

GBINFO

KEELEY
IBANEZ AD9

PRICE: £169 (including delivery)

BUILT IN: Japan/USA

TYPE: Analogue delay stompbox

FEATURES: Delay time, delay level & repeat controls, normal & dry outputs

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

DIMENSIONS: 53(h) x 74(w) x 124(d) mm

CONTACT:

Keeley Electronics Europe
PHONE: 01223 841035
WEB: www.robertkeeley.co.uk

BOSS RE-20

PRICE: £151

BUILT IN: Taiwan

TYPE: Tape echo digital modelling stompbox

FEATURES: Echo volume, repeat rate, intensity, bass & treble controls, reverb volume control, mode selector, input volume control with peak indicator LED, virtual tape display, effect on/off & tap tempo pedals, stereo inputs & outputs, direct output switch, expression pedal input

POWER: 6 x AA batteries or 9V DC mains adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 57(h) x 173(w) x 158(d) mm

CONTACT:

Roland UK Ltd
PHONE: 01792 702701
WEB: www.roland.co.ukEVENTIDE
TIMEFACTOR

PRICE: £299

BUILT IN: China

TYPE: Dual digital delay & looping stompbox

FEATURES: 9 delay effects, 12-second loop recorder, manual & preset modes with 20 presets, dry/wet mix, delay A/B mix, delay time A, delay time B, feedback A, feedback B, mode, 'knob', depth, speed & filter controls, 3 multi-function footswitches (bypass, tap tempo, infinite repeat, bank & preset select, store preset, looper record/play/stop), stereo inputs (guitar/line level), stereo outputs (amp/line level), aux switch & expression pedal inputs, MIDI in & out/thru, USB interface

POWER: 9V DC mains adaptor only (supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 122(h) x 190(w) x 54(d) mm

Contact:

Source Distribution Ltd
PHONE: 020 8962 5080
WEB: www.eventide.comHISTORY
REPEATING

WITH THREE OF THE BEST ECHO BOXES OUT THERE FOR COMPANY, DAVID GREEVES SETS OUT IN SEARCH OF SOME DELAY GRATIFICATION

From the crude slapback echo of the very first rock 'n' roll records to the cavernous delay textures of stadium-filling bands like U2 and Coldplay, the love affair between the electric guitar and the delay effect has been a long and happy one. The cumbersome tape echo units of the 1960s were replaced with compact analogue delay pedals, which were themselves superseded by more powerful digital delays, but none of these effects ever quite became obsolete. On the contrary, vintage delay sounds are as popular as ever.

What we have here are three of the most exciting delay effects around, each with a very different approach. The Keeley Ibanez AD9 is a high-quality, true analogue delay unit, while the Boss RE-20 is a digital simulation of Roland's legendary RE-201 Space Echo tape-based delay. The Eventide Timefactor, meanwhile, is a supremely powerful delay modeller, with two independent delay lines and nine different delay effects, from vintage to modern and beyond.

CONSTRUCTION & FEATURES – KEELEY IBANEZ AD9

Robert Keeley is well known in effects

circles for his modified pedals. He takes mass-produced stompboxes from the likes of Boss and Ibanez and tinkers with the insides to improve sound quality and, in many cases, add new features. In this case, the subject of his attentions is the Ibanez AD9, the modern reissue of one of the seminal analogue delay pedals of the early '80s. Here, Keeley has added a true-bypass footswitch and upgraded some of the components inside, so the effect gives you a cleaner, fuller sound.

The controls behave exactly as before, with a delay time knob to set the amount of time between repeats (ranging from 20 to 300 milliseconds), a repeat control to set the number of

GLAD EVENTIDINGS

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE TIMEFACTOR'S EFFECTS

- **Digital Delay:** twin three-second delays with adjustable modulation and low-pass filter
- **Vintage Delay:** analogue and early digital delay sounds with adjustable bit-depth, modulation and filter
- **Tape Echo:** simulates the sound of tape delay, complete with tape hiss, wow and flutter (pitch and amplitude modulation) and filtering
- **Mod Delay:** delay with added chorus-style modulation, adjustable wave shape, speed and depth, plus low-pass filter
- **Ducked Delay:** the volume of the repeats is reduced ('ducked') while you're playing and restored to normal levels when you stop, with adjustable ratio, threshold, release time and low-pass filter
- **Band Delay:** three different filter types (low-pass, band-pass and

- high-pass) with adjustable resonance, depth and speed
- **Filter Pong:** the dual delays alternate between the two outputs for spacious stereo effects
- **Multi Tap:** 10 separate delay taps

- with controls for tap levels, spacing and diffusion
- **Reverse:** repeats are reversed for trippy backwards guitar solos
- **Looper:** 12-second loop recorder with a variety of dubbing modes



repeats (this would be labelled 'feedback' on many other delay units) and a delay level control to set the overall effect level (you could also think of this as a wet/dry mix control). There's a single input and two outputs – a standard output and a dry output carrying the unadulterated guitar signal for use in a stereo setup.

The new true-bypass stud switch is mounted on the panel just above the AD9 reissue's original rocker switch. This is not redundant, however. Stepping on it is equivalent to turning the repeat control all the way up, causing the pedal to slip into self-oscillating feedback.

Keeley does produce two other AD9 variants, which let you attach expression pedals to control delay

■ The AD9's simple controls provide a range of warm analogue sounds



GBOPINION

KEELEY IBANEZ AD9
GOLD STARS
 ★ Authentic analogue echo sounds
 ★ Superb for slapback
 ★ Very low noise
BLACK MARKS
 ● None

GBRATING
 ●●●●●

level and delay time with your feet. They are considerably more expensive, though – the one-pedal version costs £239, while the two-pedal version costs £319. That sounds like a lot of money, but an un-modded AD9 reissue will set you back around £110, and modding these pedals is a pretty complicated business.

SOUNDS – KEELEY IBANEZ AD9

With so few controls, the Keeley AD9 is incredible easy to use – the more impatient among you will love the fact that it takes mere seconds to get to the sound you want. And what a sound it is! Warm, atmospheric and somehow intrinsically musical, this is a world away from hard, sterile digital delay and a perfect example of why many players swear by the old analogue technology. The way repeats degrade due to the "shortcomings" of the circuit design, losing high frequency content and undergoing a slight phase shift, gives the effect a natural,

rounded tone and stops the repeats from getting in the way of the new notes you play, even with the delay level set quite high.

The maximum delay time of 300ms might not sound like a lot, but we think it will be just about enough for many players. But what this pedal really does best are shorter echo and slapback

sounds. If you're looking to nail a spooky Chris Isaak atmosphere or give your rockabilly riffs that authentic "trapped in a tiled bathroom" slap echo, you simply have to try this pedal. Inevitably, when you turn the repeat control up past half-way, there is some audible hiss on the repeats, but at more restrained settings, the pedal is incredibly quiet, a testament to the improved components that Keeley has installed. Finally, the self-oscillation function triggered by the original footswitch is something you may use rarely, but it's a great special effect to have at your disposal, sending your signal toppling into chaotic feedback.

Looking at the price of this pedal, you might feel that it's a lot to pay for what, especially compared to the other two effects on review here, is quite a limited set of features. However, if you want a vintage-style analogue delay sound, especially some slapback this is as good an example of the real thing as you'll find.

CONSTRUCTION & FEATURES – BOSS RE-20

The RE-20 adopts Boss' now-familiar dual-pedal format. The pedal on the left bypasses the effect, while the pedal on the right lets you tap in the tempo. There are controls for echo volume, intensity (number of repeats) and repeat rate (delay time, in other words), a reverb volume knob to control the separate built-in reverb effect, and bass and treble knobs, which only apply to the echo effect and not the reverb. A further knob sets the input volume, and there's a peak LED to tell you when you're overloading the input. The "virtual tape display" (the orange light between the two pedals) cycles from left to right to give a visual indication of the speed of the effect.

Next, we come to the 12-position mode selector. The RE-20 models the original Space Echo's three playback heads, which are spaced out from the record head to provide different intervals of delay as the tape passes over each in turn. The mode selector lets you select the different heads, or different combinations of heads, with and without reverb. You can also select the reverb on its own with no echo.

The pedal has stereo inputs and outputs, and, if you want to use it in a parallel effects loop, you can switch it to pass only the effected signal to the outputs. You can also plug in an expression pedal to control either the repeat rate, intensity, echo level or a



■ The RE-20's 'smiley face' pulses in time with the echo effect

special function called 'twist'. This can be triggered at any time by pressing and holding the tap tempo footswitch, causing both repeat rate and intensity to increase together automatically, so the repeats rise in pitch and speed, eventually going into self-oscillation.

The RE-20 is powered by six AA batteries (giving about 32 hours of use with alkaline batteries, according to Boss) or you can attach a standard 9V DC mains adaptor.

SOUNDS – BOSS RE-20

Of all three effects, the RE-20 probably put the biggest smile on our faces the instant we plugged into it. This pedal is quite simply tons of fun. Evocative '60s surf sounds spring up out of nowhere, and the combination of convincing tape echo emulation and the wonderfully clang-y and spring-like built-in reverb effect – a bit of a surprise bonus – works very well. You can opt for long or short single delay sounds (up to 6 seconds is available) or one of the combined-head settings for a multi-tap delay sound.

Attaching an expression pedal adds a whole new dimension, and, together with the tap tempo function, makes this a very flexible and powerful unit. The bass and treble controls are very welcome, though even with the treble control turned all the way down and the bass all the way up, the RE-20 has quite a bright delay sound that lacks the Keeley AD-9's wonderful warmth. We've got no problem with that, however – not when there are so many truly inspiring sounds on offer, from crisp, raucous slapback to long,

GBOPINION

BOSS RE-20
GOLD STARS
 ★ Evocative tape delay sounds
 ★ Tap tempo control
 ★ Fantastic built-in reverb

BLACK MARKS
 ● Slight increase in background noise

GBRATING
 ●●●●●



■ The Eventide Timefactor revels in complex layered delay sounds

spaced-out delays that really let you hear the gentle chorus-like pitch shifting that's typical of tape echo. The 'twist' function is great fun too – it's more gradual than the AD9's self-oscillation switch, with the increasing rate and intensity raising the pitch of the repeats and sending the signal spiralling upwards.

So what don't we like? Well, tapping in the tempo overrides the repeat rate control, but switching modes causes the unit to revert to the rate control's speed, so you have to tap the tempo in again. The pedal also adds a bit of background noise to the signal – more when it's bypassed than when it's on, worryingly. We're only talking about a small lift in the noise floor, something which you probably won't notice in a gig situation, but if you're a hard line noise Nazi, you might consider putting the RE-20 in a separate loop so it's removed from the signal chain when not in use.

CONSTRUCTION & FEATURES – EVENTIDE TIMEFACTOR

Eventide was at the forefront of digital delay technology way back in 1970. The company's flanger, phaser and 'Harmonizer' effects went on to achieve legendary status among guitarists, but guitar pedals are a relatively new venture. A bit like the T.C. Electronic Nova Delay we reviewed last month, the Timefactor is Eventide's attempt to package its high-end rack effects technology in a guitarist-friendly (or should that be 'guitarist-proof?') format. In terms of features and tweakability, however, this box of tricks easily puts the rest in the shade.

What you get is not one but two independent delays of up to three seconds each (called 'A' and 'B') with individual delay time and feedback controls, a delay A/B mix control and an overall wet/dry effects to choose from (see box on page 104 for details) plus a

12-second loop record function. Four continuous rotary encoders (labelled 'knob', 'depth', 'speed' and 'filter') perform different functions depending on the effect selected.

All settings can be saved in one of 20 preset slots, and the three footswitches enable you to cycle through the 10 preset banks and select one or other of the presets in each. Alternatively, in 'play' mode the switches are used to bypass the effect, tap tempo and to freeze and repeat a section of audio while you play over the loop. In looper mode, they provide record, play and stop controls. You're now beginning to get an

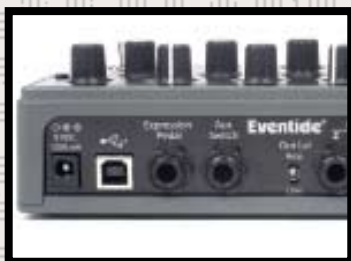


DETAILS

WHATEVER KIND OF DELAY YOU'RE AFTER, THESE ARE THE CREAM OF THE CROP



■ The Keeley Ibanez AD9 is fitted with a true-bypass switch and upgraded components



■ By connecting an expression pedal to the Timefactor, you can control any parameter



■ The Boss RE-20 has a 12-position rotary switch to select reverb, echo or both at once



GBOPINION

EVENTIDE TIMEFACTOR

GOLD STARS

- ★ Unbelievably powerful and varied effects
- ★ In-depth tweakability
- ★ High sound quality

BLACK MARKS

- Complexity may frustrate some
- Expensive

GBRATING



idea of the complexity of the unit, but we've only scratched the surface.

You can set the delay time in milliseconds or in rhythmic subdivisions of the tapped tempo (quarter note, eighth note and so on); you can select a buffered bypass or hard-wired bypass; you can map any combination of parameters to an expression pedal; and you can control and synchronise the unit and back up presets via MIDI, using either conventional MIDI cables or the USB interface. Essentially, if you want it, you got it.

SOUNDS – EVENTIDE TIMEFACTOR

With so much at your fingertips, the Timefactor obviously lends itself to in-depth tweaking, and it's not for the faint-hearted. You can keep things simple, however, and just set the A/B mix control to 100 percent A to use a single delay line, but being able to mix in a second delay opens up so many possibilities, and digital delay fans will be in seventh heaven. Programming the unit does take time, but being able to store presets is a massive bonus,

allowing you to set up 20 song-specific delay patches should you so desire.

The delay effects are invariably excellent, with some really exotic filter-modulated, ping-pong and multi-tap sounds that work especially well in stereo. The vintage and tape echo modes are convincing, if lacking the indefinable organic quality of the AD-9 or the immediacy of the RE-20, but then you're not going to buy a unit like this if you just want a simple vintage delay sound.

The range of effects available is very impressive, from subtle and spacious to downright demented. The pedal excels at modulated, evolving delay sounds, and it's child's play to map one set of parameter values to the expression pedal's toe-down position and another to the toe-up position, then use the pedal to morph between them. You can even set the delay time to zero and use the Timefactor's impressive modulation and filter capabilities on their own. And the brilliant thing is that the quality of the unit's signal processing means that your tone and playing dynamics are always perfectly preserved.

GBCONCLUSION

THREE DELIGHTFUL DELAYS

■ It's symptomatic of the pleasure and the pain that are the lot of the effects enthusiast, that we have three different delay pedals here and could happily find space for all of them on the same pedalboard. All three offer utterly compelling sounds that we just don't want to be without.

The Keeley Ibanez AD9 is a quality analogue delay stompbox that's simplicity itself to use, with a rich, organic sound that's simply the real deal. For vintage-style slapback, it takes some beating. The Boss RE-20 is great fun, offering fantastically retro, lo-fi delay and reverb, with the added flexibility of a tap-tempo control. The Eventide Timefactor is expensive, costing only a bit less than the other two put together, but we know of no other delay pedal that offers such breadth and depth of functionality. You need to be willing to invest some time in programming your patches, but if you're serious about delay, this is one seriously powerful pedal. **GB**