

CATALINBREAD ROUND-UP £137-£185

Meet the American boutique stompbox guru with a unique approach to tone that's bringing back cult sounds from the 60s and 70s

OPERATING out of Portland,

Oregon, Catalinbread produce a range of boutique effects pedals that are a step above the norm. Where other manufacturers would develop and build a vibrato unit, Catalinbread's builders make their lives a little more complicated by trying to replicate the distinctive sound of the circuitry in early 60s 'Brownface' Fender amplifiers. The result is the brilliantly named Pareidolia Harmonic Mesmerizer. Joining that pedal in our round-up are the Topanga Spring Reverb, the Dirty Little Secret Brit valve head simulator and the incredible sounding Echorec, which repeats the sound of a cherished 60s echo machine. Each unit's gubbins are squeezed into the same-sized regular stompbox casing, and can run on nine-volt to 18-volt mains adaptors. The higher the voltage, the greater the headroom, says Catalinbread. The Dirty Little Secret and Pareidolia can also subsist on a nine-volt batteries.



CATALINBREAD ECHOREC £185

Delays expected, in a good way

THE ECHOREC is based on the classic Binson echo unit of the same name, which saw service with Hank Marvin and David Gilmour. Catalinbread's ultra-compact version boosts the original unit's 300ms delay time to 1,000ms and is spookily accurate, with everything from a room reverb to multi-head UFO impressions. Run it in 'trails mode', via an internal switch, and the last note fades out naturally even after you've turned it off.

CATALINBREAD DIRTY LITTLE SECRET £137

The stack-in-a-box

WE'LL LET you in on the secret. There's a little switch on the inside of this pedal that selects between one of two modes: Super Lead and Super Bass. That's right, the Dirty Little Secret mimics the tone of a pair of classic British heads. Super Lead offers more gain for 70s rock fun and games while Super Bass nails the 60s era with less overdrive. Tonally, this is as good as stompboxes get. Our only niggle is you have to unscrew the backplate to get to the mode switch.



Total Guitar
BEST BUY

CATALINBREAD TOPANGA SPRING REVERB £159

Surf's up for reverb junkies

THE HEIGHT of reverb'd cool was reached during the surf music boom of the 1960s. The Topanga recreates the sound of the Fender 6G15, the greatest outboard reverb unit of all time and every surf guitarist's dream. Turn up the Dwell control, smack your strings, and there's an explosion of reverb, like rattling the springs in one of the old Fender units. It's uncanny how authentic it sounds. We also love the Mix control: wide open, you get a wet, ghostly tone that sounds like your guitar is miles away. We often dismiss reverb as something we have on our amplifiers; this pedal will turn that nonchalance into an obsession.

CATALINBREAD PAREIDOLIA HARMONIC MESMERIZER £153

One-of-a-kind vibrato

'HARMONIC MESMERIZER' sounds like a weapon Dr Evil developed, and its origins also date back to the swinging 60s. Based on the distinctive vibrato circuitry installed in the 'brownface' Fender amplifiers of the time, this fantastic pedal delivers aficionado-slaking levels of authentic wobble. The unit's pilot light flickers to match the rate of the effect, and the range takes you from a slow pulse to a rapid throb. There hasn't been a vibrato unit that sounds quite like it since, well, Austin Powers' day.

It's uncanny
how authentic
the Topanga sounds

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Delay, overdrive, reverb and vibrato pedals

INTERNAL SWITCHES:

Echorec: Buffer;

Dirty Little Secret: Bass

Topanga Spring Reverb:

True bypass/buffered

BYPASS: True bypass

POWER: Dirty Little

Secret & Pareidolia:

9V battery or mains

adaptor; Echorec &

Topanga: adaptor only

(not supplied)

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CATALINBREAD ECHOREC

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

CATALINBREAD DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

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

CATALINBREAD TOPANGA SPRING REVERB

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

CATALINBREAD PAREIDOLIA HARMONIC MESMERIZER

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

