

## FIRST PLAY



**CARL MARTIN AMPSTER  
AMP/SPEAKER SIM DI**  
£239

**WHAT IS IT?** An all-analogue valve-based amp/speaker simulator with a quality DI output for connecting to studio or live consoles

1



# Direct Line

This valve-driven DI box from Carl Martin could be the missing link for pedalboard users

Words Nick Guppy Photography Phil Barker

**1** The familiar amp-like controls need no introduction. Elsewhere, the left button switches between 4x12 closed-back and 2x12 open-back cabinet emulations, while the right button operates a mute function. The LED glows green or red depending which cab emulation is in use, and usefully flash in mute mode to help avoid those panicky 'where's my sound gone?' moments

**2.** The Ampster's quality DI features a useful ground lift switch. There's also a series effects loop and a remote jack if you want to house the Ampster in a rack setup

**3.** Behind the silver grille is a hand-selected ECC83 from TAD, providing high-quality tones and that indefinable extra 'something' that comes from using real valves

**B**ased in Denmark, analogue specialist East Sound Research has been turning out clever products for guitar and bass under the Carl Martin brand for nearly 30 years and has an enviable artist roster that includes Joe Bonamassa, Pete Thorn and Kid Andersen. Added to an already diverse range that includes pedals, amps and switching solutions, the Ampster is a valve-based DI box that's poised to be popular for anyone who uses pedals.

The Ampster is intended to sit at the end of a pedal chain and adds direct-out flexibility, with a quality balanced output on XLR for connection to audio interfaces, and studio or live consoles. There's a familiar set of amp-like controls including Gain and Master volume, together with Bass, Middle, Treble and Presence. Two footswitches sit either side of a small silver-vent grille, behind which lurks a single TAD ECC83 twin triode valve. One of these buttons functions as a mute, while the other switches between a choice of 4x12 closed-back or 2x12 open-back cabinet emulations. A single LED glows red or green depending which emulation is active and flashes when the Ampster is in mute mode.

On the rear panel there's a single 6mm jack input and a jack marked 'Link' for direct connection to an amp. The balanced DI output features a useful ground lift switch and there's also a three-position voicing switch that progressively trims low-end frequencies to taste. The Ampster also boasts a series effects loop and a useful remote switch if you want to house it in a rack. Power comes from an external adaptor that isn't included: the Ampster needs a good one amp of current so if you're using an existing power supply, make sure it can handle this, or alternatively use Carl Martin's own Power Jack PSU.

We tried the Ampster out with drive and delay pedals into a small mixing console and were impressed by the convincing cab emulations and warm, amp-like tones. The simple controls are quick to dial in and fun to use, and it's also impressively free of noise, making it a great choice for studios.

With more and more players using pedalboards to get their sound, the Ampster could turn out to be the vital missing link, adding a quality console connection so you can run your guitar into an amp, a desk or both and mix the signal for the best overall result. **G**



## CARL MARTIN AMPSTER AMP/ SPEAKER SIM DI

**PRICE:** £239

**ORIGIN:** Denmark

**TYPE:** Valve-based analog amp/cabinet simulator and DI

**VALVES:** 1x ECC83

**DIMENSIONS:** 145 (w) x 125 (d) x 70mm (h)

**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 0.5/1

**CASE:** Alloy

**CHANNELS:** 1

**CONTROLS:** Gain, bass, middle, treble, presence, master volume

**FOOTSWITCH:** Cab sim select, mute

**CONNECTIONS:** Input, Link, DI out, Effects send/return, remote, all on 6.5mm jack

**POWER:** 9V DC (adaptor not supplied), 1,000mA minimum

**OPTIONS:** None

**RANGE OPTIONS:** None

**Selectron Distribution**

**01795 419460**

**www.carlmartin.com**



# 8/10

**PROS** Adds valve warmth and balanced DI connectivity to any pedalboard; all the functions you need to dial in a great sound

**CONS** Niche product but indispensable for 'board users; needs a solid 1A of DC power, which might mean upgrading an existing PSU or using an extra one