





BOSS IR-2 £179

Amp and cab emulation in the familiar guise of a Boss compact pedal

The practical advantages of self-contained amp and speaker emulation in a small pedalboard-friendly pedal are there for all to see in the likes of the Strymon Iridium and Walrus Audio ACS1, but now those have got competition from Boss in the shape of the IR-2. Boss has previous experience in this genre of pedal with their twin-footswitch IR-200, but this time, in what looks to be

The guitar input is mono, but you get a choice of mono or stereo output to a line level device like a PA system's mixer, or to an amp. If you fancy a bit of silent practice you also get a mini-jack stereo headphone socket, and as the IR-2 can be battery powered, you can do that anywhere. The pedal can also function as an audio interface via its USB socket, allowing it to be used for recording to a DAW. Further socketry provides a mono



1 FOOTSWITCH
The Green and Red amp channels can be toggled between using the footswitch when the pedal is engaged. A long press is needed to bypass the pedal.

2 KNOBS
Dual-concentric knobs have the Ambience, Level and Gain on the taller, inner knob while Bass, Middle and Treble are adjusted by the outer rings.

3 USB AND PHONES SOCKETS
The headphone socket allows silent practice with just guitar and pedal, but it can also be used for monitoring if you connect via USB to a DAW for recording.

THE MOST VERSATILE BOSS COMPACT THERE IS

an inspired piece of engineering, they have crammed an impressive range of functionality into a compact pedal chassis.

The IR-2 is designed to deliver the sound of 11 different amps, each of which comes with a matched Celestion Digital cabinet IR. A free IR-2 IR Loader app for macOS and Windows also lets you load IRs of your choice into the pedal. While combined use is the default, you can use amp and cab individually as there is provision to turn either off.

or stereo send and return loop which can bring other pedals into the signal path after the amp emulation.

The IR-2 provides Level, Gain, Middle, Treble and Bass adjustments for the amps. You also get an ambience knob to add in a sense of space to the sound with a choice of great-sounding Room, Hall or Plate Reverb. All of the 11 amps are very playable, reacting well to guitar dynamics and between them will deliver

a range of tones to cover many musical styles.

You'll find some player favourites – Fender Twin and Bassman, Vox AC-30, Marshall 'plexi', plus models for Soldano, Mesa/Boogie and more – alongside generic Boss creations like the aptly named 'Clean', 'Crunch' and 'Hi-Gain'. A press and hold on the footswitch is needed to bypass the pedal but, when active, the footswitch provides instant switching between two channels. These can each feature a different amp or the same amp with altered settings so you can, say, have two gain levels of the same amp – a practical choice for onstage use.

A truly portable rig for practice, recording and live use, the IR-2 is quite possibly the most versatile Boss compact there is – it's an outright problem-solver that all guitarists should consider carrying in their gigbag.

Trevor Curwen

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| SUMMARY | FEATURES | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | SOUND QUALITY | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | VALUE FOR MONEY | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | BUILD QUALITY | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | USABILITY | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| | OVERALL RATING | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |

AT A GLANCE

- TYPE:** Amp & Cabinet simulation pedal
- FEATURES:** Buffered bypass
- MODES:** Clean, Twin, Tweed, Diamond, Crunch, Brit, Hi-Gain, Soldano, Brown, Modded, Rectifier
- CONTROLS:** Ambience, Level, Gain, Bass, Middle, Treble, Mode selector, Bypass footswitch
- CONNECTIONS:** Standard input, standard outputs (A/Mono, B), standard CH Select input, standard Send, standard, Return, Phones, USB
- POWER:** 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor 160 mA
- DIMENSIONS:** 73 (w) x 129 (d) x 59 mm (h)
- CONTACT:** Boss, boss.info/uk

Photos: Phil Barker