



You can zone in on various sweet spots, where the chorus or vibrato sweep can be made more prominent

Roger Mayer Concorde+ & Voodoo-Vibe Jr

From one of our most popular tone gurus, an updated favourite and a new addition to the Vision range by [Adrian Clark](#)

It's always nice to see British designers flourishing, not through any feelings of national pride, but purely because it makes financial sense to buy locally. Even though the US dollar is at such a low point that buying direct from the States can land you some amazing bargains, you still have to have the gear imported into the UK. You'll pay for shipping, VAT and duty, which will add significantly to the overall price. Buying from local makers gives you more bang for your buck (or rather, your quid) and promotes a healthy climate of competition and technological progress, especially among smaller companies.

On the subject of buying locally, Roger Mayer is one of our best-known designers. Everyone knows the stories of the effects he designed for Jimi Hendrix, but those pedals were just the start. Several of the principles he first explored back in the sixties can still be found in the current product range, which is constantly evolving to incorporate new ideas. The main development of late has been to reissue several of the pedals in the Vision

format. We've looked at a couple of these before and been impressed by the design. Rather than using the die-cast casings of old, the Vision pedals have a custom made, ergonomic housing. So, without further ado, here are the two latest additions to the Vision family.

Concorde+

The Concorde+ treble booster arrives with impeccable timing when players seem to be taking an interest in some of the earliest stompbox types. Lots of famous players, including Ritchie Blackmore, Brian May and Tony Iommi, have used treble boosters in their rigs, and last year we looked at the BSM reissues of the Dallas Rangemaster, Orange and Hornby Skewes models. However, the Concorde+ is based on an original Roger Mayer design from the early sixties, used by a young Jimmy Page among others. The unit owes its sound to the combination of both germanium and silicon transistors and a circuit featuring a passive EQ section before the treble boost section.

Externally, the Concorde+ follows the basic Vision design. It's solidly built

and has a low profile, aiding stability under the foot. With a larger control panel than on most stompboxes, the footswitch and three knobs are kept well apart, minimising the risk of accidental adjustment. All connections are neatly housed on the rear edge, while the battery sits behind a convenient sliding cover on the front edge. In addition to the standard input and output, all Vision units also have a pair of buffered outputs that are designed to drive long cable lengths without the usual loss of high frequency content. Should you wish to save on batteries, there's a connection for a barrel-style 9V DC adaptor (with a 2.1mm centre pin). However, battery life is generously long (150 hours plus for the Concorde+ and 20 hours plus for the Voodoo-Vibe Jr) so this extra purchase isn't a desperate necessity.

A quick tour of the controls (with the help of the informative manual) helps to explain how the unit works. The drive control sets the level of the silicon stage, which in turn drives the germanium output stage, hitting it with much more signal level than would be

CONCORDE+ TREBLE BOOSTER

ORIGIN: UK

TYPE: Treble booster pedal

FEATURES: Two types of transistor (silicon and germanium) with different sonic characteristics

CONTROLS: Drive, tone, output

CONNECTIONS: Guitar input, hardwired output, two buffered outputs

MIDI: No

POWER: 9V adaptor or battery (not supplied)

OPTIONS: None

The rivals

CONCORDE+ BSM RM Treble Booster

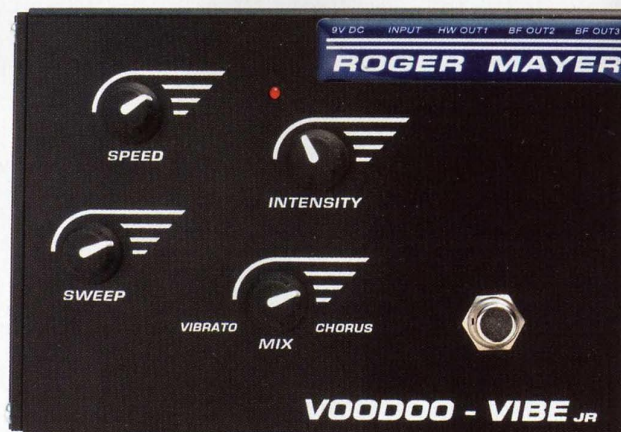
BSM HS Treble Booster

SCOTT'S Crispy Cream Treble Booster US (mail order only)

The BSM pedals are based on the Dallas Rangemaster and Hornby Skewes pedals originally produced in the sixties and seventies, while the hand-built Crispy Cream (www.treblebooster.com) combines elements of the Rangemaster and the Vox pedals. All of these pedals are very simple compared to the Concorde+, lacking the dual transistor types and control flexibility

ROGER MAYER CONCORDE+ & VOODOO-VIBE JR

EFFECTS  GUITARIST INTERACTIVE



VOODOO-VIBE JR

ORIGIN: UK

TYPE: Dual vibrato/chorus effect

FEATURES: Vibrato and chorus effects can be blended with the Mix control

CONTROLS: Speed intensity, sweep, mix

CONNECTIONS: Guitar input, hardwired output, two buffered outputs

MIDI: No

POWER: 9V adaptor or battery (not supplied)

OPTIONS: The original Voodoo-Vibe (with tremolo effect and switchable waveforms) is still available (£POA)

The rivals

VOODOO-VIBE JR

Electro-Harmonix Poly Chorus

Line 6 Modulation Modeller MM4

Jim Dunlop Univibe

The Dunlop version of the Univibe uses optical circuitry and lacks the Sweep control of the Voodoo-Vibe Jr. Also, the vibrato and chorus effects can only be selected individually, rather than blended. If retro chorus is all you need, the E-H pedal offers more flexibility with that effect, while Line 6 provides digital models of several classic modulation effects

CONCORDE+	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

■ **WE LIKED** Excellent sound quality, with a surprisingly wide range of tones

■ **WE DISLIKED** It'd be nice to have a little more bite from the tone control

VOODOO-VIBE JR	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

■ **WE LIKED** Warm, organic sounds with no unusable extreme settings

■ **WE DISLIKED** Might not be wacky enough for some people

→ available from your guitar's pickups alone. The output knob controls the final output level, which can in turn be used to overdrive the front end of your amp. In between lies the tone knob, a passive EQ control.

SOUNDS: Although the name suggests this pedal will just add some top-end bite to your sound, it'll actually do far more. The drive and output controls can be combined to produce a huge range of overdrive and fuzz tones, and the differences between the silicon and germanium transistors can clearly be heard. Higher drive settings give a wonderfully spongy fuzz tone which never seems to stop sustaining, while the output stage gives a more standard boost effect, with plenty of gain to kick even the politest amp into life.

Our favourite approach was to start with the drive at zero, setting the output to give the desired amount of amp overdrive, and then gradually introducing the more saturated fuzz of the drive section to taste.

Voodoo-Vibe Jr

With a pedigree going back to the original Univibe effect popularised by Jimi Hendrix and Robin Trower, the Voodoo-Vibe has also received a Vision update. Once again, the basic design follows the Vision format, as described above, so let's see what it does...

While the standard Voodoo-Vibe has a tremolo effect in addition to the traditional vibrato and chorus, the Junior version returns to the simpler style. The speed knob is self-explanatory, covering both effects and a wide range, from a slow, menacing modulation to a fast shimmer. The

depth of the modulation cycle is then controlled by the intensity control and the centre frequency by the speed control. While the chorus and vibrato effects on the standard Voodoo Vibe (and previous Univibe-type effects) were switchable, A/B style, the Voodoo-Vibe Jr has a mix control, enabling you to blend the two effects.

SOUNDS: Like its ancestors, the Voodoo-Vibe Jr is great for getting those 'on the edge' lead sounds heard in Jimi Hendrix's Machine Gun. However, there's far more to it than that. Clean and partly distorted sounds can be textured with a subtle shimmer or totally twisted for some wobbly Radiohead effects. Even at very low settings, the pedal adds to the sound, almost akin to a subtle ring modulation effect. This is great for adding extra character to a full-on lead sound.

The ranges of the speed and intensity knobs aren't particularly extreme, but the advantage here is that you don't lose a huge portion of each knob's sweep to useless comedy sounds! The 'operational windows' of both controls have been set sensibly to create a range of good, usable sounds, allowing for plenty of subtle adjustment within those boundaries.

It's easy to overlook the importance of the sweep control, as it doesn't initially seem to do much. After a bit of experimentation, though, it's easier to focus your hearing on what it's actually doing. The exact behaviour of the control depends on your basic guitar/amp tone, but by turning the knob very slowly, you can zone in on sweet spots, where the chorus or vibrato sweep can be made more prominent.



Verdict

Roger Mayer's effects may not be as extreme as some, and he certainly doesn't go in for all-in-one units with every effect you've ever heard of, but that's part of the charm. You always get units that serve a clear purpose and are easy to set up and use. What's more, the quality of design and engineering ensures that RM pedals always perform well, and with excellent sonic quality.

Price-wise, both the Voodoo-Vibe Jr and Concorde+ are more expensive than mass produced products, but considerably cheaper than many of the equivalent US 'boutique' pedals. The Concorde+ is within the range of most serious players, and while the Voodoo-Vibe Jr requires careful budgeting, the quality of the sounds it can produce makes it well worth a demo. **G**

Roger Mayer Concorde+

Guitarist RATING ★★★★★

Roger Mayer Voodoo-Vibe Jr

Guitarist RATING ★★★★★