Radial Tonebone Plexitube £299
Radial's Tonebone range expands further with the Plexitube. We plug in... by Adrian Clark

We were highly impressed by the multi-talented Trionode back in issue 270, and Radial's Plexitube is designed along the same lines, with a flexible interface, twin channels and a 12AX7 valve. As the name suggests, the Plexitube is designed to give a typically British range of sounds, and the front panel bears the slogan 'Hot British Distortion'.

The Plexitube has one footswitch for turning the pedal on and off, and another for toggling between the two channels. A green LED by the on/off footswitch indicates that the pedal is in (true) bypass, and the channel selection is indicated by means of a red or yellow LED. Along with the mono input and output, there's also an effects loop on channel two. Instead of the usual send and return connections, Radial has used a single insert connection, as found on mixing desks; you'll need a special TRS insert cable, which carries both the input and output through a single jack plug.

The main row of controls is simple enough to follow. Each channel has its own independent level control, and there's a single drive control (there are dual drive controls on the Trionode). Then there are high EQ, low EQ and dual contour knobs. The purpose of contour is to determine the frequency range at which the mid-range boost or cut is applied, so with that in mind, let's move on to the row of switches below the main controls.

First up is top end, which adjusts the characteristic of the high frequencies. The options are 'bright', 'flat' and 'dark', which are self-explanatory. Bear in mind that the controls on the Plexitube (and other Tonebone pedals) are interactive, so an adjustment to one control will affect how you need to set other controls. The top end control is a case in point: each switch position will probably require a readjustment to the high EQ control.

Next comes the three-position voicing switch for each channel. These affect the mid-range characteristics of the sound and are designed to be used in conjunction with the contour controls. Both feature 'fat' and 'scoop' settings, but channel one, aimed primarily at...
The Plexitube offers a range of Marshall-esque tones; but what really impressed us was just how wide that range of tones is.

Verdict
Tonebone products are not cheap, and very few players could justify spending $300 on a distortion pedal. For that sort of money, you want the product to form the very backbone of your sound, and if you're a Marshall fan, the Plexitube could very easily do that. It's difficult to find a bad tone from this pedal; we found a range of new possibilities every time we plugged in and started a new tweaking session.

Radial Tonebone Plexitube
Guitarist Rating ★★★★★★☆