

Radial JDV

Built like a very small brick outhouse and sporting features that you normally wouldn't expect to find on a DI, the JDV isn't just another DI, it is a DI that you can compare others to. ZENON SCHOEPE

ONE OF THE DOWNSIDES of the price-point-hitting malaise and far eastern 'cost saving' manufacturing is that some of the 'feel good' factor, which has always been part of the gear experience for me, has been eroded. I encounter boxes that work fine and sound fine but are just not special enough to get me excited about them. The humble DI has suffered more than most and become a rather unremarkable and utilitarian sort of affair that your sales man will quickly justify by asking what you would expect for the price.

For what is in essence a pretty straightforward electrical procedure, it is surprising that DIs are so hit-and-miss. While many of us can probably name a DI that we prefer, many more will be able to mention instances where they've encountered ones that have underachieved. It's all the more annoying when so small a component can give rise to issues that really shouldn't be issues at all because a bad DI can introduce noise, change the fundamental character of the connected source and also do strange and unpredictable things to the dynamic range and attack. It's actually the last of these I find most irritating because I don't want to hear a DI and I don't want it to impart an imprint — there are too many other boxes vying for that particular duty.

It's perhaps significant that a number of mic preamp-type outboard processors are blessed with critically acclaimed DIs. That's good, but for me there are times when a small box on the floor is all it should take and all it should need.

I feel better just by looking at a Radial product because it reminds me that I want to be surrounded by exceptional gear; proper stuff that does the job and will continue to so. If you're aware of Radial from Canada then you'll know it builds a very wide range of versatile interface-type products. It's quite a traditional outfit in this respect because very few other manufacturers can be bothered to concentrate quite so much effort on such a specialist and professional portfolio.

Build quality is quite remarkable as the devices employ a type of 'book-cover' construction that has a super-tough metal deep 'U' serving as the wrap around cover to the innards, leaving the controls and connectors to be arranged on the three remaining sides; additionally protected by a generous overlap of the 'cover'. They're weighty and have soft rubberised bases so they don't slide around. They look like they will last a lifetime.

One of the benefits of the construction method is that certain units in the range can be stripped of their 'book-covers' and slotted into a rackmount, complete with power, for instances where multiple units are required.

The JDV (US\$449) is now in Mk3 guise and is a staple of the range. Radial chooses to split the controls into sections for input, the musician and the engineer in its description of the box and this happily coincides with three panels.

The input side has LED indicators for power, signal



and overload, followed by switchable 80Hz high-pass and 7kHz low-pass filters and a switch that activates an exceptional 3.9MΩ input impedance or fully variable 'Drag', or loading, control on a pot. Because there are two jack instrument inputs, you get to select between them on a switch.

There's a direct Thru passive output and two Class-A active Aux outputs for effects or other amps, plus a tuner output. This is already far in advance of most DIs and gives you many more possibilities, whether that's for visiting musicians or your own recording guitar set up. A speaker input pad switch means you can also take in a post-amp signal.

Finally the side that the engineer will be most interested in has an XLR balanced mic level output and switches for polarity, a -15dB pad (you may well need this as the box is capable of remarkable output), and a ground-lift. Power comes up through an external 42V DC supply.

You won't have to worry about the JDV once it is connected up because it just gets on with it. The filters are handy and the Drag control offers useful optimisation for different instruments. Best of all, it is transparent and just gives you a good wide and strong representation of what you're plugging in; then it's all in the

and Phazer variable phase control (see Products p19) are particularly interesting.

If you haven't thought about your DI for a few years then it is time to see how things have moved on. No one is putting as much attention and thought into developing the concept as Radial is. Frankly, if you're up for a DI then this is where you start and end. ■

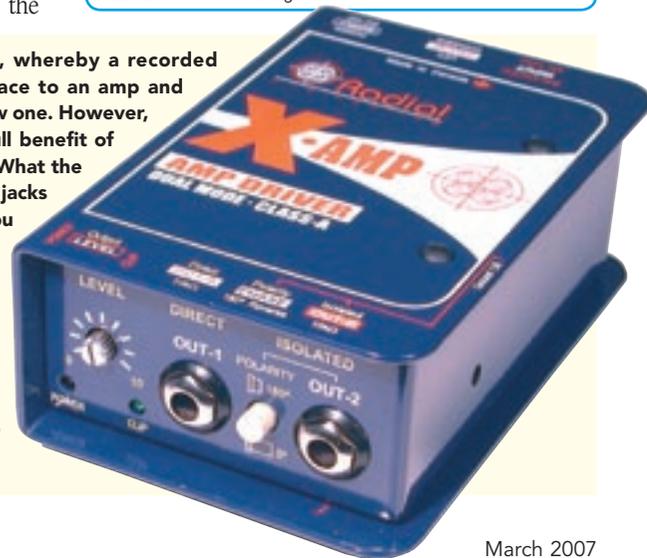
PROS Transparent; great I-O capability; very flexible.

CONS Nothing.

Contact

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X-Amp The concept of re-amping, whereby a recorded signal is sent via an interface to an amp and speaker combination for rerecording, is not a new one. However, it needs to be done properly if you want the full benefit of delaying your creative decisions to a later time. What the X-Amp does is give you two outputs on 1/4-inch jacks — one is a direct feed the other is isolated — so you can double your possibilities. Power comes from an external 15V DC supply and the input comes in on balanced XLR and has a ground lift switch. The isolated output gets a polarity switch, which is a nice touch, and a ground lift operates on both. Essential to the whole process is the presence of an output level pot with a clip LED. It works exactly as expected and it doesn't corrupt your signal while it's doing it.



fingers.

What I like about the Radial range is that many of the boxes are complementary and you can apply them together to sort a problem or to enable a creative solution. Radial is big on DIs, splitters, and re-amping and the recent introduction of the JDX Reactor guitar amp and cabinet direct box