



## Two From BBE

TESTED BY DANNY RAPPLEY

### BBE FREE FUZZ

If you like fuzz, the Free Fuzz (\$169 retail/\$119 street) just might be your peach. The battle-tough, true-bypass pedal comes with its own external power supply (it can also be powered by a 9-volt battery), and it can deliver the basic vibe and feel of the delicious fuzz flavors launched by artists such as Vanilla Fudge, the Strawberry Alarm Clock, the Yardbirds, and Jimi Hendrix. When the Free Fuzz's Fuzz knob is cranked to 5, the sound is more like an overdrive. Move up to around 7, and the tone and sustain screams "Purple Haze." Going to 9 uncorks the fearsome roar of Blue Cheer's "Summertime Blues," and, when maxed at 10, the Free Fuzz explodes into a buzzy cacophony that will delight sonic rebels and experimental types. The higher settings do elicit audible hiss, but those who dig vintage rock tones will appreciate what the Free Fuzz delivers. In fact, I even compared the Free Fuzz against a vintage 1969 Fuzz Face, and I discovered the Free Fuzz was quieter, easier to control, and way fatter—albeit a tad less fuzzy than the classic original.

### BBE GREEN SCREAMER

In case you have just thawed from a 40-year cryogenics experiment, I should inform you that a green box has delivered the absolute classic overdrive sound since the late '70s. The little greenie gave SRV his snarl, The Edge his edge, and has served probably thousands of other guitar heroes and weekend warriors alike. However, BBE's version of Ibanez's uber-popular TS808 Tube Screamer—the Green Screamer (\$149 retail/\$99 street)—is more of an upgrade than a knockoff. The Green Screamer boasts a warmer sound than a reissue Ibanez Tube Screamer, as well as more complex harmonics, a more "tube-like tone," and quieter operation. Whether used as a gritty signal boost with the gain set low, or set to full, singing Satriani levels, I felt the Green Screamer won hands down in a blind comparison test with a Tube Screamer. Like its siblings in the BBE stompbox line, the GS includes a hardwire bypass, one-percent resistors (which make the circuit extremely consistent, ensuring near-exact sound quality from one pedal to the next), an external power supply (it can also run on a 9-volt battery), a ready-for-the-road casing, and a slip-proof rubber bottom.

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