



Heavenly Bodies



CELESTIAL EFFECTS
LIST PRICE From \$149
 celestialeffects.com

► **IF YOU'VE EVER** taken a subway in one of the world's great cities, your trip has likely been made comfortable by Thermalogic, the Massachusetts-based corporation that for 40 years has provided temperature and humidity controls for clients around the globe. Curiously, that same company is now making a small line of killer boutique pedals under the brand name Celestial Effects.

As it happens, Thermalogic's Lead Product Sales Engineer, Domenic Mancini, is a guitarist and certified gear junky. He has a collection of over 100 pedals—everything from original MXRs to modern boutique mod-

els—and in his spare time builds and mods amps and guitars. Several years ago it occurred to Mancini that his company, stocked with an incredible assortment of electronic components, would make an ideal laboratory for designing and manufacturing effect pedals. "We have a plethora of parts to work with in our stockroom—basically every transistor and capacitor known to mankind," he says.

Given a bit of downtime during the recent economic slump, Mancini convinced Thermalogic to produce a line of pedals featuring his original designs, and in early 2011 Celestial Effects was born. The company's offerings currently include a handful of excellent units for dirtying things up—the Taurus Blues Overdrive, the Virgo Rock Overdrive, the Capricorn Rock Distortion, the Aquarius Fuzz and the Scorpio Super Boost.

All Celestial Effects pedals are true bypass and no expense is spared on their innards. The capacitors are from Panasonic's ECQ series, which Mancini finds offer superior clarity, and the wiring connecting is substantial. "We use wide, two-ounce copper circuit board etch lines equivalent to 14-gauge wire in the signal paths, which conducts sound much better than the little, thin, one-ounce lines found in many pedals," Mancini says. "That's a little trick I learned from some equipment we made for the military."

Each hand-built pedal takes a classic piece of gear as the inspiration for something new. The uncommonly responsive Taurus, for instance, started life as a perfect recreation of an Ibanez Tube Screamer before Mancini transformed it. "I began playing around with the circuit to make it touch-sensitive, like a Matchless," he explains.

For the Virgo, with its multiple clipping options, Mancini channeled some of his favorite guitar tones—those of Jimmy Page, Gary Moore and other Seventies rock players. To evoke those sounds, he incorporated two TL082 op amp amplifiers arranged in a parallel configuration. Says Mancini, "Rather than rob your tone, the Virgo will enhance it with fullness and clearness on any setting, from slight boost to all-out saturated goodness."

With the Virgo and its Celestial Effects counterparts, Mancini brings to the boutique market a series of pedals that are at once familiar and new-sounding—special tools for the expressive musician looking for something a little different. "I see no need to recreate pedals that are already out there," he explains. "I don't want to imitate; I want to innovate." ●