

The Tube Amp Factory Primo Reverb

by
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Some years ago we reviewed several of Dave Harris' early *Tube Amp Factory* amps. Those amps, like most of Dave's early amps, didn't have reverb in it. Since then Dave has added reverb to all but one of his amps. He says he did this to add a little fullness to the amps for rooms where the acoustics may not be quite right. According to Dave, "After experimenting with various reverbs, both spring and solid state, we settled on a *Belton* solid state module originally developed to replace the spring units found in vintage organs (which were the original application of reverb effects in general). It was selected because it sounded as good as any of the spring units we tried, wasn't as finicky, and was compact enough to fit in a head." The small compact size also made it possible to fit the unit in a stand alone pedal. At our guitar show in January, Dave gave us one to review.

Sometimes it is fun to have a lot of parameters you can adjust on an effect. I have a stand alone tube, spring pan reverb unit, where I can adjust the level, bass, treble, dwell, mix and master volume of the signal. I have a reverb pedal with just about as many controls on it. Other times it is better to have an effect where the maker has found the sound and set it and all you have to decide is how much of it to use. I was raised on *Fender* amps with reverb in them. That's the way they work. Fender set all the parameters of the reverb and gave you one control. It was essentially a mix control, and you controlled how much of the delayed signal to mix in with the straight signal. That's what you get with the Primo Reverb.

It's got one knob on it and it's a mix control. Dave has tweaked the reverb to sound good, setting all of the parameters but one, and he's done a wonderful job of it. What you do is mix in as much of that reverb as you want. The way the pedal works is that part of your guitar signal is always going straight through the pedal from input to output. You add in the part of the signal that is processed by the pedal. The amp has a true bypass on/off switch, so when the pedal is off, your entire signal goes straight through. That's all there is to it.

Again, as someone who was raised on those *Fender* reverb amps, the Primo Reverb, to me, pretty much nails that sound. If you shake it you don't get that reverb spring noise you get when you bump an amp, but is that really a problem? You can dial in a subtle bit of reverb to add a little depth to your amp. Turn the knob up some more and you start to get the sound of bigger and bigger rooms, with more and more reverb. Turn it up all the way and you have large drippy reverb and the ability to surf or do some rock-a-billy. I used it mostly to get that reverb amp snap back when you hit a note and then choke it off, and it did a great job of that.

The pedal is quiet with almost no hiss, even when it is turned up all the way. Also when turned up to cavernous reverb, the one I had never went into oscillation.

The pedal measures 2.5" x 4.7" x 1.5". It is hand wired. It can be powered by a 9 or 12VDC AC adapter or the included 9V battery.



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