

# 'THE BAND' *by Headway Electronics*

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As I have always had a strong preference for a quality mike and an acoustic fiddle, I was a good candidate to review this new violin pickup, called 'The Band', made and marketed by Headway Electronics in Banbury. I also have a distaste for gluing and screwing ugly devices to fiddles that fall off during gigs and interfere with their acoustic sound. As a result the easy and unsticky method for attaching this pickup to the instrument (and for removing it) gave it a head start over anything I'd used before. Basically it's a flat tube that wraps round the fiddle body below the bridge, with the jack socket underneath the fiddle but above the shoulder rest. You fix it together with velcro and its a good firm fit that doesn't shift about. I liked it a lot, it gave plenty of gain yet avoids the scratchy harsh sound that many of these devices make unless they go through an expensive reverb unit. I just put it through a standard battery powered DI Box straight into the mixing desk and PA. I used it with two different fiddles. With my quiet and forgiving session fiddle it gave limited room to

manoeuvre in the middle frequencies, which had to be turned right down, but we still got a good strong and smooth sound. With a much better quality and more sensitive fiddle I got a far brighter sound plus plenty of lift that separated the fiddle sound from the rest of the band, and no trouble mixing it.

Overall its far and away the best pickup I've used at a gig, because its easy to manage, sounds good, and you can rely on it. The written advice that comes with the pickup suggests trying a back line amp as well, but I didn't need one. The lesson for me was that you need a responsive instrument to get the best out of the system, but that's just the same with a mike or any thing else. Very highly recommended. Look up Headway Electronics at <http://www.headwayelectronics.com>, or write to them at PO Box 408, Banbury, Oxon, OX15 4XU.

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