



BBE BOOSTA GRANDE

As its name implies, the Boosta Grande (\$129 retail/\$79 street) is a clean booster that will push a signal up to 20dB without coloring the sound. Whether going for clean, crunch, or saturated tones; using single-coils or humbuckers; or plugging into tube, digital-modeling, hybrid, or solid-state amps, the Boosta Grande is in a class by itself. This affordable, transparent signal booster is a must have for live performance and recording. It's also a terrific tool for boosting degraded signals, as well as for axes that darken up excessively when you roll off the volume. Simple, rugged, and relatively quiet, it's a tremendously useful pedal regardless of whether your dream tone is Django's or Dimebag's. —*Danny Rappley*

BBE Sound Inc., (714) 887-6766; bbsound.com

BBE ORANGE SQUASH

An essential tool for increasing sustain, a compressor also smoothes the dynamics of your picking to make chords and single-note passages sound clear and defined. The Orange Squash (\$169 retail/\$119 street) uses a vintage-style FET compression circuit for warm, natural response, but adds a true hardware bypass to ensure that your straight guitar sound remains perfectly intact. With the Bias level at 5, the Orange Squash provides a nice bluesy sustain. At 7, the response is perfect for putting the pop in your chicken pickin,' and at 8, the compression sanitizes 1/64th-note high-gain passages. I found the Orange Squash very useable overall, though, like most stompbox compressors, it's a little noisy at high settings. —*Danny Rappley*

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BBE FREQ BOOST

Boosting treble for solos dates back to when a bridge pickup was first bolted to a guitar, and the birth of electronic effects naturally led to the creation of such primordial treble boosters as the Dallas Range Master, which was championed by Brian May and advanced by Tony Iommi. Designed to cut through midrange clutter like a scalpel, the Freq Boost (\$149 retail/\$99 street) launches high-end sparkle and shimmering overtones like fireworks. Judicious handling of the single Volume knob is in order, as the intensity of the harmonics can be overwhelming. But after a few minutes of familiarization, you will be ready to jump from dark rhythm to dazzling solo tones with a push of the switch. As with the other BBE pedals, the Freq Boost successfully captures the essence of the original, and puts it in a modern, more flexible, and user-friendly package. —*Danny Rappley*

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CARL MARTIN QUATTRO

As an unrepentant minimalist and neat freak, I couldn't be happier with a compact, four-effect pedalboard powered by an integrated 12-volt power supply and built like a '50s atom-bomb shelter. The bulletproof Quattro (\$820 retail/\$575 street) can be cruelly battered about without worrying about breakage, I can't lose anything (including the power cord), operation is idiot proof, and the sounds are fabulous. The robust echo also has a tap-tempo footswitch, the tremolo goes from vintage stutter to chop suey, the compressor adds chunk without artifacts or pumping and breathing, and the overdrives (two drive options are selectable) are meaty and articulate. If only the company had popped an onboard chromatic tuner into the mix, this multi-effects wonderbox would be as unstoppable as the 1972 Miami Dolphins. —*Michael Molenda*

Carl Martin Research, dist. by Gary Castelluccio & Associates, (973) 772-3333; carlmartin.com

