

Quicktest



PreSonus Audiobox USB £119

Compact audio and MIDI interface
with music creation software

CONTACT: Source Distribution PHONE: 0208 962 5080 WEB: www.presonus.com

A 2 x 2 audio interface (stereo in, stereo out), the Audiobox offers a pair of XLR/jack combi input sockets equipped with phantom power so you can plug in any mic, a guitar, or other instrument. There are both headphone and line outputs, each with their own volume knob and a mixer knob to balance the level of the input signal against that coming back from the computer for comfortable monitoring.

In Use

The Audiobox takes its power from your computer's USB bus, so it can be used anywhere and the quality of the onboard preamps ensure that it provides a decent signal for anything plugged in. Besides the audio connections you also get MIDI in and out sockets so you can also use a keyboard to play soft synths or trigger drum loops – not a bad function to have, as it comes bundled with PreSonus Studio One Artist software.

This music creation program has over 4GB of virtual instruments, plug-ins, loops, and samples to create backing tracks ready to be used with a guitar and/or vocals.

Verdict

If you want to record on your computer or just play through software amp sims you'll need an audio interface and, being rugged, easily portable and offering mic, guitar and MIDI interfacing options, the Audiobox USB is a strong contender for your cash. **[TC]**

The Bottom Line

We like: Solid metal construction; compact; MIDI as well as audio interfacing

We dislike: Silver marking on a silver knob means positioning is not always clearly seen

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Kuassa Amplifikation Crème \$34

The crème de metal...

CONTACT: Kuassa PHONE: N/A WEB: www.kuassa.com



three types on offer and use two virtual mics, each from a choice of four.

Sounds

With options for moving the mics in relation to the speakers alongside the amp, overdrive and cab choices, there's a useful range of tones to be had here. These stretch from clean through to full on high-gain metal sounds, which can be effortlessly

We looked at Kuassa's Amplifikation One amp sim plug-in a while back and the company has now brought out Amplifikation Crème, which it says is a darker, fuller and heavier version. What you get is a VST or AU plug-in, laid out as a nice-looking graphic of an amp head with a built-in overdrive section, plus a matching cabinet with various mic'ing options.

Three different amp types can be called up, each with three selectable channels (clean, distortion and distortion with full bottom-end) and controls for gain and volume, plus low, mid and high EQ. One of three different overdrives with drive, tone and level controls can be placed before the amp and you can select one or two 4 x 12 cabs from the

dialled in, albeit with loads of hiss when the gain is cranked – taken care of easily enough with the built-in noise-gate. Overall, you get plenty of amp for not much more than £20.

Verdict

If you're on a budget and looking for an amp sim plug-in for mainly distorted sounds, this is well worth a listen. **[TC]**

The Bottom Line

We like: Easily tweaked interface; cool range of overdriven sounds; low cost; try-before-you-buy demo

We dislike: DAW track needs to be stereo before plug-in can be inserted

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Vibramate Bigsby mounting kit **approx £47**



A foolproof method of fitting a Bigsby to selected guitars

CONTACT: AllParts PHONE: 0800 849 8224 WEB: www.vibramate.com

For a genuinely vintage look and wobble performance, only a Bigsby will do, but retrofitting one to your guitar can be a chore. However, if your guitar has a standard tune-o-matic bridge and stud tailpiece, all you need is a Vibramate mounting kit and you're away. They're available for carved top guitars, such as a Les Paul, or flat-tops, such as an SG. There's even a version for a Flying V.

You'll need to buy the Bigsby separately, and depending the choice of vibrato, the kit comprises a simple baseplate designed to fit the two holes left by the removal of the tailpiece.

The plate is screwed into these holes and the Bigsby is secured by four screws, with no extra drilling required.

In Use

We were supplied with a V500 in black to fit to our flat-top Washburn Idol. We must concede to some trepidation before fitting the unit, but it's no exaggeration to say that it took us less than 10 minutes to set the Bigsby B500 in place and string the guitar back up.

Verdict

The units are available either directly from Vibramate.com



(the company is affiliated with the Gretschgear.com website) or from AllParts in the UK. This is an innovation of true genius and, as long as your guitar boasts a standard tune-o-matic and stud tailpiece, you should find a kit to fit. [SB]

The Bottom Line

We liked: Ease of installation; choice of models
We disliked: Nothing

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

T-Rex Tonebug Phaser & Chorus Flanger **£145 each**

T-Rex gets the modulation bug

CONTACT: Westside Distribution PHONE: 0141 248 4812 WEB: www.t-rex-effects.com

The two latest pedals in T-Rex's more affordable Tonebug series, the Phaser and the Chorus Flanger, cover classic modulation territory. Both have rate and depth knobs and a switch to select two different effects – a choice of 'modern' and 'vintage' phasing in the Phaser while the other pedal's name should give you a clue...

Sounds

Balancing the Phaser's two knobs offers up a range of usable sounds from a very slow shift through to fast warbling, the vintage tone being reminiscent of some seventies phasers – warmer and more rounded than the modern, which is a brighter more complex effect, not unlike a rotary speaker at some settings.

A rich rotary emulation is also in the Chorus Flanger's repertoire, along with more standard chorus and some sick pitch variations if you overcook the depth knob. All positions of that knob work fine for the Flanger setting though – you get a gem of a flanger with a great range of familiar sounds.

Verdict

Not everyone can afford to buy into the T-Rex experience, but the Tonebugs offer a more affordable way in and a useful 'twofer' functionality – two distinct phasing sounds will increase your tonal options, and it's unlikely you'll use chorus and flanging in the same song, so a pedal that can give you both has to be a smart addition to any pedalboard. [TC]



Two modulation effects offer some classic tones

The Bottom Line

We like: Solid build; two distinct sounds in each pedal; more affordable than T-Rex's standard range

We dislike: They're still not exactly cheap

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★