

Tech 21 SansAmp Character Plus Mop Top Liverpool

Sam Bell reviews the Tech 21 SansAmp Character Plus Mop Top Liverpool. Inspired by some of music's most iconic amp and effects pairings, all in a single stompbox, the Mop Top Liverpool perfectly captures the hot tones of the British Invasion and beyond — boasting an authentic emulation of the most beloved British tube amps of the early '60s and a powerful treble boost to push your amp into a rich, smooth "Bohemian Rhapsody"-esque sustaining leads.

In this review, I'll be taking a look at one of Tech 21's new pedals, which is part of their 'Character Plus' series of compact amp in a box solutions. The Character Plus series features classic amps paired with a classic boost. Each pedal features two channels with a unique character control, which changes the overdrive and texture of the amp the pedal is based on. In this review, we'll be looking at the 'Mop Top Liverpool', which is based on a classic Vox Style amp with a Rangemaster booster. The sound of British Rock and, most famously, Brian May of Queen!

This compact amp in a pedal can be used in front of an amp or into the return using the main amp as a slave amp. Or it can be used directly using the XLR out. The XLR out has a matched speaker cabinet emulation, which interacts with the pedal's EQ, giving a balanced sound.

The pedal itself features two channels, both identical with their own gain, volume, treble, middle, bass, and character control. The character control changes the identity of the amp sound. When on channel A, Character A below 12 o'clock gives us the tone of a Vox Top Boost with controls set to 9,

great for a punchy, clean tone or warm crunch. As we move through to 12 o'clock, we bring in some classic British-style mid-range. Passing 12 brings us into some more clarity, and all the way up brings some upper mid crackle of pushed Alnico Speakers.

Channel B's character control set below 12 o'clock gives us the tone of a top boost set to 3 for a nice, clean sound with lots of low and high-range detail. Advancing towards 12 o'clock brings back those much loved British mids; passing 12 o'clock brings in a vocal-like sustain to the mid-range. •



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On full, the character control boosts the low mids for a non-Top Boost AC30 tone.

But let's not forget the awesome Range Master style boost, which can be engaged on both channels, taking the tone shaping even further. Taking us to treble booster heaven, the boost works uniquely on this Tech 21 pedal. It offers a few boost options in one control knob. At 12 o'clock, it's flat; when turned clockwise, it gives you up to a 12db treble boost for that 70's vibe. When you turn counterclockwise, we get a 12db mid-range boost, giving a slightly more modern sound.

The sounds and feel are really impressive; tech 21 has paired up with Sansamp Technology, giving us great amp emulation; mixing this with the great speaker emulation makes this a go-to solution for the travelling musician. If Vox isn't your thing, the Character Plus series also features Marshall, Hi Watt and Fender editions, which are just as versatile in their ballparks. The pedal itself is well built, and sturdy footswitches and an easy-to-use

layout make this perfect for road use; plus, it's probably the same size as some supermarket chocolate bars, so it'll fit nicely into your gig bag. It has a very sturdy metal construction and can be powered by 9-volt adapters. It comes with its own resilient 9v adapter with a nice, fabricated power chord, which won't get tangled up or start to cut out because it has been used twice. It's super!

Suppose the direct-to-desk thing isn't your cup of tea. You can use this with an amp and change the character of the amp nicely and easily; it is perfect for those gigs where you're using a shared or house backline and want to bring your own tone.

So, in summary, the Tech 21 Mop Top Liverpool is an awesome all-in-one Vox in-a-Box style amp emulation solution that can almost fit in your pocket. There are tons of tones in a small space and sturdy pro construction (Richie Kotzen uses his own signature model on the road!). Need I say more? Check one out! I love it.



Tech 21 SansAmp Character Plus Mop Top Liverpool

MSRP: (UK) £299 | (US) \$249

The Breakdown



For fans of

- » Classic British amp tones
- » 100% pure analogue old-school sounds
- » Standalone; or to drive a power amp, mixer, or PA system

For more information, please visit:

tech21nyc.com