

IK Multimedia StealthPedal £243

An audio interface with a wah pedal software controller *by Trevor Curwen*

Software amp simulation is a great way to access a wealth of guitar sounds with just a computer, and there are plenty of 'starter packs' available combining software and a basic audio interface. Yet although most of the programs on the market offer a modelled wah, operating it by foot isn't possible through a standard audio interface. Now, you could buy a large combined audio interface/controller that some companies provide, but these are usually considerably more expensive than a basic audio interface. It's opportune, then, that IK Multimedia has launched something much more affordable...

The Rivals

The StealthPedal stands alone at this price, but **NI Guitar Rig Kontrol Edition** (£444) offers a controller/interface with pedal treadle, plus footswitches and Guitar Rig 3. **Waves** offers GTR3 with the **GTR Ground foot controller** (£399), but you'll need a separate interface. The **AmpliTube Stomp IO** (£789) offers more control.

StealthPedal puts an audio interface into a standard sized wah pedal chassis with a treadle that can be assigned to operate the software's parameters, including wah of course. StealthPedal also comes with several versions of the AmpliTube software to give you instant access to a range of tones straight out of the box.

The StealthPedal is well-built and offers stereo in/stereo out operation as well as use with a single guitar. The output signal is monitored via a volume knob on the pedal side, controlling a pair of jacks and a headphone output. There are also sockets for adding an extra expression pedal and a pair of footswitches should you wish to expand your control options (these can be set in a graphical interface on the main page). Any other amp and FX modelling software that has MIDI control can also be set up via a separate MIDI control graphical interface.

Sounds

After going through IK Multimedia's swift online registration process, it's ready for use. Once connected via USB a 'traffic lights' array of three LEDs shows the status of the pedal and can also show

input level or be the guide lights for AmpliTube's tuner.

The main software with StealthPedal is AmpliTube X-GEAR, which only has a small number of models, but is the unification software that allows you to add any of the other AmpliTube packages. You also get AmpliTube 2 Live and Ampeg SVX Uno, which are cut-down versions of their parent programs. StealthPedal buyers also get a free download of AmpliTube Metal. All in all these may just give you as much tonal variation as you need. Certainly it's a comprehensive bundle for anyone going the software route for the first time – not least for the integral tuner, metronome and the excellent SpeedTrainer phrase trainer.

As an audio interface, StealthPedal sounds really good, delivering a clear signal all round, and the pedal treadle works a treat with whatever parameter you assign to it. Our only niggle is that the headphone socket is a mini jack – fair enough perhaps, as most people will have a set of mini-jack-equipped headphones for use with iPods. But try to find a set with the two metres or so of cable needed to stretch from foot to head! Studio monitoring headphones and their usually longer cables will do the trick though – with an adaptor plug.

Verdict

StealthPedal is a great idea – functional straight out of the box, it provides an easy way in to the AmpliTube experience, and it can be easily expanded upon should you have the desire and the funds. At street prices below £200, it's currently the most practical and reasonably affordable solution for connecting guitar and computer. **G**

The Bottom Line

We like: Instant foot control; expandable system
We dislike: Mini-jack socket for headphones; no hardware-only version
Guitarist says: Practical guitar and computer integration at a decent price

IK Multimedia StealthPedal

PRICE: £243

ORIGIN: Italy

TYPE: Audio interface/controller pedal packaged with amp simulation and FX software

BIT DEPTH: 24-bit A/D and D/A conversion

SAMPLING RATES:

32.0/44.1/48 kHz

POWER SUPPLY: USB self-powered

CONNECTIONS: 6.4mm jack inputs (L, R), 6.4mm jack outputs (L mono, R), 3.2mm stereo headphone jack, USB, expression pedal jack, footswitches jack

CONTROLS: Output volume knob, pedal treadle, pedal switch

DIMENSIONS: 250 (d) x 100 (w) x 80mm (h)

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 1.36/3

EXTRAS: USB cable, AmpliTube 2 Live software, Ampeg SVX Uno software, AmpliTube X-Gear bridge software, RiffWorks T4 recording software, plus AmpliGrooves Loops from Sonic Reality

OPTIONS: IK Multimedia dual switch unit (£67), IK Multimedia expression pedal (£67)

RANGE OPTIONS: StealthPedal Deluxe (£425, with AmpliTube 2 and Ampeg SVX)

FORMATS SUPPORTED: Audio Units, VST, RTAS (Mac OS X) – VST, RTAS (Windows XP and Vista)

COMPUTER SYSTEM

REQUIREMENTS: Power PC-based and Intel-based Macintosh; Windows (See website for full details)

IK Multimedia

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www.ikmultimedia.com



Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



The StealthPedal can be configured to control many effects



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