

## GEAR Pedal Pow Wow

### TECH 21 BOOST D.L.A.

Tech 21's Andrew Barta always is always seeking interesting ways for his pedals to distinguish themselves and serve players' needs. While the Boost D.L.A. (\$195 retail/\$149 street) isn't a radical rethink of a delay pedal, it does offer two groovy perks: a 9dB boost for launching solos out of a bandstand mix, and the ability to "lo-fi" the signal with user-adjustable controls for Tone and Flutter (modulation). The box itself is road tough, and includes a noiseless on/off switch with a buffered bypass, and an easy-to-open battery compartment. Equally easy are the pedal's operations—you simply twist the Mix, Feedback, Tone, Time (30ms-1,000ms), Level/Boost, and Flutter knobs to taste. The only control I missed was a Tap Tempo button for adjusting delay time on the fly while performing. The fundamental delay character is solid, clean, and robust—which makes it quite fun soiling the tone by adding modulation, or darkening the timbre of the repeats with the Tone control. (The manual's handy sample settings get you started quite nicely.) For those who play at low volumes, a tad more boost would be nice, but at normal-to loud-gig levels, the boost punches out like Chuck Liddell. Overall, this is a fab delay that let's you play it clean, or as dirty as you please. —*Michael Molenda*

**KUDOS** Excellent sound. Easily tweakable. Tough as nails.

**CONCERNS** No tap tempo option.

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### TECH 21 BOOST R.V.B.

I'll admit upfront that I'm not a reverb kind of guy. I love dry, in-your-face guitar tones that sound as if they were whipped with bamboo rods until their bruised and shattered sonics rage with cascading yowls of anger and madness. Ahem. Having said that, I must also admit that the Boost R.V.B. (\$195 retail/\$149 street) is a blast to use, it sounds wonderful, and it may have slightly cured my aversion to ambience. The pedal delivers everything from spank to surf to sheen, and it shares the same construction and operational details as its sibling, the Boost D.L.A. I was able to easily translate some of my studio tricks—such as darkening the timbre of a huge reverb setting, and mixing the wash ever so slightly behind the guitar sound to "three-dimensionalize" solos—using the Mix, Tone, and Feedback (which oscillates to produce spring-reverb effects) knob. I didn't use the Rumble control much, as I found little use for diminishing or pumping up low end, nor did I find the Level/Boost function that attractive, as I don't often solo with reverb. These are personal quirks—other players may love these features, and they do work well. Whether you're into subtle ripples, or bathing your tone in a virtual ocean, the Boost R.V.B. is a marvelous tool. —*Michael Molenda*

**KUDOS** Excellent sound. Easily tweakable. Tough as nails.

**CONCERNS** Solo boost not as useable unless you're a real reverb fiend.

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