

DIGITECH

VENTURA VIBE

REVIEW BY **YOEL KREISER**

STREET PRICE **\$149.95**



Listen to the heartbeat, the clanking of money, the proletariat British voices speaking about insanity, and the screams of Clare Tory amalgamate into a climax as it drops you into the arms of a warm, rich swirl. Listen to the pounding feedback and seething, pulsating fuzz as it rips your body apart through the hands of a machine gun-wielding master of the Stratocaster. Hear the crooning and creaking of the Bridge of Sighs as it buckles under the weight of the thick, syrupy throb. These most majestic and unique sounds were created by the venerable Univox (Shin-Ei)

Uni-Vibe. The Ventura Vibe is DigiTech's latest in a line of impressive digital pedals made to simulate three different modulations, all in one tiny box. Employing many clever ideas and plenty of versatility, the Ventura Vibe may just be the syrup to cure your Uni-Vibe blues.

What really hit me first about this unit was the sheer number of features DigiTech managed to cram into one box. Thanks to the power of modern DSP technology, it was able to cram three recreations of well-loved effects into a small box, while still having space for tons of features

that both performance-oriented and studio-oriented musicians will love. The first mode on this pedal is the Vintage mode, which seeks to emulate that spacey throb that set Hendrix, Gilmour, and Trower apart in their early days. The second setting, labeled "Modern," is set to emulate the warbly, sea-sick vibrato tones of the Uni-Vibe, and just for kicks, DigiTech included quite a stunning rotary mode which is set to emulate those lovely Leslie tones. It contains both stereo ins and outs, which is perfect for running a stereo rig or going direct with a guitar,

synth, or bass into a DAW or console. On the front, we have four knobs: Speed, Depth, Mix and a concentric control knob for both Tone and Drive (don't worry, they are mutually exclusive; one does not affect the other). While the footswitch may look standard, it's quite heavy duty, and holds a "secret" function, unbeknownst to the casual observer. When held down, the LED will change from red to green, and the speed will ramp up, just like on a real Uni-Vibe or Leslie! DigiTech has also gone the extra mile and added a rubber "settings saver" (Stomplok) that covers the knobs to ensure your perfectly-tuned settings stay intact. Being a huge fan of Uni-Vibes and Leslies, I was ecstatic to dive right into this pedal and see what kind of cards this son-of-a-gun can deal.

I think it should be said that I love my vibes thick and meaty. Upon plugging it in, I was initially disappointed at the weakness of the bass in the signal. However, after tweaking a bit, and setting

the Mix knob at 12 o'clock, I got very close to the tone I was chasing. With the Mix knob cranked, the vibe is a little anemic, which is strange considering I was expecting the complete opposite. However, even with the Mix knob where I wanted it, I still felt that it didn't have that gut punch I have come to expect from a good Uni-Vibe. It is about 85 percent there, still very good considering the absolute slew of features on this thing. The vibrato setting was good, but intense vibrato makes me feel a little ill so I generally try to avoid it. However, with the Mix set low, it added quite a nice space to distorted tones. The rotary mode pleasantly surprised me. I have a real Leslie to compare, and the Ventura Vibe really held its own against other rotary pedals I've tried such as the Strymon Lex and Neo Instruments Ventilator. It really sounded like a miked Leslie, with an unmistakably hollow tone that really moves nicely with a bit of drive kicked in. While it

may not sound as "hi-fi," it's got character in spades, and makes a really lovely substitution for hauling around a 200-plus pound Leslie cabinet, or a \$400 attempt at "pedalizing" one. To try out the stereo mode to its full effect, I went direct into my DAW and the tone was nothing short of gorgeous. The guitar swirled around my head and filled the room with a really warm tone that most VSTs find hard to replicate. Plugging an analog synth inline also really warmed up the tone and added a fat space and stereo presence to it that really helped drive the track I was working on.

WHAT WE LIKE

Many different tones available. Tons of flexibility for many different rigs and some very clever design choices that shows DigiTech really went the extra mile with this one.

CONCERNS

Could use a bit of tweaking in the EQ department.