

Equipment review

EDM-1 'A wee box to make your amplified fiddle sound good!'

REVIEWED BY TOM BELL-RICHARDS

OK, SO YOU HAVE A PICKUP on your fiddle and you play amplified? To have a chance of sounding good, you need an electronic box of tricks between your fiddle pickup and the sound system.

You need something because fiddle pickups don't produce the sort of signal that "mixing desks" or amplifiers need. To sound good, some translation is needed. This little box from Headway electronics would be a good choice because it is well made and has the versatility to cope with a range of situations. It's called a "Headway EDM-1 Multi-Function Pre-Amplifier" but I reckon many people would stop there if that had been the title of this review! (Its aimed at pickups not microphones, but its big brother, the EDB copes with both, see below.)

Oxfordshire company Headway specialise in equipment for musicians like us. One of the controls on the EDM-1 is labelled with settings for bouzouki, tenor guitar, mando, and violin of course. They talk our language! Setting that knob to match your instrument may be the most technical thing you need to do, but straight away you've told the electronics most of what they need to know to give you a good sound.

The rest of the controls are simple. Most important is the Power on/Mute switch. Switch to green light while you're playing, red light when you're tuning, unplugging your instrument or going for a cup of tea! There's a master volume knob and three knobs that give "tone control" over the low, middle and high parts of your sound. Leave them in the middle until you have a chance to play with them and see how they affect the sound.

I've been trying out the EDM-1 with my Sonic violin with built in pickup, (reviewed in **FiddleOn** 34.) No fuss, no bother, the EDM-1 gave a really

nice amplified sound with all the controls in their default settings, but every venue is different so it's good to have the other controls for when they're needed.

It's priced at around £150. There are cheaper alternatives but the EDM-1 gives the impression, and online reviews agree, that it's a professional quality bit of kit that should give years of real-world good service, providing all the functions you need for a fiddle with a pickup. It even fits in a fiddle case.

The EDM-1 has a big brother with a lot of extra functions, the EDB.

I reviewed the first version in **FiddleOn** 31. It's a very capable device which can take and blend inputs from a microphone and/or a pickup; provide "phantom power" to microphones; give control over the sound across five bands from bass to treble, and has "sweepable EQ" that can be used if just one frequency is causing feedback, or other problems.

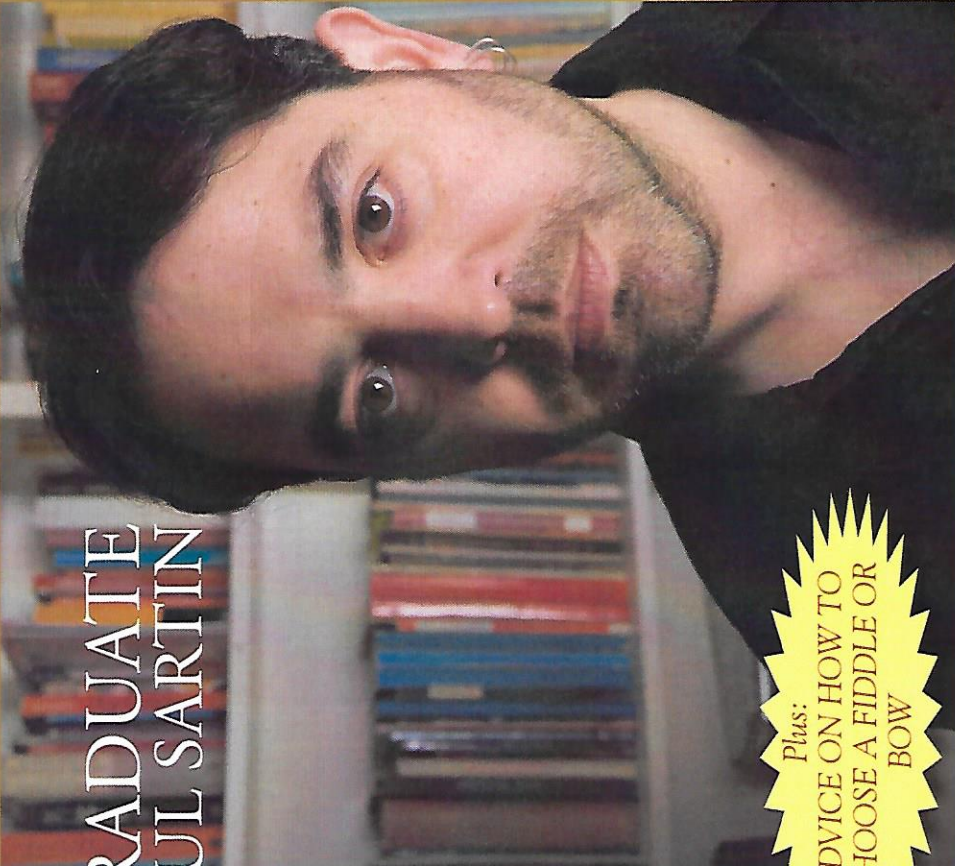
There's now an updated version called the EDB-2. Headway have listened to customer opinions and you can now choose to apply the five-band EQ to either, or both inputs, plus there's an "ipod" input so you can blend in another sound source and a few more "techie" enhancements.

You probably already know if you're interested, but for a multi-instrumentalist, solo performer, or fiddler who uses a variety of setups in different circumstances, priced at £250, it's a small device that justifies Headway's description as "a Swiss Army knife for musicians." I've used one for several years and found it excellent, though the new little EDM-1 has the functions I use most.



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