

# ZVex Nano Head £399

Guru of groundbreaking effects answers the prayers of valve purists by Chris Vinnicombe



The half-watt head no studio should be without from Zachary Vex

**CAPTURING** a thunderous drive sound in the studio isn't easy. The sound pressure generated by a valve stack can play havoc with microphones and produce harsh results. Enter Zachary Vex, the stompbox guru responsible for some of the most ingenious designs of recent years. Rated at one half-watt and

integrated into a pedal housing, the Nano Head is the world's smallest production valve amplifier. With its twin JAN-6021W military-spec valves, mini transformer and cooling fan, the Nano Head is built exactly like a grown up amp, only it sounds better...

**SOUNDS:** We hooked the head up to a 2 x 12 with Celestion Vintage-30 drivers and cranked up the volume to see what it was capable of. With the volume around three o'clock, the bright switch engaged and the Thickness and Mellow controls set to normal, the tone is reminiscent of a Blackface Bassman on full tilt, with a hint of classic Marshall. With a budget condenser mic we were stunned by the authenticity of the recorded tone: a truly exceptional high-gain sound full of harmonic complexity and bags of raunch, sitting perfectly in a mix without the need for outboard EQ. Clean the tone up and things get a little more Vox-ish, but stay just as satisfying.

ZVEX NANO HEAD	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
<p>■ <b>WE LIKED</b> Outrageously good drive tones</p> <p>■ <b>WE DISLIKED</b> Erm, something this good should be a trade secret!</p>	

Disconnect the cab and the Nano's internal speaker comes into play; try mic'ing this up for nasty no-fi fuzztones!

## Verdict

With your eyes closed it is hard to believe that the huge sound you can hear is really coming from the Nano Head. If £399 seems excessive, consider the price of a power attenuator, or rival low wattage valve amps. Capturing a world-class drive sound has never been so easy, and no studio, regardless of size, should be without one.

Guitarist RATING

★★★★★