

BLACKSTAR POLAR GO
£79

WHAT IS IT? A highly compact audio interface with built-in mics that works well with phones

Go Getter

Blackstar's palm-sized audio interface is a godsend for players who want better audio on their phone-recorded videos

Words Jamie Dickson **Photography** Phil Barker

1. Physical control knobs for Input and Output levels are handy, but you'll need the accompanying app to access and edit things like EQ and reverb settings, routing options and more
2. There are two USB-C sockets on one end of the Polar Go: one is for recharging the unit's internal battery and the other is for audio connectivity with phones and other devices
3. A combi jack on the other end of the unit allows you to use XLR and standard instrument cables to input audio into the Polar Go

Players who like to record videos for social media on their phones will know that the in-built mics aren't the best at capturing great guitar sounds. That's why the Polar Go mobile audio interface by Blackstar is a welcome little addition to its range of audio interfaces, especially at well under £100, as its main job is to help you capture pro-quality audio that's auto-sync'd to your phone videos.

The Polar Go is built around a pair of high-quality mics housed inside the unit's palm-size casing (though there's no obvious grille or aperture for them to 'hear' through), but there's also a combi jack input for either XLR or standard instrument cables. Between these two inputs, the Polar Go can be used to record everything from acoustic guitars to electric bass, vocals, keys and more – and can also provide 48 volts of phantom power to mics that need it. The Polar Go can run off either its own rechargeable internal battery or draw power from your phone, computer or mobile device when connected to one via the USB-C connection port.

We'd wager that most *Guitarist* readers will want to use the Polar Go to record acoustic guitars via the built-in mics, or perhaps electric guitar sounds from a modelling device or amp simulator plugged into the combi jack input. Either way, we'd recommend plugging in headphones for monitoring, as this will allow you to hear the sound of your guitar running through the interface's digital EQ and reverb (the Polar Go offers five reverb voices). To get the best out of those features and edit them easily you'll want to install the Polar Go app, available for mobile devices, PC and Mac, which gives you independent control over signal coming in from the mics, the combi jack and even the TRRS jack if you're using a mic-equipped headset. The app also has a Camera control tab that lets you start, stop and save video recordings on your phone and monitor what the phone camera's 'seeing' as you play – with audio recorded via the Polar Go automatically sync'd to any video captured.

Verdict

Small, inexpensive, effective and easy to use, the Polar Go is a no-brainer pocket audio interface for guitarists who like the convenience and simplicity of phone videos but want pro-quality audio to match that does their playing and guitar tone proper justice – and more besides. Hard to fault. G



BLACKSTAR
POLAR GO

PRICE: £79
ORIGIN: UK/China
TYPE: Portable audio interface
FEATURES: Built-in pair of mics, Input/Output control knobs, 48V phantom power
CONTROLS: Input and Output control knobs, phantom power switch, internal battery power on/off switch
CONNECTIONS: USB-C power input, USB-C connection port, combi-jack input, TRRS jack
POWER: Internal battery (recharged via a dedicated USB-C port) or can draw power from mobile devices while connected
DIMENSIONS: 80 (w) x 65 (d) x 41mm (h)

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Guitarist CHOICE **9/10**

PROS Small, light, inexpensive; useful, easy to operate features; great sound quality from the in-built mics; useful inputs for external mics and sound sources; app works intuitively and well

CONS We'd love to edit settings via Bluetooth (rather than USB cable); plugged in, the cable can make phone positioning awkward



THE RIVALS

If you want a small, quality mic that syncs to your phone's video recordings and acts as an interface for electric guitar as well, Focusrite used to make a product called the iTrack Pocket – an iPhone cradle with built-in mic and an accompanying app for controlling video capture on your phone. It's been discontinued, however, and replaced in the company's product line-up, in a broad sense, by the Vocaster One (£149, right), a slightly different kind of compact interface that's aimed more at podcasters but has an input for a single mic and can send audio to your video-capable camera via a TRS cable.



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