

KEELEY ELECTRONICS

30MS DOUBLE TRACKER

REVIEW BY **FLETCHER STEWART**

STREET PRICE **\$199.00**



DOUBLE TROUBLE DEVIATIONS

Imagine a subtle—yet infinitely versatile—modulation machine that straddles the line between chorus, flanger and slapback echo. This pedal would add movement and a mysterious backdrop behind the guitars core tone, while seamlessly slinking into the nether realms of ambience and intrigue. This shadowbox would tiptoe behind the scenes of known modulations, weaving a web between the familiars into tonal tapestries of new sonic subtleties. Add to this the ability to create polymorphic dual deviations

and spread or condense them at will, and we have an idea of what the new Keeley 30ms Automatic Double Tracker is all about.

In a convoluted overlapping landscape of boutique tone tweakers, modders and noise box builders, veteran tone doctor Robert Keeley has come up with a strikingly original pedal design concept—the studio stompbox. The first in Keeley’s studio-in-a-stomper series is this mighty red-and-black twin attack. The 30ms ADT crams all the magic of Abbey Road Studios engineer Ken Townsend’s tape reel stereo treatments into a compact form factor

that belies the kaleidoscope of trippy tones within. As if this wasn’t enough, Robert Keeley has even included the famous “Abbey Verb” chamber effect, modeled after the fabled Studio Two. Far out.

TRIPTYCH OUT TO STEREO FIELDS FOREVER

Upon unboxing, I jacked the 30ms ADT into the effects loop of my trusty dual channel clean-to-crunch machine—The Victory V30. While most folks like chorus and flange tones before dirt, I wanted to hear the full movements of these more subtle modulations, while having the built in reverb

logically after the distortion. My intuition was bang-on. Even with extreme amounts of gain, the 30ms never flattened out or became too whooshy and obvious. This is perhaps due to its more subtle and unpredictable pitch deviations Keeley painstakingly fine-tuned into the control set.

Starting in Dimension mode with everything at noon, I played a clean arpeggiated cyclical riff and engaged the pedal. A pure warm halo of movement surrounded my tone that was silky without ever getting caught in the sickly chorus hairnet of sticky 80s stigma. Turning up the "Abbey Verb" revealed a roomy echo with some pre-delay and diffusion. This was great for an unobtrusive ambience that maintained the subtle overall approach of the pedal. Switching to the dirt channel with these same settings released a tide of *Permanent Waves*. This distorto-chorus was similar to vintage Alex Lifeson tone. Switching to Abbey mode revealed a more traditional chorus effect with everything

at noon, so I decided to simulate a vintage tape flange by scaling the time back to 5ms and turning the rate down to a crawl. What I ended up with was a phosphorescent flange-like tone reminiscent of *Metal Box*-era Keith Levene. Ace. Switching to the Slapback setting and configuring the internal dipswitches for Double Track Pro mode, I bypassed the reverb in favor of full control of the two voices. I then jacked into inputs one and two of my audio interface with a TRS cable and hard panned them in my DAW sent to two Marshall plug-in emulators. I was immersed in stereo slapback glory with the two independently detuned voices simultaneously speaking in liquid tongues, wetting each side of my brain with inspiration.

WHAT WE LIKE

The idea of a studio-in-a-stompbox is fresh. While the Keeley 30ms ADT doesn't offer tape saturation like the only other pedal of its ilk—Strymon's Deco—the effected signal is filtered with warmth and garnished

with an organic patina. I compared this compact stomper with my coveted '70s BBD chip-laden PA:CE ADT rack unit and it sounded every bit as lush without the hiss of noisy old components. I also love the Ampex tape reel box graphics, compact size and overall usability and immediacy of the control set. This is a hard one to turn off; maybe I will Velcro it atop my amp and have it permanently in the loop.

CONCERNS

I would rather have stereo inputs and outputs than having to whip out the TRS cable. Then, I could run the 30ms through the effects loops of two amps.