



Universal Audio OX Amp Top Box

Dialed-in Studio Guitar Sounds

The new OX Amp Top Box from Universal Audio combines a premier reactive load box with a world-class digital amp and the company's Dynamic Speaker Modeling. Suitable for use on stage or in the recording studio, it's UA's first hardware product designed specifically for the guitar market.

OX is composed of two individual components: the analog load box and the digital modeling section. On the analog side, OX works in conjunction with your tube amp, providing the ability to control your speaker volume, while still driving your amp at optimum saturation levels. The digital end offers cabinet and microphone modeling that allows you to produce studio-quality guitar recordings directly out of the box.

A load box takes the place of your tube amplifier's speaker. You simply connect your amp's speaker output to the input of the load box, and the output of the load box is sent back to your speaker. The load box has an attenuator that controls the volume of the returning signal.

Tube amps react to how hard you drive them, and an amp set to a lower level will sound much different when cranked. But with the load box connected, you can adjust your amp for the desired sound and dial back the overall volume to a more comfortable level, while still retaining the same tonal characteristics and dynamics—including speaker breakup, drive and cone cry.

Although the speaker output is pure analog amp tone, the digital component of OX offers additional line outs that feature the DSP modeling

function. OX has six selectable onboard "rigs" that offer a variety of cabinets, microphone and effects emulations to create studio-quality recordings. OX also provides a "room" control to dial in the exact amount of ambience. The six selectable rig models provide plenty of great options, and the sound is amazing. This functionality alone might be enough for some users to justify the unit's \$1,299 price tag, but the OX box bursts with possibilities when paired up with the OX software app.

The app requires a Wi-Fi connection and runs on Mac or iPad. (No Windows or Android version is available at this time.) Once connected, you are presented with a host of additional rig options, plus the ability to customize and create your own rig presets. You also can use the app to customize the six rigs that are available from the unit's hardware box.

OX has two quarter-inch line/monitor outs that can feed either a mixing board or monitors for live playing; they also can be connected to a DAW for direct recording. In addition, there is a headphone out for monitoring or silent practicing. OX also has a digital out that supports a fixed sampling rate of 44.1kHz. Depending on whether you have a combo amp or a separate head, be aware that you might need to purchase special cables to make the proper connections to OX.

Considering Universal Audio's reputation as a leader in both analog hardware and digital software, it's no surprise that the OX Amp Top Box hits the mark in both of these categories.

—Keith Baumann

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Evans UV1 Bass Heads

Durable Coating, Full Tone, Quick Rebound

Evans Drumheads by D'Addario Percussion has released UV1 coated bass heads, which complement the company's UV1 single-ply coated snare heads and tom heads. Available in a range of sizes from 16 inches to 26 inches, the standard UV1 bass head is similar to the snare and tom heads in dynamic response and durability, but it has a collar especially designed to fit bass drums. This is an ideal head for players who seek a bright attack and want their bass drum to match the sonority of their snare

and toms. The heads' ultraviolet-cured textured coating—slightly heavier than a sprayed-on coating and resistant to chipping, fading and stick marks—eliminates just enough overtones to give the bass drum a full and deep tone, allowing it to be played with minimal damping.

Evans' UV EQ4 version of the bass drum head adds an internal 10-mil overtone control ring around the circumference. It still has plenty of sustain, but the attack is less bright than the standard UV1. The UV EMAD