

DANELECTRO

Billionaire pedals

Three bargain tickets to filthy rich tones from Dano

Words Tervor Curwen Photography Neil Godwin

From pedals named after food or shaped like little owls, quirky has become the Dano way. Yet their latest Billionaire series seems almost conventional by comparison.

Not only do we find the curvy shape quite elegant, these pedals have a solid build quality with metal rather than plastic casing and a robust soft-touch footswitch. They are also finished in US classic car colours with matching knobs, which is particularly attractive on the Big Spender – there’s definitely something about a sea foam green and cream combination that’s very pleasing to the eye.

At launch there are four pedals and the Battery Billionaire power supply (reviewed in this issue’s Audition section on p120) to power them. The Pride Of Texas alludes to SRV’s tone so we know where that one is coming from, so here we’re looking at the other three: a booster, tremolo and a rotary speaker simulator.



Billion Dollar Boost

The familiar-looking control layout combined with Danelectro’s claim that the Billion Dollar Boost is a reissue of a 1980’s secret weapon of A-list Irish and Brit rockers, makes us think that it’s most likely based on the Boss FA-1 FET Amplifier as used by The Edge. What you are getting is a solidly built pedal that offers either a flat boost across all frequencies or a boost that rolls off some bottom end. Unity gain is at about 10 o’clock on the Volume knob and above that there’s loads of signal driving capability with the option of bringing in the Bass and Treble knobs, each offering practical cut and boost. At lower levels with our clean amp it delivered a touch of airy enhancement and extra clarity, while further on it was able to induce breakup, grit and crunch. Where we really liked it though was in front of a drive pedal where it laid the perfect jumping off platform to another level.

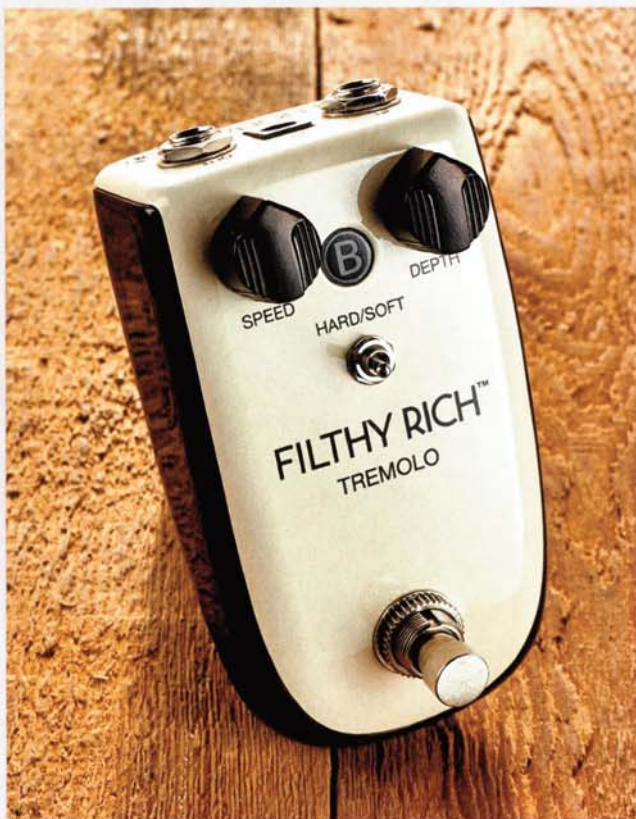
Verdict A versatile boost with plenty of oomph and tonal sweetening that’s great for stacking

Tech Spec

- ORIGIN: China
- TYPE: Boost pedal
- FEATURES: True bypass
- CONTROLS: Volume, Treble, Bass, Flat/Low Cut switch, Bypass footswitch
- CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output
- POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)
- DIMENSIONS: 62 (w) x 114 (d) x 45mm (h)



9/10



Filthy Rich Tremolo

Apparently based on the tremolo found on Danelectro amps from the late 1940s, the Filthy Rich has a very basic set of controls, the same in fact as the previous Tuna Melt pedal. A switch selects two different tremolo types, Hard and Depth. Hard is a square wave tremolo that's almost an on/off stutter effect as it has a preset depth and doesn't go to complete silence. The Depth knob, in fact, only comes into play on the Soft setting, a much gentler sine wave tremolo reminiscent of 1960s Fender amps, which can go from a skittery flutter to a deep throb. The only other control is an internal trim-pot for a level-compensating boost. Players who demand tap tempo and a wider range of waveforms might not be interested, but this may be ideal for anyone who wants an affordable slimline tremolo with simple control and, most importantly, a sound that holds its own alongside units that cost much more.

Verdict Two classy tremolo options in a compact setting with simple operation

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: China
TYPE: Tremolo pedal
FEATURES: True bypass
CONTROLS: Speed, Depth, Hard/Soft switch, internal trim pot for volume boost, Bypass footswitch
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output
POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 62 (w) x 114 (d) x 45mm (h)

8/10



Big Spender Spinning Speaker

Rotary speaker sounds are complex to recreate but there are several stompboxes dedicated to the task on the market. A cool alternative to chorus or phaser pedals, they are generally a source of lush modulation such as the Fender Vibratone tones as heard on SRV's *Cold Shot*. Most, though, offer stereo operation, have large footprints and are a lot more than this Big Spender. What you're getting here is a compact mono pedal that could slip into a tight pedalboard space yet still offers a second footswitch for transitioning from slow to fast speeds. The Speed knob sets your chosen fastest speed and hitting the Ramp footswitch takes you from there to the slowest speed or visa versa. There's plenty of output in the volume knob to add a bit of grit. The Big Spender may not be quite as slavishly authentic as some rotary pedals out there but it's certainly a decent shout for the asking price.

Verdict A stylish, practical and affordable way to add a dedicated rotary speaker pedal to your 'board

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: China
TYPE: Rotary Speaker pedal
FEATURES: True bypass, Red and Green LEDs for fast and slow speeds, flashing LED when transitioning
CONTROLS: Volume, Treble, Speed, Bypass footswitch, Ramp footswitch
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output
POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 62 (w) x 114 (d) x 45mm (h)

8/10