

KEELEY ELECTRONICS

PHASE 24

REVIEW BY **MATT FISHER**STREET PRICE **\$179.00**

OK, I'll just say it: I'm a phasaholic. I love phasers and they have inflicted damage to my bank account many times. Even today, 36 years since Van Halen's first album came out, I still have a big green phaser front and center on my pedal board. So when I got the chance to review the Keeley Phase 24, I jumped on it. Based on my prior experience with Keeley products, I expected it to be good.

Usually the first thing I do when I get a new pedal is to take it apart, sniff around inside, get a sense of the quality of components and workmanship, and try

to figure out if I got my moneys worth. But not this time. I plugged the pedal in front of a DS-1, cranked up a THD Bivalve into a pair of greenbacks, hit the plate reverb, and tried to play Eruption. OK, that sucked. But that was me, not the pedal. So then I plugged the Keeley in line with two of my favorite phasers for reference, and played some things that are within my ability.

FIRST IMPRESSION

Well, It's different than my other phasers. Rather than just cloning one of the classics it seems Keeley put its own spin on it, which

is a good thing. There is a Mix knob instead of a regeneration knob, which can take the phased signal completely out of the mix at one extreme, or, cranked clockwise, push plenty of phasing goodness into the amp. With no regeneration knob, the Phase 24 won't do the over-the-top industrial tones that some phasers are capable of, but it also doesn't suffer from the nasally tones that plague so many of these boxes. There is a toggle switch to select two or four stages of phasing, each of which produces a different character, so you basically get two phasers in one box. Nice.

For heavy rock tones, I (like most guitarists) prefer to plug a phaser in front of my distortion pedal or overdriven amp. Just like a wah pedal, a phaser can shine or suck depending on where it lives in your signal chain. When plugged in front of a gained-out amp, the Phase 24 is very quiet. Most phasers will produce a very noticeable “swooshing” sound in high gain situations, but the Phase 24 has almost none of this. I’m not sure how Keeley did that but I appreciate it. There is the familiar clock noise (like a heartbeat) that is common with phasers, but it is very faint and it’s hard to notice unless one is trying to. I really enjoyed setting the intensity high and the rate low for single note phrasing. I noticed that there is a slight attenuation of low frequencies. This is not necessarily a bad thing. The pedal has excellent clarity, which I believe is partly due to the emphasis of mids and highs. I wouldn’t call it a “lead boost” but it can

certainly push your solos forward in the mix.

With clean tones, the personality of a phaser (for better or worse) is clearly revealed. The Phase 24 works very well with clean tones and, again, does not suffer from the aforementioned “nasal” effect. I switched to a single coil pickup, plugged into a Mesa Blue Angel loaded with a Celestion Gold alnico speaker, and strummed on some chords that I’m sure David Gilmour must have played at some time or another. The transparent nature of it works well with complex chording, and I didn’t mind just switching—and leaving—it on.

WHAT WE LIKE

Let’s just say that the Phase 24 is a kickass pedal. There are nice swirly tones, it’s surprisingly quiet, and like any great phaser, it satisfies deeply. I never actually got around to taking it apart (the wife was wondering why I disappeared for three hours), but I feel confident that the Keeley folks are still living up to their high standards of workmanship. Highly recommended.

CONCERNS

None.