

Gear

STOMPBOX FEVER



Tech 21 Roto Choir and Boost Chorus

TESTED BY MICHAEL ROSS

SINCE TECH 21'S 1989 INTRODUCTION of the SansAmp—the world's first true amp “modeler,” although based on analog circuitry—the New York-headquartered company has created an impressive range of amplifiers and effects. Two recent introductions, the Roto Choir and

Boost Chorus, follow a path that Tech 21 has been on for quite some time now by incorporating digital technology as needed for the time-based aspects, while keeping the rest of the functions in the analog domain. The result of this hybrid pairing provides uncanny sonic realism and

flexibility, with the warm response you'd expect from old-school pedals.

Roto Choir

“Badge,” “Angel,” and “Cold Shot” are among the tunes known for using a rotary speaker effect on guitar. Tech 21's Roto

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- Hear some classic clean riffs through the Roto Choir.
- Listen to a Boost Chorus demo recorded direct with the Tech 21 Leeds pedal.

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Choir (\$295 retail/\$219 street) offered impressive simulations of these tones and many others through manipulation of its six interactive knobs, two footswitches, and twin pushbuttons. In addition to a buffered Bypass footswitch, a Fast/Slow switch ramps the speed up and down much like a real Leslie. The Top Speed knob allowed me to stop the rotation completely and still sculpt interesting sounds using the High, Low, Drive, and Position knobs.

This last knob is purportedly a virtual mic positioning control, but it acted more as a de facto depth modifier, increasing and decreasing the intensity of the effect. Cranking it clockwise and adding a hefty helping of Drive delivered modern chop-trem sounds. Starting the chop in fast mode and ramping down the speed with the footswitch while dropping my Strat's trem arm was a cool effect on a recent gig.

The Biamped button yielded lush Uni-Vibe sounds when engaged, and Leslie-like

effects when off. In fact, the amazing number of usable sounds produced by this pedal made me wish it was programmable. You can't have everything, but the wealth of terrific musical tones available from the Roto Choir make it worthy of an Editors' Pick Award.

KUDOS Wide variety of rotary and Uni-Vibe effects. Quiet operation. Compact.

CONCERNS None.

CONTACT Tech 21, (973) 777-6996; tech21nyc.com

Boost Chorus

Remember the distinctive chime of Ry Cooder in the '70s and Kurt Cobain in the '90s? Tech 21 certainly does. In addition to a number of other classic chorus sounds, the Boost Chorus (\$245 retail/\$189 street) does a great job of replicating the nirvana of the E-H Clone Theory pedal, and, in its Multivoice mode, it let me dial in the lush but clear chorus that graced *Bop Til*

You Drop-era Cooder records.

Rolling the Speed and Depth knobs completely down, with Multivoice off, allowed me to use the Pre-Delay knob for doubling and slap effects. Here the Mix control became essential, but I find a mix option on chorus always preferable, as it lets me dial the modulation back to maintain sonic focus during distorted solos. Lowering the delay amount in regular chorus mode added a lush flanging swoosh to the list of this pedal's effects.

The Level control is another plus, helping to compensate for volume loss that can accompany modulation and delay effects. With its myriad modes of warm modulation, this Tech 21 pedal could easily make chorus cool again. 

KUDOS Lush, warm chorus with added flange and delay possibilities.

CONCERNS None.

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