

Walk Together, Rock Together: A Talk with Kevin Seconds, Ian MacKaye & Don Zientara

RECORDING

The magazine for the recording musician®



Miking Instruments!

- Tracking Carl Verheyen
- Intro To Microphones
- Recording Gotye's Ondioline

25 NEW Reviews
Austrian Audio • CAD Audio
Cloud Microphones • DPA • Maestro
Modartt • Peach Audio • PreSonus
PSPaudioware • Royer Labs • Strymon • Toontrack • Warm Audio

VOL. THIRTY-SIX NUMBER EIGHT

\$5.99US \$5.99CAN

05 >



MAY 2023
USA \$5.99
CANADA \$5.99



Peach Audio Cube 5

An Aussie-made in-line gain booster with a twist

REVIEW BY ALEX HAWLEY

Peach Audio started in 1983 and is best known for its 196 series of tube preamps made by hand in Australia. Led by David Peach, who got his start modifying and repairing guitar amps in the 1970s, Peach Audio sources high-quality components with a no-compromise approach to design. On review today is the Cube 5 preamplifier and DI box.

Overview

Cube 5 is an ultra-low noise preamplifier intended for the stage, studio and everywhere in between. Its core functionality is designed to boost low-output dynamic and ribbon microphones before hitting the preamp or interface to improve the signal-to-noise ratio and produce cleaner and clearer recordings. So if you're recording a quiet source or want to supplement an entry-level preamp or interface with cleaner gain and less noise, Cube 5 fits the bill. Cube 5 will reveal more detail and clarity from those low-output dynamics and ribbons in the process. It features a push button with two different gain settings: low (+13dB) and high (+26 dB).

Beyond gain boosting, Cube 5 also features a 1/4" DI input optimized for passive instrument pickups, such as guitar or bass. The DI input features two impedance options: low (600Ω) and high (4kΩ).

The DI input doubles as an effect send-return using a 1/4" Y cable to insert effects into the signal chain before it hits the interface. This is especially useful for home and project studios with limited I/O, allowing you to insert hardware effects without eating precious I/O on your main interface or mixer while recording. The effects loop is optimized explicitly for guitar pedals and FX. Have you ever tried using a

guitar pedal on a vocal? Cube 5 makes it very easy to do so, which could open up all kinds of creative applications for the stage or studio.

Silence is Golden

"Low noise" is a term that gets thrown around a lot these days, and eventually, the bar for which modern gear becomes truly "low noise" by today's standards will be raised (err, lowered? You get what I mean). In that regard, Peach Audio is at the front of the pack. Cube 5 features an impressive noise figure of -132dBV (A-weighted) to ensure a pristine signal-to-noise ratio. This is made possible by its fully balanced, transformer-coupled input and output, paired with JFET topology.

Another differentiator is its power specs. Being an active preamp, Cube 5 requires phantom power (typically specified with a 10mA current requirement). In reality, not all devices provide the full 10mA rating needed. Peach Audio designed the Cube 5 with a 5mA current requirement, ensuring consistent and reliable performance in any situation, even while battery-powered on the go.

Engage the Booster

I tested Cube 5 with various microphones and sources, including the Shure SM7B and an AEA R84. I have only a little to say on the gain-boosting front:

it works as advertised! In both cases, I A/B'd with and without the Cube 5 (while cranking the external preamp to make up the level difference). The Cube 5 produced cleaner recordings (especially for the Shure SM7B) without a detectable noise floor.

Cube 5 used as a DI also sounded great on guitar and bass. The response sounds full-bodied and clear. Having another clean DI in the kit is always helpful, so this is a welcomed bonus.

I rigged up my pedal board to test the effects loop and tried singing into the Shure SM7B. It's great fun playing with my pedal delays and reverbs; even the Digitech Whammy pedal produced some creative effects on vocals! This is something to consider if you'd like to incorporate vocal effects at a live show sometime—this is a simple way to execute that.

Final Thoughts

There's plenty to love about the Cube 5. It's easy to use and can be implemented in various roles throughout the studio and stage. The price is steeper than others in its category, but you'd be hard-pressed to find something with lower noise, cleaner results and with this many applications outside of in-line gain boosting. The Cube 5 is a great all-around piece to have in the inventory. ➔

Price: \$299

More From: peachaudio.net