

LR BAGGS

Align Series pedals

A unique trio to get the most out of electric-acoustics


Words Trevor Curwen **Photography** Olly Curtis

Our pedal reviews are usually dedicated to those designed for electric guitar. However, anyone with a pickup-equipped guitar can use pedals, and it's not too rare to see the stage in front of electro-acoustic guitars players festooned with chorus, delay, looper and reverb pedals.

Here, though, is a range of pedals designed from the ground up for acoustic guitar players. Californian company, LR Baggs, well-known for their pickups, has released the Align Series of pedals, each cutely adorned in a different simulated wood finish, which, when put together on a single pedalboard, could make a really compelling set. The Align Active DI (£199) is intended to go last and features a useful signal-muting footswitch for tuning or instrument changes and XLR and standard 6.4mm jack outputs as well as standard ground lift, phase-reverse and pad facilities. But here we are focusing on the other three Align-series pedals, as they are the ones that directly influence your sound.



LR Baggs Align Session £219

This is designed to bring studio tone to your live rig by providing enhancement to your sound in the shape of saturation and compression that's especially tailored for acoustic guitars. The compression is multiband so you have different amounts applied to the low, mid and high frequencies rather than a blanket compression over the whole signal. While that may sound complicated, it's actually a no-brainer to use with just a single knob, which ushers in natural compression that's very responsive to how you play. Pretty transparent with no obvious squashing or unwanted altering of note transients, this is smooth and silky compression that keeps the sound consistently solid and prevents any spiky frequencies from getting too prominent. Saturation, similarly added by a single knob, adds warmth, giving your sound more body. Combine them and you'll find a sweet spot that improves and enriches. 

VERDICT Enhancement for your electro-acoustic guitar – once you've turned this on you won't want to turn it off

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: China
TYPE: Acoustic pedal with saturation and compression
FEATURES: Buffered bypass
CONTROLS: Volume, Gain, Saturate, Comp EQ, Bypass footswitch
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output
POWER: 9V battery or 9V-16V DC adaptor (not supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 82 (w) x 125 (d) x 60 mm (h)

8/10



LR Baggs Align Equalizer

£219

Based on the circuit found in the Para Acoustic DI, the Align Equalizer offers a range of practical tone-shaping facilities. A three-position high-pass filter switch rolls off the bottom end below certain frequencies and can be set to tame boominess, but the main thrust of the pedal has to be the six small centre-detented knobs each with up to 9dB of cut or boost at the frequencies of 85Hz, 350Hz, 700Hz, 1.6kHz, 4.8kHz and 10kHz. These offer plenty of scope for improving the sound of your acoustic guitar's pickups with carefully applied cuts and/or boosts that can get your tone right where you want it. There's also a useful aid to feedback suppression via a notch filter that can attenuate a narrow band (notch) of the offending frequencies with a 20dB reduction. You simply find the problem area by moving the rotary knob until the feedback stops – it covers the bottom end and lower mids in a range that runs from 40 to 300Hz. **G**

VERDICT: Sorts problems, balances tone, can match various instruments and tailor a specific EQ for each one

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: EQ pedal

FEATURES:

Buffered bypass

CONTROLS: Volume, Notch, 85, 350, 700, 1.6k, 4.8k, 10k, hpf switch (40/80/120), Phase switch, Gain switch (+6/0/-6), Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS:

Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V-16V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 82 (w) x 125 (d) x 60 mm (h)

Guitarist CHOICE

9/10



LR Baggs Align Reverb

£219

This reverb pedal may seem pretty basic compared to those that offer many types of verb in one box, but sometimes simplicity can be strength. The single reverb voice here has been shaped by LR Baggs to reflect the natural voice of an acoustic instrument and complement its dynamics. The reverb does wrap itself nicely around your sound with a range that runs from just a touch of extra ambience to a sense of a much larger space. The reverb amount and size is easily dialled in with the Reverb and Decay knobs but you also get a very practically-ranged Tone knob that brightens or subdues to taste.

For the money there are more versatile reverb pedals on the market but this one matches the style of the other pedals so is the obvious choice if you are building an LR Baggs signal chain and really is all you need if you want an easily operated pedal to provide a sense of space that complements your sound. **G**

VERDICT: It's about as simple a reverb as we've seen but it's a fine fit for electro-acoustic guitar

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Reverb pedal

FEATURES:

Buffered bypass

CONTROLS: Volume, Tone, Reverb, Decay, Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS:

Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V-16V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 82 (w) x 125 (d) x 60 mm (h)

7/10