

KEELEY ELECTRONICS VIBE-O-VERB

REVIEW BY **FLETCHER STEWART**

STREET PRICE **\$149.00**



SILVER SURFING IN A SEA HAZE DAZE

How is the branching of trees, uncurling of a fern, flowering of an artichoke, fruit sprouts of a pineapple, breeding of rabbits and the arrangement of a pine cone's bracts all related? Did you know that tone technology and natural biology are all part of the cosmic collective conscious? Is Fletch having flashbacks while reviewing pedals again? No dear readers, I assure you that I am of sound mind and the brain behind the sounds of today's subject-in-review is none other than Robert Keeley. Without spiraling

down the rabbit hole of circular, open-ended mathematics, I present to you Keeley's Fibonacci Spiral—or golden ratio—inspired reverberator... the one-of-a-kind Vibe-O-Verb.

What sets the Vibe-O-Verb apart from most aural atmosphere processors is the three distinct modulation types on tap and their placement in the signal chain. The Harmonic, Vibrato and Phaser settings affect the reverb tail only, while the pure input source remains unaffected. Like a glassy curling wave barrel, there are no right angles in the swell. While the face of the reflective magic box

reads in familiar language—depth, decay, rate, blend, et cetera—the actual experience of riding this silver machine is very new. Let's paddle out into the clouds.

THE LUCID LIQUIDITY OF TAB- TONGUED TONE

Starting with the Rate and Depth controls dialed out, I can observe the reverb on its own. With vintage amp and effect settings such as Harmonic, Vibrato and Phaser onboard, one might expect a dripping spring reverb to complement the old school vibe. Keeley opted out of this predictable treatment and

went for a futuristic room with moving plates-style dynamic. This is a welcome departure, because most of us with a reverb addiction probably already have a spring tank or two on hand. Time for some modulated madness . . .

The Harmonic setting with all the dials at midnight presents a rollicking ebb and flow that conjures up visions of a black juju-laden oil spill upon a lapping hungry ocean at high tide. Speaking of midnight, oil and voodoo, this is a ghostly Hendrix haunt that gets more or less intense and writhing depending on where the depth and rate are set. Dialing back the decay creates a lovely Uni-Vibe approximation if one is after a less wet ride. Moving into the vibe territory, we ascend toward the realm of true pitch bends and fever-dream shoegaze candyland. This immediately inspires one to grab their favorite fuzz pedal, ram it into the VOV and get all My Bloody Valentine with a slow, slurring rate with the Depth, Decay and Blend dimed. Dial

all these knobs back and crank the rate right up and we have a great VB-2-like rubber room setting that I imagine The Riddler would use as an always-on effect. Finally, switching to the Phaser setting, I was privy to a pulsing, serpentine spiral of sound. This was akin to playing from the centered observation point of a panopticon, with the sound bouncing of shifting tectonic reverb plates that moved around me in orbital axis. Trip-tastic.

WHAT WE LIKE

This pedal cleverly takes a bunch of familiar ingredients and tosses them into a sonic stew all anew. Being a big fan of Robin Guthrie, Nick McCabe and modulated reverb in general, I am stoked to see someone with Keeley's pedigree fearlessly forge ahead with a unique take on a largely unexplored concept. Like many stompers coming off the prolific Oklahoma assembly line of late, this Keeley stomper is as beautiful to behold, as it is to hear.

CONCERNS

While the Vibe-O-Verb is immersive enough in mono, I can only imagine what this chromed box of dreams would sound like in stereo.