

This is the kind of gear that makes you think, "What a great idea?" at the same time you're thinking, "Why haven't we had this all along?" All of the gear in this category is being recognized either because it solves a problem in a new way, reinvents a genre, or combines things we hadn't thought to put together... or else because it's just plain cool. This is our Premier Gear Fresh Approach Award.

FRESH APPROACH



Jekeko Fixed Wah

If you've ever found a good parked Wah tone, then you've probably also lost it. A stompbox-housed Wah pedal that loses the treadle for easily replicated parked tones is such a great idea that we were surprised it took this long. If you're into the parked sound, there's no reason not to try this pedal out; you may never look back. There is nothing tonally lost, and dialing in is a breeze. Said reviewer James Egolf, "If you're in the mood for some parking, order one, learn 'Cracked Actor' and 'Mother Mary,' then just try to wipe the grin off your face."



Source Audio Soundblox Multiwave Distortion

Source Audio's new Distortion can't be described by comparisons to classic tones, because nearly everything that comes out of it is brand new. After listening to a few dozen ODs this year, this was incredibly refreshing. The pedal handles complex chords with clarity, and the sounds are easily sculpted through your string attack. You're going to play with this one for a while. On top of that, we have to mention the Hot Hand device, which Source Audio sells separately. The motion sensor combined with the already robust offerings of the Multiwave distortion opened up so many sounds that reviewer Gary Guzman noted [August '08, online], "There were so many different sounds pouring out of this unit that other players will think you're using multiple effects..." Um, yes please.

Ribbecke Halfling Pin Bridge Acoustic

It's not often that an innovation actually becomes an entirely new instrument. With an archtop in the front and a flattop in the back, the Halfling somehow takes the best of both worlds and combines them into one guitar. You get the smoothness and warmth of an archtop with the liveliness and brilliance of a flattop.

Ribbecke made more innovative changes with the Pin Bridge, which takes the Halfling concept and applies it to an acoustic platform. Like many innovations, the Halfling Pin Bridge takes a bold hand to jump in and get the most out of it, but the result is completely worth it.

"If you're a serious and confident player who's not afraid to live a little bit large, this guitar will rock your world. This isn't the only guitar you'll ever need, but it's one hell of a ride." – October '08

