



THE ROTARY CLUB

BBE Sound Mind Bender and Soul Vibe pedals

BY CHRIS GILL

EVER SINCE THE FIRST caveman threw his neighbor over a cliff just to hear him scream as he plummeted to his death, mankind has been fascinated by the sounds made by moving objects. Probably the coolest aspect of moving sound is how pitch bends due to a phenomenon called the Doppler effect. Attempts to duplicate it have led to some rather interesting inventions, such as the Leslie rotating speaker cabinet, which creates vibrato (a regular pulsating change of pitch) through horn tweeters that rotate and a spinning baffle mounted in front of a fixed speaker.

For guitarists, using a genuine Leslie cabinet onstage is about as practical as a band with two bass players. Fortunately, those genius inventors who create effect pedals with wacky names figured out how to duplicate rotating speaker effects electronically, with no moving parts to break down during your solos or bulky cabinets to haul around. BBE Sound recently introduced two compact pedals—the Mind Bender chorus/vibrato and Soul Vibe rotary speaker emulator—that provide different takes on beloved pitch-bending rotating speaker effects. Both are as easy to use as a rectal thermometer: just plug in and play. Best of all, there's no greasy mess!

FEATURES

THE MIND BENDER and Soul Vibe are about as simple as an effect pedal gets in the age of the microchip, but hey, we're talking about stomp boxes here, not rocket science (otherwise you'd be reading *Rocket World*). Both pedals have mono inputs and outputs, so there's no dual-amp or dual-channel shenanigans going on—just pure electro-simulated rotary mojo. The Mind Bender features speed and depth knobs, a footswitch for selecting Vibrato or Chorus modes (with a green LED for Vibrato and yellow LED for Chorus), another footswitch for turning the effect on or off, and, well, that's it.

The Soul Vibe includes speed and intensity knobs, an on/off footswitch and a silk-screened illustration of some cat who looks like he stepped out of an ad for T.J. Swann Easy Nights fine

apple wine. A trim pot hidden inside the Soul Vibe acts as sort of a secondary intensity control. It's preset from the factory to provide the optimum mix of dry and effected signals, but you can tweak the pot to make the effect as subtle or dramatic as you want.

Both pedals boast an ice-cool blue LED that flashes in sync with the effect rate. Just like yo mama, they also feature an easy-access nine-volt battery compartment and a non-slip rubber bottom; unlike yo mama, they have true hardwire bypass. BBE also included a nine-volt external AC adapter at no extra charge. The pedals are housed in sturdy aluminum cases that are as thick and wide as a pimp's wallet during fleet week.



BBE SOUND MIND BENDER AND SOUL VIBE PEDALS

LIST PRICES: Soul Vibe, \$189.00; Mind Bender, \$209.00

MANUFACTURER: BBE Sound, bbesound.com

CONTROLS: Speed, intensity (Soul Vibe), speed, depth (Mind Bender)

FOOTSWITCHES: Effect on/off (Soul Vibe), effect on/off, vibrato/chorus (Mind Bender)

INPUT: Mono

OUTPUT: Mono

OTHER: Nine-volt AC adapter jack (adapter included), easy-access nine-volt battery compartment

Vibrato/Chorus mode switch gives you access to two classic-sounding effects.

The Soul Vibe's rotary speaker emulation has a perfectly seasoned "phase-like" sound.



PERFORMANCE

IF WILD, WARBLING pitch-bend effects are your cup of joe, these pedals serve the flavors you savor. The Soul Vibe is essentially a Uni-Vibe-style effect with an irresistible gargling phase-shifter swirl that produces satisfyingly expressive timbres. The speed knob lets you make the effect as slow as your Kentucky cousin or as fast as an Eldorado getting chased by the fuzz, while the intensity ranges from a subtle touch of 'Vibe to tones that are as thick as your New Orleans nicee. From Jimi to Trower to Gilmour—all the vibey tones you love are here in their full trippy glory.

The Mind Bender is really two effects in one, although you can only use the vibrato and chorus separately, not both at once. According to BBE, the vibrato circuit is based on the design on the über-rare Boss VB-2 Vibrato, while the chorus clones the long-extinct Way Huge Blue Hippo. If you can even find either of these original pedals you'll spend well over twice the price for half the effect of the Mind Bender. If you're a fan of chorus, you'd be hard pressed to find a pedal that produces an effect as rich and thick as the Mind Bender. The vibrato effect is equally impressive, producing the woozy, wobbly warble only a true vibrato can produce. The Mind Bender is not a "phasey" as the Soul Vibe, but its rotary speaker-style effects are just as psychedelic, and you get chiming chorus as an added bonus (without the static white noise that comes with lesser analog chorus stomp boxes).

THE BOTTOM LINE

IN THIS DAY OF whiz-bang multieffect units, the Soul Vibe and Mind Bender may not seem earth shattering, but they do a great job of creating timeless sounds that will never go out of style. Their tones are thick and expressive, with tons of personality and almost unperceivable noise, and they're built to last a lot longer than you did on your dream date with Geraldine. If you want your guitar to sound whirly, swirly or burly, the Soul Vibe and Mind Bender get the job done. ✨

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