



GEAR

REVIEW



TONE TO THE THIRD SQUARED

The Electro-Harmonix Epitome, Tone Tattoo

The concept is smart yet so obvious it's a wonder no one came up with it sooner. With both the Epitome and the Tone Tattoo, Electro-Harmonix manages to cram three effects into a single housing. Did life just get a whole lot easier?

The Epitome combines EH's Micro POG (polyphonic octave generator), Stereo Electric Mistress flanger/chorus, and Holy Grail Plus reverb. The Micro POG section adds amazing layers of shine and shimmer with just three knobs: Sub (for the bass octave), Up (for the treble octave), and Dry (to mix in the effect-treated tone). Do the math – that's the potential to simulate an 18-string guitar. Dial in the Sub and Up octaves to taste and then roll in Dry to add the guitar's natural tone. It's like a 12-string guitar with a bass octave tracking perfectly beneath it. This could be especially useful for a solo guitarist. Conversely, just put on the Sub and crank it

through a crunchy amp for some seriously wicked metal tones.

The Epitome's Stereo Electric Mistress allows the user to dial in the rate of the flange and/or chorus (sorry – no tap tempo). These are the famous, fat tones that EH pioneered 35 years ago – everything from Leslie organ sounds to the chorus and flange of The Police, Rush, and Pat Travers. Meanwhile, the Holy Grail digital reverb section provides settings for Spring (classic surf sounds), Hall (big cathedrals), Room (medium ambience), and Flerb (digital-

ton dials up some amazing ambient drone effects for the experimental/progressive crowd, tweakable for endless, dazzling soundscapes. Ladle in some of the Electric Mistress for lush environments more often associated with synths. It's difficult to believe these sounds are coming from a stompbox. Bring in the Micro POG and suddenly it's like surfing through the gates of Olympus. You may not even believe you're playing a guitar. The Epitome isn't cheap, but it brings a lot of bang for the buck.

The Tone Tattoo houses more conventional effects than the Epitome, namely EH's Memory Toy delay, Neo Clone chorus, and Metal Muff distortion – again, in a single box with three footswitches. Moreover, all three effects are analog and completely independent of one other. There's a world of sounds here, from '80s rock to '90s grunge to '50s slap-back delay to straight-up metal. And, as with the Epitome, the effects will interact in cool ways.

The Memory Toy's Delay, Feedback, Blend, and Gain controls will help find the perfect echo, from mild to extreme. Analog architecture means a fatter, warmer delay than with digital, but without the articulation. This is a deep, smoky delay tone akin to a tape Echoplex. The Neo-Clone is very simple, with a Rate knob for the speed of the chorus and a Depth button for two choices of analog chorus flavor, while, the Metal Muff is set up a like an amp, with Treble, Bass, Volume, and Drive controls, plus a useful Scoop toggle and a noise Gate button with accompanying Threshold knob. The Scoop has three choices of midrange attenuation, great for thrash-metal setups.

On the gig, the Tone Tattoo proved a great meat 'n' potatoes pedal, providing essential distortion, chorus, and delay tones. Each effect can be as extreme as anyone could possibly want it, but for straight rockin', just a dab will do ya – a little overdrive and delay left on all the time, with the chorus kicked on when needed. One debit is difficulty reading the labels on the knobs, especially on a dim stage. The pedal should be set up before the gig and activated via the footswitches when needed.

Adding the Epitome to the signal chain results in a lot of firepower for just two pedals. With the Tone Tattoo holding down the fort, the Epitome becomes a surprise weapon for killer reverb, modulation, and octaver effects (if stereo can be wired into the PA, all the better). The audience won't have a clue how all those sounds are coming from just two pedals. – **Pete Prown**



Prices: \$491.84 list (Epitome)
and \$292.35 list (Tone Tattoo)
Info: www.ehx.com

reverb repeats like U2 or country-style).

Of course, the real fun comes when the effects are combined. The Holy Grail's Shimmer but-