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1 RADIAL ENGINEERING TONEBONE REGENCY £163

ORIGIN: Canada

TYPE: Pre-drive and booster pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Gain, Level, Tone,

Drive, Low-Mid switch, Boost

footswitch, Drive footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output, standard send, standard return

POWER: 9V adaptor (not supplied) 60mA

DIMENSIONS: 107 (w) x 96 (d) x 49mm (h)

Polar Audio

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www.tonebone.com

Radial Engineering's Tonebone pedals are engineered to take hard stage use with 14-gauge steel casings protecting their military-grade circuit boards. The Regency is a pedal designed to push amps harder courtesy of two independently footswitchable sections that can be used separately or together. One section houses the Pre-Drive circuit, not unlike a standard overdrive pedal with Level and Drive knobs plus tonal options, while the second section is a straight-up clean boost that can deliver up to 23dB extra and sports a send/return loop so you can add in one or more extra pedals that will also come in when you hit the boost.

The Pre-Drive has a three-position Low-Mid switch to set a low-end that best matches your amp, and a Tone knob that subtly brightens or darkens,

but its main feature is the various levels of gritty boost and drive you can achieve by juxtaposition of the Level and Drive knobs. Used with a clean amp, this can give you that extra dirty channel, but if you already have a dirty or full-on high-gain amp, there's a lot of nuanced emphasis that you can feed into the front-end of your amp to add extra harmonics and sustain, pushing things further. Add in the Boost section and you'll get another level of that.

The Boost section by itself has as much as you'll ever need to drive a valve amp harder. With our clean-set small wattage Fender, we hear a nice shift into edgier realms without too much travel on the Gain knob, while at max our amp was singing

with natural overdrive. Putting a delay pedal in the send/return loop and setting the right amount of extra gain can give you just what you need to kick in for playing leads. Also, the fact that there is no shift in the sound with the Gain knob set to zero gives the boost section a secondary function as a remote switcher if you don't require any boost. With the Regency situated at the front of your 'board, you can take advantage of the send/return loop to switch a larger unit – such as a tape delay or rackmount processor that's sitting next to your amp. This is also useful for pedals that are situated at the back of your pedalboard where it's difficult to access their own footswitches. **[TC]**

VERDICT A very practical pedal that can fulfil a number of functions, not least giving you three instantly accessible levels of drive

9/10



2 RADIAL ENGINEERING TONEBONE CLASSIC V9 £163

ORIGIN: Canada

TYPE: Overdrive/distortion pedal

FEATURES: Buffered bypass

CONTROLS: Level, High, Low,

Drive, High switch, Mid switch,

Range switch, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V adaptor (not supplied) 60mA

DIMENSIONS: 107 (w) x 96 (d) x 49mm (h)

Tonebone's original Classic was a valve-driven distortion pedal used by Eric Johnson, among others, but its larger footprint and the 15-volt power needed to drive the valve meant that it got a bit out of kilter with recent stompbox trends. This new V9 incarnation is said to offer the same sound via FET and IC circuitry in a smaller, more pedalboard-friendly format that can run from a standard nine-volt supply. We get standard distortion pedal Level and Drive knobs, but there's also post-gain EQ consisting of High and Low knobs, plus two three-way switches to set up the sound – one that either rolls off or boosts the top-end to suit the type of amp you are using, and the other providing two levels (+7dB and +12dB) of midrange boost at 500Hz.

The first task with this pedal is to set the third three-way

switch, which sets the gain stage to Low, Medium or High. Low finds the sounds of the signal just breaking up and, true to the original, it sounds very organically valve amp-like. The Gain knob will take you from just a touch of grit, through raw amp break-up, to practical levels of crunch. More crunch and raunch resides across the gain range in the Medium setting, where we're getting into nicely cranked amp territory. Switch to High and there's more compression, saturation and harmonic content; this is the place for the sort of distortion that will support sustaining lead playing with notes that can tail off into feedback.

While the pedal delivers dirt from a whisper to a scream,

that may not mean much unless you can focus it into just the right tonal area. Fortunately, the tone controls here are highly effective in doing just that. The High and Low knobs complement each other well in shaping the brightness and weight in the sound, while the Mid switch has a real influence on its character, offering three distinct variations and certainly playing a role in fattening up single-coil pickups, if that's your goal. There's a real versatility here, in that the pedal has a gain range and tonal options that will complement a varied range of amps. It's also a very responsive pedal that's sympathetic to playing dynamics and cleans up nicely with guitar volume roll-back. **[TC]**

VERDICT Valve-like overdrive and distortion delivered across a marvellously versatile range with bulletproof build quality

9/10

