



Roger Mayer Pedals

Voodoo Boost and Spitfire

CLASSIC BRITISH EFFECTS TRICKERY to drive your sound in a new direction. Can they cast their spell on us? Gareth Huw Davies puts them to the test

Roger Mayer has been designing footpedals and other electronic gear for studio and stage since the '60s, when his friendship with Jimmy Page led him into associations with many of the leading guitar players of that and subsequent eras – including Hendrix.

I've seen and heard his pedals in use on various occasions, but never actually had the chance to get my teeth into one before... and then I get two at once. Must be Christmas.

So we open the boxes and find two heavy duty pedals, one looking like a new take on a miniature 1960's radio, the other like a model transposed from the *Jetsons* set. Both boxes can be battery or mains powered, requiring 9V in either case. Battery life is a healthy 150 hours, so you needn't worry

too much about power supplies or the screw-up casings. The blurb says that internal filters on the Voodoo Boost mean that pretty much any old supply can be used. Both boxes have true bypass, with a very positive single footswitch for on/off switching, and both have guitar input switching to turn them on and off.

SPITFIRE

The Spitfire is the latest addition to the Rocket range of distortion pedals made by Mayer. It's the simpler of the two pedals on review, having only two sockets, In and Out, and two pots, Volume and Gain. That's it. There's no power LED, just that bright red die-cast metal casing with its fins protecting a pair of chunky knobs. Be warned, the output available from this unit is huge – and you'll need to be careful with your levels, as you can still overdrive the input stage of your amp with the Spitfire's Gain control turned fully down.

This pedal offers a wide range of sounds, too, from mildly dirty to completely over the top. You may not

like the whole range of possibilities and you may like some of them only some of the time, but you're going to find some combinations of amp, guitar and pedal that really make you want to play. I found myself setting less bassy sounds on both the test Laney LC15R and a humbucking Yamaha, mostly staying on the bridge pickup plus a healthy amount of treble. You might tend towards using your Strat with this particular pedal.

Mayer reckons that his specially-designed distortion and EQ allows you to play chords without any nasty overtones. I definitely agree: the Spitfire does make a hugely heavy sound but it doesn't get unpleasant, and you can hear the notes – well, some of them – even through super-heavy distortion. You can also get storming lead sounds, plus feedback if desired, even at pretty low volumes. However, my favourite sound was with medium output (to match my clean sound), very little gain on the Laney, and then between 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock on the Spitfire's gain.

This is a versatile device, as the characteristics of the sound not only

