

Although they've been with us for some time, SIMON TILLBROOK decides to re-evaluate the usefulness of Radial's JD-7, X-Amp, and SGI in context of the modern studio.

This is a short review of a few hardworking boxes that provide facilities and flexibility that are so often relied upon and taken for granted. In this case, the boxes are made by Canadian company, Radial Engineering, who manufactures a wide range of such interfaces and converter units.

I had three units from Radial Engineering's very extensive range of products: the JD-7 Injector, the X-Amp, and the SGI. These are all units designed for the distribution and re-amping of guitar signals for live and studio applications.

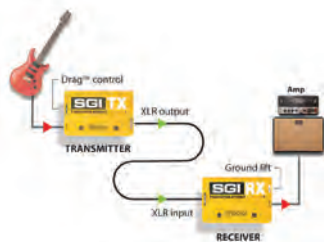
power from the supplied external 15V DC power supply. Line signal from your recorded source or DI feeds the X-Amp balanced XLR input that has an associated ground lift switch. The output end of the Radial X-Amp has a transformerless jack socket output and a transformer isolated jack output to supply two amplifiers. You can flip the phase of the transformer isolated output to phase align when using two amplifiers together and the overall output level to those amplifiers is variable with a single rotary control.

Using the Radial X-Amp to re-amplify a number of

RADIAL ENGINEERING

JD-7 INJECTOR, X-AMP, & SGI

Guitar Splitter/Re-amp, Active Re-amp, and Studio Guitar Interface



JD-7

The Radial JD-7 Injector has been with us longest of all and is a single rack mountable unit guitar (or line level) signal distribution system.

The Radial JD-7 allows you to simultaneously run up to seven independent amplifiers incorporating effect loops in two of the feeds. The build quality is exceptionally high and the JD-7 utilises discrete Class A circuitry throughout, as well as Jensen transformer isolated outputs.

You can connect two guitars/instruments through the front Hi-Z jacks or a +4dB line signal through the rear balanced XLR inputs.

The front input section of the Radial JD-7 has a feature common across two of the products I had for review and across the Radial range of interfaces in general – the Drag pot. This control introduces variable loading between the guitar pickup and the guitar amplifiers input that is usually lost through the re-amping or DI process. Radial feels that it is this resistant relationship that adds additional tonal variation.

There is a balanced XLR output on the rear, so you use the Radial JD-7 to simply record your signal as a DI box, but the isolated Jensen transformer outputs to your chosen amplifiers are all on the front accessed from jack output sockets.

Outputs five and six can include an effect loop connected via the rear jack send and return sockets, so a pedal board arrangement can be integrated with each of those two amplifier setups.

Using the Radial JD-7 in both a studio and live scenario is a joy as there is so much flexibility of distribution here, allowing for multiple simultaneous amplifier setups for both guitars and, for example, keyboards.

The Drag function is particularly good, having a very broad effect over the tonal aspect of your sound. You can dial in a thick warm feel through to some edgy harsh sonic aspects. The outputs are all super-clean and, with ground lift switches on each, completely free of any ground interference and hum.

Radial's JD-7 is about distribution, flexibility, and tonal variation, and is exceptionally good on both counts.

X-Amp

The Radial X-Amp is a box designed to take your recorded sound and feed to up to two amplifiers for re-amping. The X-Amp is a descendent of the JD-7 incorporating the same Class A circuit design.

Build quality feels bulletproof, again, with this small bookend sized box, with a rubber non-slip surface on the base. As an active unit, the Radial X-Amp draws its

guitar signals with a few amplifiers was simple. There is little to say here, but then that illustrates that the X-Amp does exactly what you need it to. The results were as if the guitar was plugged directly to the amplifier with no additional noise even at higher gain levels.

The Radial X-Amp is a solid tool that is perfect for simple re-amping applications.

SGI

The Radial SGI (Studio Guitar Interface) addresses problems with long guitar cable lengths and comes as a two-box package – the SGI TX and the SGI RX.

The SGI TX is a Class A active unit deriving power from the supplied 15V DC power supply while the SGI RX is passive. This arrangement is claimed by Radial to transmit a high impedance guitar signal through lengths of 100 metres (330 feet) and more. Each of the two parts of the Radial SGI has an isolating transformer that have been matched and counter wired to address the issue of noise and other distortion.

Using the Radial SGI over various cable runs on a few in-studio setups involved a simple assembly process. The Guitar plugged into the SGI TX jack input that had the Radial Drag function rotary control next to it. An XLR cable was connected from the balanced XLR output of the SGI TX to the balanced XLR input of the SGI RX, then finally a jack cable to connect the SGI RX output to the amplifier.

I used cable runs of 10, 20, 50, 100, and 120 metres during the test and you would be hard pushed to notice any difference between them. Once again, the Radial SGI performed exactly as claimed and as you need it to.

Conclusion

They may have been with us for some time but these boxes from Radial Engineering are every bit as useful now as they ever have been. The X-Amp and SGI do exactly what you need, and feel as though they would last a lifetime with the uncompromising build quality. With the Radial JD-7, you have fabulous flexibility of distribution and tone.

Unglamorous they may be, but essential for many, and more useful than you might imagine. }

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INFORMATION

£ JD7: GB£1,404.00, Xamp: GB£219.00, SGI: GB£297.00 (inc.VAT)

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