo-based but it's not just amplitude (volume) modulation that's going on here – there are elements of both phasing and pitch modulation, somewhat akin to a Uni-Vibe or rotary speaker, casting a gorgeous otherworldly haze over the tremolo. **[TC]**

VERDICT Vintage tremolo with a distinctive voice revisited. And, yes, you'll be mesmerised by it

8/10

4 CATALINBREAD ECHOREC £185

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Multitap echo pedal

FEATURES: Switchable true or buffered bypass

CONTROLS: Swell, Tone, Delay Time, Mix, Program Select switch, internal gain trimpot, internal modulation trimpot, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V-18V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 65 (w) x 112 (d) x 47mm (h)

This Catalinbread pedal is more niche than the recent Hall And Collins Signature Echo, and concentrates on the sound of that most revered of drum echos, the Binson Echorec, as used by David Gilmour, among others. The pedal features a 12-mode selector dial that offers different combinations of the four heads to produce the rhythmic patterns of the original plus a few extra, offering them with a wider range of delay times (a max of 1,000ms compared to the original's 300ms). There's an excellent tone control for darkening/fattening or brightening/thinning the repeats, while an internal modulation trim-pot can add a bit of wobble if desired, simulating an ageing drum. There's also an internal gain pot that has a secret full-on fuzz setting at its extreme! Overall, you're getting a pretty close approximation to the sound of a real Echorec but with extra capability. **[TC]**

VERDICT A viable substitute for the real thing at a fraction of the size and price, with no maintenance

8/10