





## Danelectro The Breakdown: The Premier Guitar Review

Shawn Hammond March 8, 2020



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Recorded using an Anasounds Element reverb and a Celestion Ruby-loaded Goodsell Valpreaux 21 (clips 1-3) and a Weber Gray Wolf-loaded Jaguar HC50 (clip 4) miked with a Royer R-121 feeding an Apogee Duet going into GarageBand with no EQ-ing, compression, or effects.

Clip 1: Squier Tele with Curtis Novak JV-M neck and Tele-V bridge pickups, first with the Breakdown bypassed, then engaged in mode 1 with volume at 2:30.

Clip 2: Squier Tele bridge pickup, first with the Breakdown bypassed, then engaged in mode 2 with volume at 2 o'clock.

Clip 3: Squier Tele with bridge pickup, first with the Breakdown bypassed, then engaged in mode 3 with volume at noon.

Clip 4: Squier Jaguar with Curtis Novak JAG-V bridge pickup, first with the Breakdown bypassed, then engaged in mode 6 with volume at max.

## RATINGS

### Pros:

Incredibly simple (and affordable) way to zing up your rig with varying degrees of gain — from hardly there (but magical) to blistering quasi-fuzz.

### Cons:

Modes 2–6 add some background hiss when volume is past noon.

### Street:

\$149

Danelectro The Breakdown  
danelectro.com



### Tones:



### Ease of Use:



### Build/Design:



### Value:



Based on the rare Univox UD-50 Uni-Drive reportedly used by Hendrix and Jimmy Page in the late '60s and early '70s, Danelectro's The Breakdown uses three 2N3904 silicon transistors (in place of the original's out-of-production silicon Matsushita 2SC859 "black button" transistors) to blast your amp's front end with up to 35 dB of gain. Controls are super simple: There's a volume and a 6-position "break-up" knob. (The UD-50's large, wah-style treadle design has been wisely abandoned for space considerations.)

**I'm not being hyperbolic when I say it can make your amp do things you may never have heard it do before.**

The Breakdown isn't just badass for the usual bang-for-buck Dano spiel, nor simply because it can outdo famous Klon clones at the whole "clean boost with a little extra somethin'-somethin'" thing. I'm not being hyperbolic when I say it can make your amp do things you may never have heard it do before—but the amp's gotta be working hard for the magic to happen. My 6973-powered 20-watter has always sounded amazing cranked with a Tele, but in nearly 10 years I've never heard it sound so many shades of awesome—from bristling harmonic liveliness with the Breakdown's volume somewhere past noon in modes 1–3, to several hues of seething rock glory in higher modes. Same goes for my Jag through a 50-watt EL34 combo. I don't know if the amp or the guitar have ever sounded more visceral, with higher Breakdown settings yielding snarling fuzz ferocity with attack that's razor sharp and articulate yet not strident. Meanwhile, Breakdown's higher settings yielded singing, well-defined corpulence with a Les Paul and my Vibrolux Reverb.

**Test Gear:** Squier Tele, Squier Jaguar, and Eastwood Sidejack Baritone DLX all with Curtis Novak pickups (JM-V and Tele-V, JAG-Vs, and JM-WRs), Gibson Les Paul Traditional with 57 Classics, Goodsell Valpreaux 21, Jaguar HC50, 1976 Fender Vibrolux Reverb

### Watch the First Look:

