

WUDTONE CP VINTAGE TREMOLO £119  
ACCESSORIES



## Wudtone CP Vintage Tremolo

Can an S-type 'tremolo' emulate the tuning stability of a Floyd Rose without changing the looks or tone? **HUW PRICE** tests the Wudtone...

**T**he basic operating principle of Leo Fender's vibrato design was just fine, but over the decades, various attempts have been made to refine it. Some have been more successful than others and it is argued that Fender's original version sounds best because the front of the bridge plate remains in contact with the body: base plates with knife-edge pivots tend to float above.

Andy Preston of Wudtone is both a guitarist and a trained engineer, so he has combined his experience in both fields to improve the feel, stability and sound of the Strat 'trem'. Wudtone bridge plates come in two varieties - the CP Vintage has traditional looks and materials, while the Holy Grail is made from higher tensile steel for increased dynamic efficiency and sustain. The point where the strings emerge from the block and wrap over through the saddle is a common breaking point. Wudtone plates are milled to form a string-friendly curve.

Observe a regular vibrato in action and you'll notice how the front of the plate slides down the retaining screws as the trem is dipped. This occurs because the rear of the screw head fouls against the plate. Wudtone plates have angled recesses for the screw head, which allow the plate to pivot against the screws, rather than slide. To enhance bridge-to-body contact,

Wudtone uses a 0.5mm stainless-steel whacker plate under the bridge plate. Like the screw recesses, it's virtually invisible when installed and Wudtone claims improved feel and tone.

Lastly, there's the 1018 Cold Steel Block. It's virtually identical to a pre-CBS Fender block, but Wudtone employs a nylon bush to eliminate slack. The block comes with a 5mm stainless-steel arm, because regular arms won't fit.

Wudtone sells the bridge plate, whacker plate and block individually, along with complete units that include springs and a claw. Various sizes

plate, then reinstall the screws, springs and tune up.

I noticed a tiny bit more definition and clarity along with a lighter feel. It's hard to describe, but everything felt slightly freer and smoother. Since the bridge sits a little higher, you will need to lower the saddles to compensate.

Next, I installed the plate and block assembly. I didn't perceive any change in tone, but considering I was replacing a pre-CBS bridge and saddles, that can be regarded as an accolade. However, the Wudtone made my Strat's tuning more stable than ever.

*The Wudtone made my Strat's tuning more stable than ever... It takes the original design to its logical conclusion*

and options are available for vintage reissues, plus American-, Far Eastern- and Mexican-made instruments and customised string spacing.

### Sounds

Fitting the whacker plate is quick and easy, and it doesn't require string removal. Simply slacken the strings and hold them with a capo to maintain the tuner-post wraps. Then remove the springs and the six screws at the front of the bridge plate. Lift the vibrato assembly out, position the whacker

Wudtone makes some bold claims, but they're all fully justified. It's an upgrade that appears bone-stock unless you look at it very closely... but is it an improvement? It most certainly is. 🔄

### KEY FEATURES

#### Wudtone CP Vintage Tremolo

- **PRICE** Complete assemblies from £119.99
- **DESCRIPTION** Vintage-style vibrato assembly with refinements to improve tone, feel and tuning stability. Made in Wales
- **CONTACT** Wudtone 01291 671515 [www.wudtone.com](http://www.wudtone.com)

### LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

If you want something completely different, check out the **Stetsbar S-Style £175** with its Bigsby-meets-Strat look and feel. Callaham is renowned for its high-quality hardware. The **Callaham Vintage S Model Assembly £109** will be an upgrade on most factory vibratos, but it's built just like the originals and will have all the usual issues and limitations.

### Guitar VERDICT

- + Very nicely engineered
- + Maintains vintage looks
- + Remarkable tuning stability
- + No routing or drilling necessary
- + Cost-effective upgrade
- + Fits every type of Stratocaster

- Absolutely nothing

*A very well thought out and beautifully made product that takes the original Fender vibrato-unit design to its logical conclusion, without compromising looks or tone.*

10/10