

DOD

LOOKING GLASS

REVIEW BY DAVID A. EVANS

STREET PRICE \$149.99



I'm afraid that too many people might overlook DOD's new Looking Glass Overdrive in favor of an ultra-boutique pedal. The funny thing is, the concept and design of the Looking Glass is about as boutique as pedals come. That's right, C.J.M. Venter of the admirable Shoe Effects has teamed up with DOD for its latest release. In keeping with Shoe's reputation for tone, the Looking Glass delivers exquisite distortion with an enviable responsiveness to dynamic changes.

Venter, the owner, operator, and designer of the one-man company,

possesses that rare form of discernment which allows him to design memorable and intriguing pedals. While other companies might be content to release a fuzz clone, Venter tends to look for ways to produce something just a little different from the rest. The Looking Glass perfectly reflects Venter's desire for something which will please the most demanding players, as well as those who feel they've heard everything under the sun. The distortion isn't going to brutalize your amplifier or vie for loudest, most extreme distortion in the world (which is what

so many pedals seem to aspire to), but it will sound a whole lot better than so many others. In some ways, it reminded me of a toned-down fuzz, of the sort a person would hear from Keith Richards on "Satisfaction." The tone could be classic but also wholly contemporary. I could easily discern why Venter claimed the pedal could work for all styles of music.

The Looking Glass offers two overdrive modes, "Low" and "High." Low mode produces a tamer, quieter form of distortion with just a touch of compression. I found the

Low mode to be perfect for adding a bit of edge to an otherwise too-clean tone. It's the sort of sound which we've come to know from various "indie" bands: just a little ragged around the edges, particularly when the strumming comes on hard. The Low mode preserves the crispness of a clean signal without muddying the tonal waters. The Looking Glass surprised me because even in Low's highest-gain setting, the signal cleans up without any trouble. Some light strumming produced an ear-pleasing jangle, but as soon as I really bore down on the strings, the Looking Glass came to life with a well-balanced distortion. It was here that the Looking Glass proved its surprising responsiveness.

In the High mode, the Looking Glass offers more of the same excellent responsiveness. Even in the highest levels, the pedal produced a remarkably transparent overdrive. Complex chords rang out confidently, without becoming lost in a forest of overtones. But when it was

pushed, the Looking Glass produced a killer buzzsaw of distortion which would cut through the mix.

The Looking Glass also features a useful set of equalization knobs for pre- and post-signal alterations. The thoughtfully-designed Input Filter is meant to compensate for guitars with brighter or darker signals. Also, the Looking glass has two equalization knobs, one for higher frequencies and another for lower ones. I appreciated that the high knob didn't, when turned up, produce the sort of ear-splitting treble which can ruin a distortion. Likewise, the low boost-cut knob didn't produce a boomy or muddled tone.

The Looking Glass is, I believe, Shoe's first foray into the world of "big name" effects companies, and what a satisfying collaboration it is. If Venter maintains his good taste, then future collaborations ought to be just as satisfying as the Looking Glass.

WHAT WE LIKE

Exquisite distortion which is highly, highly responsive to dynamic changes. Sparkling tone. Two distortion modes.

CONCERNS

None.