



TC Electronic G-System £1,195

TC Electronic hits the floor with more control, flash and metal than ever by Benji Bartlett

TC Electronic has never been the shy, retiring type when it comes to introducing a new product. As its stunning-looking G-System makes a grand entrance into the market, it's no surprise that the daring Danes are dubbing it the "world's first complete high-quality, floor-based guitar system". It's a bold claim, and it's certainly audacious enough to ruffle

a few feathers at Line6, BOSS, Zoom, DigiTech and Yamaha.

The concept behind the G-System is to put as much control at the feet of the player as possible. It comprises two distinct sections: the controller/display unit, with its gleaming steel and chrome buttons, and the rack-mount processor, or 'brain'. This is steeped in the quality heritage of TC

Electronic's guitar processors like the G-Force and G-Major.

The heavy-duty brushed steel construction is impressive both in looks and strength. It can also be permanently mounted to a pedalboard thanks to pre-drilled holes along the underside. This is probably the best way to treat the unit since it's quite heavy and those sharp edges

The G-System's prime advantage over its rivals is the amount of control options available, and the flexible set-up possibilities



along the underside could be hazardous when packing down at the end of a gig.

Topside, however, the G-System is far from perilous. The user interface is about as close to five-star luxury as your feet will ever get. There are smooth mirrored chrome discs to stomp on, each with its own concentric function light and a user display that if were it any brighter, you could include in your band's light show. If there were beauty contests for guitar equipment, this thing would win hands down.

The modular construction is indicative of the kind of forward thinking that has kept TC Electronic at the forefront of guitar processing, with units like the G-Force and G-Major rack processors. The new unit might look like the flight console of an alien spaceship but the whole concept is rooted in simplicity. The controller/brain pair can be used combined at your feet, as supplied. Alternatively, they can be divorced from one another with an Allen wrench and a few twists of the wrist, allowing the delicate electronics, along with your favourite stomp pedals, to be stored out of harm's way. This feature is a brilliant idea and if you've ever lusted after the kind of neat, tidy effects control enjoyed by pros like David Gilmour with their custom-built Pete Cornish racks and switching systems, you'll be delighted with this option.

You'll need to invest in a high-quality CAT5 cable to connect the pair, but

G-SYSTEM	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WE LIKED Supremely flexible; versatile; stunning looks and functionality ■ WE DISLIKED Sharp edges could cause injury when repositioning the unit 	

then you'll have remote control of all your effects. This option also opens the door for future hardware upgrades, meaning you'll be able to keep it as part of your rig even as technology develops. And with a USB connector as standard, you'll be able to keep your G-System up to date with the latest software by downloading patches from the TC Electronic website.

The unit includes expression control options and can be combined with a volume pedal and as many of your favourite stomp pedals as you can comfortably route into the quartet of switchable FX loops on the unit's rear. A further loop enables connection with a guitar preamp for rack devotees, or you can set up the G-System like a regular stomp pedal instead and plug it straight into the front end of your amp.

SOUNDS: For players who have yet to experience TC Electronic's digital effects, let's put things in perspective. These are the digital effects that Steve Vai incorporates in his live rack

system, and there's not a lot that he doesn't know about guitar tones. If that isn't recommendation enough, TC Electronic's reverb and chorus effects have long been highly regarded in recording studios for their wide dynamic range and exceptionally transparent character, and this is abundantly apparent here.

The G-System's 100 presets are based on the patches found in TC Electronic's popular G-Major processor and are arranged in 20 banks of five effects, with bank up/down selection buttons logically positioned to the left of the floorboard. The five respective patch switches lie along the bottom edge, nearest your toes, for instant access.

Whenever a patch is selected, the active effects blocks light up so it's clear what type of effects are present in the patch. From a comprehensive selection of filter, compression, modulation, pitch and delay effects of every conceivable sub-division, it's not difficult to create the custom effects patches of your dreams, especially since all blocks can be functioning simultaneously. The routing of the blocks is highly flexible too, and includes series, semi-parallel and parallel routing for maximum sonic versatility. Each of the FX blocks can be switched in and out noiselessly by activating the corresponding footswitch, giving you stompbox-style control over hi-fi rack effects.

When it comes to editing, TC has cleverly incorporated the jog/shuttle parameter edit and page select dials into the Comp, Loop 1, Loop 2 and Loop 3 footswitches along the back row. Using this system for effect editing is both intuitive and fast. Simply stomp →



The rivals

Line6 Podxt Live	£399
Vox Tonelab SE	£399
GigRig MIDI 8	£499

Being a groundbreaking product means that there are few rivals for the G-System. If you like to do all your sonic processing at your feet then the Vox Tonelab SE is a great place to start. It provides warm valve tones and powerful modelling with real-time control. Likewise, the Line6 Podxt Live will cater for most of your needs, but without the flexibility of hooking up tons of your favourite stompers in switchable loops, like the GigRig MIDI 8 can. For control over multi-amp setups incorporating up to eight effect loops with boost-level controls and programmable amp switching, the GigRig is one of the most effective systems that you can get

TC ELECTRONIC G-SYSTEM £1,195

EFFECTS  CD TRACKS 6 & 7



It's easy to tweak the many effects to get the sound you want

→ on Edit, select the page you want to adjust and turn the three parameter dials to make your changes. When you're finished, hit Edit again and you're rocking. Alternatively, you can choose to store the edited patch in a user location of your choice.

There are a number of presets that allude to the sounds of famous artists, including Gilmour, Summers, Petty, Crow (Sheryl), Chet Atkins, Wes Montgomery and The Edge. However, with the amount of processing power and flexibility on tap, there isn't a sound under the sun that you couldn't have a decent crack at emulating.

The sounds themselves are exceptionally clear, allowing the true character of your guitar and preamp to govern the actual tone, while the effects are seamlessly incorporated for an impressive, studio-quality sound.

The G-System's prime advantage over rival floor units is the incredible amount of control options available, and the flexible set-up possibilities. Inbuilt, high-quality effects like whammy and wah, for example, can be controlled in real-time by plugging in and calibrating any expression pedal.

You can assign effect parameters to the expression pedal too, and even changing channel on your amp can be achieved by storing specific switching information to effect patches. This is thanks to a pair of programmable stereo 6.4mm jack switches on the rear of the unit. There's also an adjustable boost feature (attenuation release), offering up to 12db lift for solos.

Verdict

When you're looking at the best part of £1,200 for an effects processor, you expect it to stand on its hind legs and perform tricks. And to be honest, that's pretty much exactly what the G-System does – you're getting a seriously impressive amount of kit for your money. As a stage-ready solution to all your effects and performance control needs, it can't be faulted. It caters for so many potential usage scenarios, it's dizzying just thinking of



TC-Helicon Vocal Technologies VoiceLive £680

Not content with providing a solution for guitar players' FX woes, TC Electronic has also gone and invented possibly the most useful vocal effects processor ever. If you're a solo singer/songwriter, or you're in a band where the backing vocals are a bit scarce, the VoiceLive can completely transform the scope and range of your vocal performances.

Its main function is to be a studio-quality vocal rack processor at your feet, providing transparent pitch correction, natural-sounding harmonies and a huge range of effects.

The sturdy unit features 48V phantom power and studio-quality mic preamp (Burr Brown INA163-based) with built-in limiter, as well as instrument input for the solo performer.

The processing power available is jaw-dropping. With EQ, compression, delay, natural-sounding harmony, pitch correction and doubling algorithms, it can turn even the most incapable crooner's throaty croaks into a full-blown barbershop quartet, male voice choir or cathedral full of Gregorian chanters.

The Preset Mode offers instant access to harmony parameters like key and scale type, while Song Mode opens up a bank of pre-programmed songs so that you can step through programmed key changes while you perform. Switching

the harmony in and out is a one-button procedure, and we can't get over just how realistic the rich, thick harmonies sound. Simple renditions of basic rock songs can be turned into full-blown Beach Boys harmony numbers with ease.

The VoiceLive includes humanisation of voices, utilising its proprietary technology called FlexTime(tm), and also features human-modelled vibrato, inflection, pitch randomisation, portamento and even gender control. Believe us, it's weird hearing yourself as a woman or even a small child! Expression pedal options further expand the potential of the unit, and with lead voice doubling, reverbs and tap tempo delay, you can't fail to get an excellent live sound for your voice.


Like any great piece of hi-tech gear, it's the simple user interface that makes it so useful. Used judiciously, it gives solo artists the freedom to present more complex and rich-sounding song arrangements that have the sound of a full band. In the current musical climate, it may mean that you're more likely to get gigs in venues that can't cater for the space that a large band would occupy. If you're in a band where only one member has a decent voice, the VoiceLive can maximise the potential of that voice and leave the other musicians free to concentrate on playing their instruments.

them all. Whether you decide to have it in your amp's FX loop, plug straight in or even run a multi-amplifier set-up, it really can do it all.

The controller has the flexibility to include powered stomp pedal loops, real-time control and a stage tuner, so to say that the G-System is versatile would be an understatement.

The product is aimed at the semi-pro and professional player and so it doesn't confuse the issue with metronomes, phrase trainers and drum machines. Make no mistake, this is a professional piece of equipment, both sonically and in its myriad potential

applications. We can already hear the massive sigh of relief from guitar players across the country now that the G-System has arrived because it's sure to make their lives easier and it could end their effects worries forever.

With the G-System under your feet, you may never want for another effects processor, and you'll finally be able to incorporate all your favourite stomp pedals into one neat, tidy, incredible-looking and great-sounding rig. 

TC Electronic G-System

Guitarist RATING



TC ELECTRONIC G-SYSTEM
PRICE: £1,195
ORIGIN: Thailand
TYPE: Floor or rack-based multi-effects processor and controller
FEATURES: Nine simultaneous effects, four switchable mono loops for pedals, loop/insert point for preamps, 4 x 9V DC outlets for powering pedals, USB connection for software updates, MIDI, connections for 2/4 expression pedals
EFFECTS: Patch assignable boost (up to +12db), filter, wah, touch wah, auto wah, formant filters, compressor, chorus, flanger, vibrato, phaser, tremolo, panner, pitch shifter, octaver, whammy, detune, delays: reverse, tap, ping-pong, lo-fi, dynamic and dual. Reverb, EQ, noise gate
PATCHES: 100 factory/200 user programmable presets
CONNECTIONS: Guitar inputs front and rear, left/right outputs, 4 x loop in/out, insert in/out, MIDI IN/OUT, 4 x 9V DC out, 2x switch out, 2x expression pedal in, USB, S/PDIF
POWER: Mains
ACCESSORIES: 4 x 9V DC power cables
TC Electronic
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