

Oasis Humidifier & Hygrometer £16.95 & £23.50

Regulate the rarefied air in which you keep your guitars with two simple gadgets... by Simon Bradley



These Oasis gizmos can save your acoustics from dry air

NOW THAT VIRTUALLY every house in the land has some sort of central heating system, ensuring your acoustics remain undamaged from too dry an atmosphere is more important than ever.

It's frightening just how quickly the solid top of your expensive Taylor, Martin or Gibson acoustic can crack if kept in dry conditions too long and,

although humidifiers have been around for the best part of 30 years, none are as simple as the Oasis version.

Comprising a membrane that allows water absorbed by Humigel crystals inside to very slowly evaporate, the unit is suspended inside the guitar body via a soft plastic strip set between the G and D strings. As the water dissipates, the tube slowly contracts, thus leaving you in no doubt as to when it requires refilling.

If the atmosphere drops below 40 per cent relative humidity, your acoustic is at risk and this hygrometer allows you keep an eye on that too. Also including a thermometer, and designed to be placed inside or on the guitar's case, the clear readout makes a quick check a doddle and the unit can also record the minimum and maximum values.

IN USE: Both are dead easy to use and the design of the humidifier makes the

HUMIDIFIER/HYGROMETER TEST RESULTS	
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
In use	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

■ **WE LIKED** Dead easy to use in a very important area

■ **WE DISLIKED** Their efficiency relies on user memory!

scenario of finding your prized guitar full of water a nightmare of the past.

Verdict

The rigours of high temperature and low humidity are not always at the top of any players' maintenance list, but these two affordable items can do the work for you. What could be worse than opening your acoustic's case and finding that it has split? ☹

Guitarist RATING

★★★★★

KEY INFO OASIS HUMIDIFIER & HYGROMETER **PRICE:** £16.95 & £23.50 **TYPE:** MAINTENANCE **TEL:** GUITAR XS 01795 538877

Stompcase £205

An ergonomic and internally powered home for your stompboxes... by Simon Bradley

Power up your pedals with Stompcase's bespoke box



THE MAIN CONCERN with having a number of pedals as part of a live rig is powering them, and although units such as the DC Brick from Jim Dunlop offer regulated juice for up to 10 pedals of

varying voltage requirements, you're still obliged to have your stompers spread out over the stage akin to a Wildebeest migration.

Stompcase is an all-in-one solution that provides power for up to nine pedals via a supply that comes straight from the mains. Also included are five patch cables of differing lengths complete with right-angled flat jacks, and a power lead that bristles with nine nine-volt connectors.

The entire unit is clothed in a black carpet-like material and pedals are affixed to its base by using small pieces of Velcro that are also included, and there's also a small compartment for storing smaller accessories such as capos and string sets.

IN USE: It's simple in the extreme to get up and running quickly and, at its absolute maximum capacity, we reckon it could just about hold 16 BOSS-sized pedals. Of course, this wouldn't leave any room for the connecting leads and, if you use units of different sizes, you'll

STOMPcase	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
In use	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

■ **WE LIKED** A compact unit that's easy to use

■ **WE DISLIKED** No provision for 12-volt pedals

need to perform a Tetris-style jigsaw puzzle, especially if you feel placing pedals in a specific order is important.

There's also no provision for pedals that require a 12-volt supply, which could prove to be a real downside.

Verdict

This is a cool idea that works well enough as long as you only use pedals that require a nine-volt supply, and although we feel the price is a tad high, the Stompcase is well-made and could prove to be just what you've been looking for. ☺

Guitarist RATING

★★★★★

KEY INFO STOMPcase **PRICE:** £205 **TYPE:** PORTABLE PEDAL BOARD **TEL:** BTS 01487 740544 **WEB:** WWW.STOMPcase.CO.UK

Qwik Tune Guitar Professor £13.99

The guitar teacher that fits in your pocket: never miss a chord again... by Simon Bradley

IF YOU'RE EVER stuck for inspiration, try picking four chords at random from your chord book and stringing them together – the more obscure the better. Although you may not be lucky enough to find a useable riff, you may well find your guitar brain firing in a new and exciting way.

The Guitar Professor measures a mere 87mm by 54mm and, as well as including a chromatic tuner and six-note pitch pipe, also features a 250-strong chord finder. Each function is selected via its own button and the chords can be scrolled through in order: A, A#, B, C and so on.

If you're searching for a specific chord, you need to first select the relevant key. Then, by using two function buttons, you can subsequently scroll through more involved types including all stops from 5th to added 13th plus minors, diminished, augmented and more.

GUITAR PROFESSOR	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
In use	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
■ WE LIKED The possibilities are endless...	
■ WE DISLIKED The tuner was a little jerky on occasion	

Once you have the correct chord the display shows a perfectly clear fret box and, although there isn't room to suggest actual finger abbreviations, fret numbers are present and correct.

IN USE: Although we found the tuner took a little time to settle down, it worked accurately enough. There's no option to alter the calibration, so you'll need to know which note you're tuning to yourself, but the on-board mic allows its operation with an acoustic too. The chord finder works perfectly too and, once you get your head around the



simple interface, you'll be away.

Verdict

Even if you own a pro-standard tuner you should give the Professor a try as only Guitar George knows all the chords... **G**

Guitarist RATING



This pocket-sized Professor knows all the chords

KEY INFO QWIK TUNE GUITAR PROFESSOR **PRICE:** £13.99 **TYPE:** TUNER/CHORD FINDER **TEL:** JHS 0113 286 5381 **WEB:** WWW.JHS.CO.UK

Exploraudio LiveGuitar H-clamp £65

A unique clamping system makes easy work of mic'ing an acoustic guitar by Trevor Curwen

A PROBLEM FOR recording engineers trying to record an acoustic guitar is ensuring the player stays a set distance from the mic. Capturing the best sound involves the optimum placement of the microphone when it comes to exactly which part of the guitar the mic is pointing at, the distance from it and the angle. A degree of experimentation usually finds a sweet spot and then it's up to the guitarist to stay in position, which may not be that difficult for a complete take of the track.

However, if drop-ins are needed to patch sections up and the guitarist has shifted in the meantime then getting back into position to avoid unwanted tonal shifts could be problematic. A solution to this is now at hand with the H-clamp, a hi-tech microphone holder that clamps to the guitar and holds the mic firmly in the required sweet spot.

IN USE: An easily turned knurled knob fixes the H-clamp securely to the lower

EXPLORER H-CLAMP	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
In use	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
■ WE LIKED Precise construction; wide range of adjustment	
■ WE DISLIKED Guitar's balance can be upset by heavier mics; adaptors cost extra	

bout of a guitar while synthetic rubber used in the construction ensures no trace of a mark is left. The amount of available adjustment is plenty for most regular acoustic guitar bodies, but adaptors will be available for anything that falls outside the 84-116mm range.

Adjustment of microphone position ticks all the right boxes and the system is robust enough to take even a large diaphragm condenser mic and keep it precisely in place. Of course, having a heavy microphone attached to an acoustic guitar will upset its balance whether on lap or strap, but in practice it's easy enough for the player to adapt to this and not too much of a sacrifice to

make in the quest for consistent sound quality.

Verdict

The H-clamp is a great idea well executed. Practical and convenient, it neatly fills a functional niche in both recorded and live sound. **G**

The H-Clamp can quickly solve your acoustic mic'ing problems



Guitarist RATING



KEY INFO H-CLAMP **PRICE:** £65 (BLACK), £60 (SILVER) **TYPE:** MIC ATTACHMENT SYSTEM **TEL:** EXPLORAUDIO 01761 463643