

# Quicktest



## Tascam iXZ £69

A mic/instrument interface for iOS

CONTACT: Tascam UK PHONE: 01923 438888 WEB: www.tascam.co.uk

The increasing array of amp sims and recording apps being released for iOS – iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch – is likely to tempt more of us to buy an input device and plug in. Tascam's first foray into the field is this compact (106 x 40 x 45mm) interface that sits on a table and connects to your iOS device's headphone socket via a lead, which means minimum stress on the socket. A combination standard jack/XLR socket can take instrument or mic signals while output is via a mini-jack stereo headphone socket.

### In Use

If you set the input for guitar you just plug straight in and get on with it. On the mic setting you also get to adjust the input gain and can switch in phantom power, (supplied by a pair of AA batteries), if using a condenser. The iXZ has no problem getting a decent signal into your Apple device and is fine for getting clean signals to recording apps. If you use amp sim apps, though,

we've found with input devices that plug into the iPad/iPhone headphone socket (rather than the dock connector) is that you can get nasty feedback in your headphones when using high-gain sounds. The iXZ exhibits this behaviour, necessitating turning down the gain or output level on the amp.

### Verdict

The iXZ is compact and cost-effective if you don't want to fork out for an interface with dock connection. It's also one of the very few products that can input decent mics or straight instruments into your iOS device. [TC]

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Compact connector for both guitar and mic; XLR input with phantom power

**We dislike:** Feedback with high-gain amp sims

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



## Dunlop SC95 Slash Cry Baby Classic £149

Welcome to the wah-wah

CONTACT: Westside PHONE: 0141 248 4812 WEB: www.jimdunlop.com

When we interviewed him about his gear for his new solo record in issue 355, Slash mentioned an update of the wah pedal that bears his name. "Dunlop has made a new version that doesn't have the preamp in it and that's what I was using," he recalled. That pedal is this new Slash Cry Baby Classic. Gone is the superfluous onboard distortion that hardly anyone, least of all Slash, actually really made use of, and the result is a stripped-down wah of a more classic spec.

The faux-worn finish, all rust-coloured undercoat and bare metal, is extremely cool, as is the 'R&F'nR' emblem cut into the non-slip rubber tread that tops the familiar treadle. Importantly there are two bright blue on/off LEDs, one on each side of the chassis, that allow you to spot whether the pedal's actually on from a distance: a touch regular wahsmiths will welcome.

### Sounds

Tuned to a lower frequency, employing a custom-wound inductor, the wah is really able to cut a tonal swathe through a classic, Marshall-driven rock tone. It's ideally suited to colouring notes à la Slash and Michael Schenker and, when turning the guitar volume down to reduce amp gain, the effect loses none of its fatness.

### Verdict

If you use a wah in a rock environment and don't necessarily need to double as a Nile Rodgers-style funk guitarist at weekends, you should give this a try. [SB]

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Cool look; good performance; nice price

**We dislike:** The pedal's tonal range isn't really suited to funk styles

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



## Vintage VRC-800AMF electro resonator £429

A plug-in-and-play resonator. Almost

CONTACT: JHS PHONE: 01132 865381 WEB: www.jhs.co.uk

With three acoustic resonators and one National-style biscuit-bridge cutaway electro resonator already in its range, Vintage has recently added this good-looking Dobro-style spider-bridge electro resonator with 12-frets-to-the-body neck joint, 626mm (24.6-inch) scale

length, Telecaster-style covered neck single-coil and knurled-knobbed volume and tone controls.

The maple laminate body has some strong flaming, especially on the back, enhanced by the satin amber finish. With a maple neck that's not over wide

(42.6mm at the nut with 54mm string spacing at the bridge) it feels good, quite electric solidbody-like and only the mismatched heel stack points to its cost-effective origins.

### Sounds

Unplugged, the 800 certainly captures a resonator's honk. It's not over loud for the style and a little more refined than many metal-bodied National-styles. Plugged in however, the bronze wound strings are not suited to a magnetic pickup designed for nickel wounds. The output is very unbalanced, the wound strings much quieter than the plain treble B and E and the Tele pickup sits some way from

them. Then there's the electric set-up, which negates all but the very lightest of slide techniques.

### Verdict

Vintage can't seem to decide who this is for. The strings don't match the pickup and what for many is a slide guitar is set up as a standard electric. Nicely made though... [DB]

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Good build; acoustic sound/playability

**We dislike:** Uneven output; action's too low for slide

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

## Korg Pitchblack Poly £83

Accurate tuning at a single strum

CONTACT: Korg UK PHONE: 01908 304600 WEB: www.korg.co.uk

After the success of the TC Electronic Poly Tune, it's no surprise to see Korg follow the polyphonic trend with this Pitchblack Poly. In similar fashion to the TC tuner, with a simple strum of the open strings, the Pitchblack Poly will automatically work out whether you're playing a guitar or bass, including four-, five- and six-strings, and then tell you how in tune you are via a clear display.

From there, you can tune each string individually, and the display changes to show the relevant note you're aiming for,

plus a meter that can be set to regular, strobe, half-strobe or split. Furthermore, you can calibrate the tuner to operate with various capo and altered tunings and we're happy to report that the interface, although involved, is straightforward to use.

### In Use

Assuming that accurate tuning is a given with a modern tuner, we'd argue that the main feature for any such item should be that it mutes the signal when in use. Your audience has no interest in hearing you tune up

and fortunately the Pitchblack Poly clears this hurdle effortlessly. What's more, it also includes a true-bypass circuit.

### Verdict

Although not quite as bijou and compact as the new Poly Tune Mini, the Pitchblack won't take up too much space on your pedalboard and, unlike the Mini, it can be run by a single 9V battery. Overall, the Pitchblack Poly is a fine unit that does nothing to dilute Korg's reputation as a maker of quality tuners. [SB]



### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Ease of use; accurate tuning; straightforward interface; compact size

**We dislike:** Nothing

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★