

IRONGEAR VOLT £67.50

Active punch on a budget? Go on then

IRONGEAR

specialises in aftermarket pickups with low price tags and names such as the Hot Slag, Pig Iron and this, the Volt active humbucker. £67.50 bags you a bridge and neck set: about half the going rate of the competition.

Visually, the pickups aren't as nice as their rivals; the plastic covers look inexpensive but not enough to diminish our confidence. You'll need to solder the pickups in to fit them and replace your guitar's standard pots with 25kΩ models. A whole set (depending on your control layout) ranges from £5.25 to £10.95 from IronGear's website, which also has wiring diagrams for most common control configurations. Don't forget, you'll

need enough space inside your guitar for a 9-volt battery.

The Volts are voiced with a push at the high and low ends, and a strong midrange. The output can be a little overbearing: if you like your cleans crystal, you might need to back off the volume. This is particularly true of the neck pickup, which pumps out a lot of bass, while the bridge has less low-end and more grunt around the high mids. The flipside is that these pickups excel for hard rock and metal – and blending the two gives a good trade-off of body and bite.

We're surprised. They aren't going to convert non-active fans, but IronGear's Volt pickups give you sound quality that's usually out of reach for this money. Get some before they up the price.

Stuart Williams



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Active humbucker set
POSITION: Neck/Bridge
MAGNET: Alnico bar
WIRING: 2x signal, 1x power
CONTACT: IronGear
 01539 755015 irongear.co.uk

SUMMARY	FEATURES	SOUND QUALITY	VALUE FOR MONEY	BUILD QUALITY	USEABILITY	OVERALL RATING
						★★★★★

ELECTRO-HARMONIX RAVISH SITAR £205

Are you sitaring comfortably?

ROCK music has flirted with the sitar since the 60s, with some bona fide legends – and Kula Shaker – employing its droning twang over the years. The Electro-Harmonix Ravish Sitar opens the door of psychedelia to guitarists at the stomp of a switch, by recreating the sitar's lead and sympathetic resonances.

You get a Level control for your dry signal, plus Level and Timbre controls for the Lead and Sympathetic sounds. The Ravish also includes five modes: Key; Decay (for altering the decay time of the Lead sound); Modulation for emulating the sound of a tanpura; Pitch, which bends the Lead sound's pitch when you plug in an expression pedal and Freeze, for holding the Sympathetic

resonances while you continue to play over the top.

We found ourselves using Key mode the most, which lets you taylor the sympathetic resonances to the key you're playing in. With a little tweaking, the Ravish produces a convincing sitar simulation. The Timbre controls can take it from being authentic to synthetic sounding; so if you're after a realistic sound, you'll probably want to keep them below the two-thirds mark. Playing style also has a big influence over the sound. This means throwing in bends and sliding into notes rather than hammering on or pulling off. It's a lot of fun, and once you plug in you'll probably find yourself dead-legged from hours of sitting and playing with it.

Stuart Williams



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Sitar simulator
CONTROLS: Dry level, lead level, sympathetic level, lead timbre, sympathetic timbre, mode/preset dial, preset switch, bypass
SOCKETS: Instrument input, expression pedal inputs, sympathetic out, main out, power
POWER: PSU (supplied)
CONTACT: info@ehx.com ehx.com

SUMMARY	FEATURES	SOUND QUALITY	VALUE FOR MONEY	BUILD QUALITY	USEABILITY	OVERALL RATING
						★★★★★