

Snapshot Product Reviews



RADIAL JD-7 INJECTOR **Guitar Signal-Distribution System**

Radial is known for its excellent direct boxes. Now, the company takes the concept of the direct box light-years ahead with the JD-7. Priced at \$799, this clever signal-distribution system allows guitar or bass players to connect as many as seven amps or simulators at a time, providing the ultimate in tonal versatility—onstage or in the studio.

The single-rackspace JD-7 can operate as a simple direct box, handling hi-Z instruments (guitars, basses, etc.) or line-level (keys, drum boxes, etc.) sources from front panel ¼-inch jacks or a rear +4dB balanced XLR input. Outputs are numerous, with a line-level XLR out and five ¼-inch outs (to feed amps, etc.). All are Jensen transformer-isolated, with ground lift and phase-reverse switches. Outputs 5 and 6 also have unbalanced ¼-inch effects loop send and return jacks. The ¼-inch outputs 1 and 7 are transformerless, direct-coupled outs—*sans* phase and lift switches.

The active circuitry is all discrete Class-A, with no ICs or op amps in the audio path. Combined with the Jensen transformer outs, the result is whisper-clean audio. Another nice touch is a rotary Drag control, which optimizes the loading of the guitar pickup to the active front end inputs. Drag can be optimized for a sweet direct sound or, alternatively, it can add some nasty edge for a bit more “character.”

The real fun begins in the studio. Users have the option of laying an ultraclean guitar track down first and then experimenting later with multiple amps/devices—sort of like a Reamp on steroids—or laying down live tracks in real time, feeding many amps/sources simultaneously. In the studio, I liked the former because we only had to use one track in the beginning, and had the option of either printing the combo of four to five amps to tracks or simply feeding them in the studio during the mix to create a “live” stereo submix.

The JD-7 offers enormous flexibility.

We combined a superclean JD-7 direct bass track with routings to a Line 6 Pod and two Fender Bassman tops driving a 4x10 and a 1969 single-15 Tone Ring bottom. Later, we sent dry rhythm and lead guitar performances to a Marshall AVT 275, Tech-21 Trademark 60, Danelectro Piggyback, Fender Deluxe Reverb and a Fender Showman/Tone Ring. There are lots of guitar amp modelers, but blending the signals from five amps was a gas. Best of all, we could experiment with various amp settings, tone, mics and placements without wearing the player out. The tone was so thick that you could cut it with a knife, and the stereo—or surround—possibilities are endless.

On other sessions, connecting sterile-sounding synth tracks to a couple of guitar amps added punch, while a dry organ track routed to an iso'd Marshall and a stereo-miked Leslie had the power of a freight train. This thing is addictive!

Radial Engineering; 604/942-1001; www.radialeng.com.

—George Petersen