

Quicktest



Motörheadphones

£79-£129

Make everything loud

CONTACT: Motörheadphones PHONE: 01223 597883 WEB: www.motorheadphones.com

Motörheadphones? What do they do, make everything sound like Motörhead? No entity on this earth should sound like Motörhead, except Motörhead themselves. The concept behind the band's badged custom range – three sets of cans: Bomber, Iron Fist and Motörizer, plus two in-ear jobs, Overkill (£49) and Trigger (£39), both with metal rather than plastic buds – is that most modern cans are designed for dance-music fans who favour monster bass, thereby short-changing guitar-based rock's need for a strong low-mid. We're assured both that Motörheadphones redress this imbalance, and that the entire range has been tested to destruction by the band and their crew.

In Use

Solid and stylish, with black-crackle finish, comfortable thanks to velvet ear-cushions and clever self-adjusting headband, and fitted with high-end trimmings like woven cable and gold-plated right-angled jack, the top-of-the-range Motörizer ain't just for hard rock, though it certainly flatters the epic filth of ZZ Top

and, indeed, Motörhead... and the weighty whomp of a symphony orchestra gets an equally luxurious ride. There's plenty of bass response, as well as those rich, warm mids, and a high-end clarity that suits solo acoustic, cello or piano. The only disappointment is that the flaws in some older recordings can be cruelly exposed, and distortion – the wrong kind – can set in before your brain is reduced to jelly.

Verdict

Killer cans at a sensible price, fit for purpose across the entire musical spectrum – use 'em for both pleasure listening and home/studio recording. And how cool is it to be seen wearing Motörheadphones when you're actually listening to Miles Davis, Martin Carthy... or Mözart? [CSM]

The Bottom Line

We like: Stylish; versatile; comfortable; well priced;
We dislike: Break-up sometimes starts before your ears actually bleed

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Planet Waves Pro-Winder £9.49

Wind, snip and remove strings easily

CONTACT: D'Addario UK PHONE: 0191 300 3000 WEB: www.daddario.co.uk

A string-winder is a vital accessory when it comes to restringing your pride and joy efficiently, perhaps at a mid-gig interval, and Planet Waves provides quite a choice. However, the Pro-Winder adds functionality with a number of useful features. There's a string snipper built into the hinge of the hardened steel handle, as well as a string-pin puller, and it's small enough to fit into your pocket.

The winder head incorporates a number of slots, which allow it to be usable with electric, acoustic and even some – but not all – bass tuner buttons of most denominations. Impressively, it can even deal with the notoriously oversized Gretsch Imperial-style tuner with consummate ease.

In Use

Stronger jaws and more tension in the pivot for easier one-hand operation are good updates from the last model. Even the bridge-pin puller has been redesigned to help better protect your acoustic's bridge from marks and dings.

Verdict

Never had a good string winder/cutter? Do yourself a favour and get the Pro-Winder. You'll soon wonder how you managed without it. [SB]

The Bottom Line

We like: Works perfectly; great price
We dislike: Nothing

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



TheGigRig QuarterMaster £149

Simple solution to multiple true-bypass loop switching

CONTACT: TheGigRig.com PHONE: 01793 862092 WEB: www.thegigrig.com

TheGigRig has a deserved rep for pro pedalboard solutions. Its new QuarterMaster is a neat strip of separate loops that gives you independent true-bypass switching over whatever is in each. That could be as simple as keeping problematic pedals completely out of your signal chain when you're not using them, or you could set up separate groups of pedals in single loops to suit your needs. The QuarterMaster is available in various configurations; we

have the six-loop option (£169), but see TheGigRig's website for other sizes and custom orders.

In Use

The relay switching and bright blue status LEDs require a nine-volt mains supply with a Boss-style adaptor. There's a bracket kit (£6) for Pedaltrain 'boards; we'd opt for a rubber pad (or Velcro) and cable ties for anything else.

We used the QM6 for our recent Dunlop Fuzz Face

comparison video (issue 361), and it coped admirably: no ground loop hum, no pops and bangs, just reliable, instant switching. In another setup, we assembled a main, everyday collection of drives, modulation and delay using four loops, but had two completely separate chains of pedals on the remaining two loops – one broadly Hendrix-inspired, the other slightly harder rock. Those extra loops would cause all sorts of issues were they all

in one great big line – here, the segregation means it's more like having three small pedalboards in one, with no problems.

Verdict

Professional-quality pedal switchers don't come much more straightforward and affordable than this. If you want simple, neat true bypass switching control over an unruly collection of stompboxes, you want QuarterMaster. [MT]

The Bottom Line

We like: Simple to use; high quality; space-efficient
We dislike: Nothing

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

IK Multimedia AmpliTube 3.9 £various

Four new amps for AmpliTube

CONTACT: IK Multimedia PHONE: 0800 0934 066 WEB: www.ikmultimedia.com

The latest AmpliTube update offers general reliability improvements and also fixes an issue on the Fender Tape Echo model – but the biggest news is that it adds new, officially certified amp and cab models from Orange and Carvin, which you can try out and purchase from the Custom Shop (credits cost from €0.45 to €0.75 depending on quantity bought).

In Use

As well as three new Orange Bass Cabinets (five credits each), three Orange amps make their debut – the OR50 head, AD200 Bass Mark III (20 credits each) and the Dual Terror (30 credits). Where the

OR50 dishes up tasty classic rock crunch, the two-channel Dual Terror offers a range from clean to Tiny Terror outrage.

Carvin isn't exactly a household name among UK guitarists, but it does have widespread US usage. Here we get a three-channel V3M guitar head (30 credits) and matching 2x12 cab (five credits). With one clean and two lead channels, reverb and comprehensive EQ, there's a versatile range of tones, particularly some heavy rock sounds, with plenty of sustain and rich harmonics.

Verdict

It's always good to get a new selection of amps and cabinets



to add to your rig, and these ones from IK Multimedia will certainly let you freshen it up with new sounds. With the Orange Dual Terror and the Carvin V3M priced between £11 and £18 each, though, you may only see them as value for money if you really can't do without them. [TC]

The Bottom Line

We like: Three juicy Oranges and a Carvin amp and cab available in software
We dislike: We'd like the amps to be more affordable

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Focusrite iTrack Solo £129

New interface for iPad/iPhone/iPod touch

CONTACT: Focusrite PHONE: 01494 462246 WEB: www.focusrite.com

The new Focusrite iTrack Solo is a two-in/two-out audio interface for use with an iPad via the dock connector, but also fully compatible with a PC or Mac computer.

Compact yet rugged, the iTrack Solo is powered via USB, so you'll need your Apple USB power supply (or a computer link) when using it with an iPad. It features a guitar input, plus a phantom powered XLR mic input, each with its own input gain knobs surrounded by an ingeniously useful 'Halo', which shows green when the

signal is at a good level, and red if it's clipping. A monitoring knob controls the output from a standard jack headphone output plus L and R line RCA phono outputs, while a direct monitoring switch lets you hear the input audio latency-free.

In Use

Focusrite has always been about sound quality, and the iTrack Solo doesn't disappoint. With quality 24-bit 96kHz A/D conversion and 105dB dynamic range, it captures all the nuances of your sound, and you

can use both inputs at once and record them to separate tracks, if your software supports that. Be aware, though, because some iPad guitar apps such as AmpliTube take their signal from the left of a stereo input, and the iTrack Solo's guitar is on the right.

Verdict

Dead easy to use, and with quality sound, the iTrack Solo could be your ideal choice for recording electric guitar and bass, as well as acoustic guitar and vocals. [TC]

**Guitarist
CHOICE**

The Bottom Line

We like: iOS and computer connectivity; Halo level indicators; software bundle included; sound quality

We dislike: Short iPad connector could compromise positioning (easily sorted with an extender cable)

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Yamaha GC22S £898

Time to get out your footstool: Yamaha goes classical

CONTACT: Yamaha PHONE: 0844 811 1116 WEB: http://uk.yamaha.com

Yamaha started out making classical guitars in the 60s, and utilised the expertise of Spanish makers like Eduardo Ferrer and later Manuel Hernandez, along with players like Segovia, Baden Powell and Paco de Lucía. Originally, the Grand Concert (GC) guitars were just handmade in Japan in very small numbers. While

that's still the case, the start point of Yamaha's new 2012 GC range, the GC12 (£748), the reviewed GC22 and the GC32 (£1,697) are factory-made in China, and therefore highly affordable in comparison to the top-of-the-range model, the GC82 – a cool £9,987.

The spruce-topped and lightweight GC22S is an

attractive piece: it's all solid, with rosewood back and sides, mahogany neck and ebony fingerboard. It's gloss finished, too, with a colourful Spanish-style rosette. Internally, it's cleanly constructed, with a dovetail neck joint, not a typical Spanish slipper heel. Scale length is 650mm (25.59 inches), nut width 52mm (2.05 inches),

and the flat fingerboard is devoid of markers, face or side.

Sounds

If you're used to a nylon-string electro, the higher 'classical' action takes some adjustment, but the overall tone is balanced, big and spacious with deep bass and strong trebles. In a few weeks, it's definitely opened out sound-wise; regular playing will increase that.

Verdict

If you're a serious student, or just like to dabble with the classic repertoire but on a quality instrument, this is a good place to start. Yamaha's excellent consistency is what makes the brand so easy to recommend, and this GC22S is a fine example of serious factory craft. [DB]

The Bottom Line

We like: Heritage; build; spacious tone

We dislike: Slightly cramped string spacing at nut

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★