



PEDALBOARD

MANUFACTURER
STRYMON

MODEL
IRIDIUM

PRICE
£399

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STRYMON

Iridium

The sound of an amp in a room for your pedalboard? Why not!

Words Trevor Curwen Photography Phil Barker

Usually for our Pedalboard section, here's a pedal that is not meant to be plugged into an amplifier.

In fact, it's actually there to replace your amp. Strymon's Iridium is an amp and cab modeller with added room reverb, unsurprisingly designed to deliver the sound of an amp through a cab in a room. While it can be an integral part of your pedalboard, its role is to be connected directly to a PA for live use or to recording equipment. It also has a headphone output so you can use it for silent practice.

What it provides is three modelled amps with drive and three-band EQ controls, each amp having a choice of three Impulse Response cabinets to be paired with, followed by (optional) room reverb. If you want different cabs, you can replace those

onboard with your own using Strymon's Impulse Manager software.

The amp and cab sections can be independently turned off so you can just use the amps with a different cabinet modeller, or feed the Iridium's cabs with another source. Plugging in an expression pedal offers volume control or morphing between knob positions and there's full MIDI remote control of parameters and access to 300 preset locations.

SOUNDS

The pedal can work in various mono and stereo combinations, its obvious position being at the end of your pedalboard signal chain, although some may wish to follow it with delay or reverb pedals. The analogue JFET input no doubt contributes

to playing feel, which has a very amp-like push and pull to it, everything cleaning up naturally with guitar volume.

The Round amp is based on a Fender Deluxe and provides classic Fender clean sound through to the combo's natural drive. There's practical tonal sweetening from the tone stack with the midrange adjustment offering the sort of variation you'd hear between different Fender eras: turn it up from a typical 'black-panel amp' scoop towards more of a Tweed tone and drive. As with the other amps, the 'A' cab is the one it's most closely associated with, and here it's a 1x12, but we were really taken by the 'C' cab's 2x10 for more of a Super or Vibrolux flavour. The Iridium cabs are very high quality, in fact, featuring a full 500ms IR never before seen in a pedal.

01. AMP & CAB SWITCHES

Choose your amp with the three-way Amp toggle switch and then choose from one of three matching cabinets (A, B or C) with the Cab switch

02. USB

USB can be used to load IR files (via the free Strymon Impulse Manager software) and for firmware updates when connected to a computer

03. AUDIO INPUT SELECTOR

You can set this for standard mono, full stereo in/out (TRS jack needed for input) or Sum, where a stereo input is summed to a mono output

04. FAV FOOTSWITCH

As with other Strymon pedals, the Favorite switch recalls a stored favourite setting, including all knobs and switches. To store a setting you press and hold it until the Fav LED blinks

05. ROOM

This controls the level of natural room ambience by combining 256ms impulse responses of real rooms with algorithmic reverb for extended decay. Small, Medium and Large rooms are selectable



Tech Spec

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Amp modeller and IR cab pedal

FEATURES: Selectable true or buffered bypass,

AMPS: Fender Deluxe Reverb, Vox AC30TB, Marshall Plexi (Super Lead model number 1959)

CABS: 1x12 Fender Deluxe Reverb, 1x12 Fender Blues Junior, 2x10 Fender Vibrolux, 2x12 Vox AC30-6 open back fawn, 1x12 Custom cab w/ Celestion Blue AlNiCo, 4x12 Mesa/Boogie Half-Back, 4x12 Marshall w/ Celestion G12M-25s, 2x12 Custom cab w/ Celestion Vintage 30s, 8x12 Marshall w/ Celestion T652s

CONTROLS: Drive, Level, Bass, Middle, Treble, Room, Amp selector switch, Cab selector switch, Audio input selector switch, On footswitch, Favorite footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard outputs (L, R), EXP/MIDI, USB, stereo minijack headphone output

POWER: Supplied 9V DC adaptor, 500mA

DIMENSIONS: 102 (w) x 114 (d) x 44mm (h)

Guitarist CHOICE

9/10

The second amp, Chime, is a Vox AC30 Top Boost with a mid control that works just like the original's Tone Cut for top end roll-off. The full gain range of the original amp is reproduced but the upper reaches of the gain knob adds a bit extra with the cab choice (including a Mesa 4x12) adding more versatility.

Punch is based on a 100-watt Marshall Super Lead – the classic 'Plexi' model. While a Plexi at full whack sounds glorious, it only goes so far, so Strymon has added extra whomp after two o'clock on the Gain knob, getting towards high gain. If you need more, the Iridium takes drive pedals really well.

While all of the amps/cabs sound classily authentic anyway, you can open the whole sound up to whatever degree you need

with the sense of realistic space provided by the room reverb.

VERDICT

This pedal is all about the provision of the three most classic amp flavours with a minimum of fuss. Unlike the Kemper, Helix and Fractal's Axe-Fx where you can navigate the menus for a massive choice of models, the Iridium is sharply focused: it has exactly what's necessary and no more.

There's a simplicity and ease of use that has massive appeal. You could simply use it as a tabletop recording tool to instantly give you the sound of a great amp recorded at a decent working volume with professional mics in a nice-sounding room (without the need for amp, mic or room). Alternatively, you could take

advantage of its form factor and integrate it into your pedalboard, turning that 'board into a full rig for headphone practice, for gigging direct into the sound system if you prefer not to use an amp or can't travel with one, or maybe as a belt-and-braces backup ready for use if your amp goes down. Strymon has identified a need that guitarists didn't know they had – and has filled it brilliantly. **G**

PROS Pedalboard-friendly form factor; three classic amp sounds expertly rendered; choice of highly realistic cabinets; IR loading; MIDI control; onboard Favorite preset

CONS Needs a high-current (500mA) supply, so may necessitate an upgrade to your power distributor if you don't want to use the supplied adaptor