

# GEAR REVIEW

## AER POCKET TOOLS COLOURIZER

### 1 ENHANCER

**ADD** extra shine and bounce to your sound and adjust the intensity of the effect with this Enhancer control. A useful feature that brings tone to life

### 2 BUILD QUALITY

**WITH** separate gain and master volume controls, and a quiet presence in the signal chain, this AER is a quality preamp that's built to last

### 3 EQUALISER

**THE** EQ section is designed to let you pinpoint troublesome feedback frequencies and cut them out of the mix – but conventional bass, mid and treble EQ controls are absent

# AER POCKET TOOLS COLOURIZER

£279

Getting great acoustic sounds isn't black and white. AER injects some colour

### AT A GLANCE

**TYPE:** Acoustic preamp  
**EFFECTS:** Enhancer  
**PATCHES:** No  
**CONTROLS:** Gain, Master Volume, DI level, Tone, Phase Reverse, Parametric EQ  
**SOCKETS:** XLR/6.3mm line-in combo jack, XLR DI line out, 6.3mm jack line-out  
**POWER:** 24V transformer  
**CONTACT:** Westside Distribution 01412 484812 westsidedistribution.com

**LET'S** face it: it can be hard to nail the perfect electro-acoustic tone. If your cherished acoustic sounds like a tennis racket fitted with P90s when you strum it onstage, it may be time to try out the new range of Pocket Tools from acoustic specialist AER.

These pedal-sized devices are designed to bring your amplified or recorded acoustic tone to life, especially this sound-sculpting preamp, the Colourizer. If that sounds more like a hair product than anything a bourban-swiggin'

rocker should keep in their gigbag, don't worry – you're worth it.

Initial impressions are good. The Colourizer's 'black box' casing looks strong enough to survive an aircraft crash. On the front, you'll find gain, master volume and DI level controls to help you dial in a clear tone, plus an Enhancer effect that adds extra harmonic zing. There's also a Tone control that allows you to subtly emphasise bass or treble if your guitar's tone is lacking in either area, and a phase-reverse switch to resolve frequency interference problems.

So far, so dandy. However, some of the Colourizer's other features are a bit less user-friendly.

To plug in, you can choose either a line-in from a pickup or an XLR mic input backed by 24-volt phantom power for condenser mics. But because of the single input you can't blend the two, making the Colourizer less flexible than its stablemate, the Dual Mix, if you want to use both an external mic and a pickup on your acoustic.

Also, the EQ section is a bit misleadingly named: rather than being a conventional EQ, it mainly acts as a notch filter to suppress feedback-inducing frequencies. The Bandwidth knob determines how fine a slice of the overall sonic spectrum the lone Level control will influence. Separate Frequency controls allow you to select where the mid-point of that band sits – from deep bass to shrill treble – and thus isolate problem areas with surgical precision.

Finally, although the pots are reassuringly solid and smooth, it would have been handy to have had some calibrated dots around each dial so the settings could

be noted down easily. At this price, you don't want to be taking mugshots of your preamp to recall how you got the best sounds to suit a particular room, mic or guitar.

AER's products are not flashy, but they are well made and this is a serious audio tool that, with a bit of experimentation, can put a professional shine on your acoustic's sound. Despite that, it's hard to work out who this is for: it's not fully optimised for ease of use during gigs, while home-recording buffs will already have many of its functions at their fingertips if they own a decent audio interface and DAW software. At nearly £300, you need to be not merely sold on a preamp's benefits but experience something close to religious conversion – and it's a little hard to see the light here.

Jamie Dickinson



AER you gonna go my way? At this price, it's no impulse buy

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