

Radial JDI Stereo & Firefly Tube Direct Boxes

By Mark Desloges

JDI Stereo

One of the most recognizable and widely used of Radial Engineering's now long list of DI offerings is the famous JDI. These workhorses have been in circulation with high profile sound engineers and production companies for years, known for their tone and ability to completely eliminate stray DC voltage that causes ground buzz in live settings thanks to the inclusion of Jensen transformers. JDIs have shared the stage with many touring artists in many countries. Now, the JDI is available in a stereo format.

Many live sound pros will already be familiar with the classic version of this onstage staple. Plain and simple, the JDI Stereo is nothing more and nothing less than what its name implies; however, don't think for a second that I'm downplaying the potential applications for this new format. I am indeed an advocate of the classic JDI and, now, the new Stereo format for its space saving features. For those of you who are not familiar with the JDI series, you have been missing out.

Known as an industry standard for its clear and transparent tone without artifacts, stability, and total ground isolation, the JDI is an absolute workhorse. On top of its superior circuitry and Jensen transformer, the JDI is equipped with a ground lift, through-puts, and a -15dB pad on each channel. Seeing as how, at this level of DI, it's not the bells and whistles that matter, the JDI series bases its well-founded pride on some of the world's best direct box circuitry made right here in Canada.

Firefly

Often times, you have an instrument or two that you want to inject into a recording device or a large-format PA system on a stage and you're looking for the character and warmth that only a tube driven circuit can produce. Don't feel bad about it; these things just happen. It's okay.

Sure, there are more accurate or

transparent DI boxes in Radial's lineup; however, this isn't about that. This is about the love of tube warmth, and that is exactly what the Firefly Tube Direct Box, with a 12AX7 tube stage, delivers.

Now that we're on the same page about tone, let's talk nuts and bolts, because this thing is fully loaded. The first thing that I want to point out is the switchable A and B inputs for running two instruments without the need to re-patch. This switching is performed on the front of the unit by depressing a button (with colour-coded indicator LEDs for clear transition between channels) or via the JR-2 Remote footswitch. I will note that the option to mute can only be performed by the footswitch, though there is a red mute LED that illuminates when the inputs are muted. Also, each input channel has its own trim pot for gain structure on top of the master output level pot.

The next thing I would like to point out is the Drag control and sweepable high-pass filter. The Drag adjustment changes the load that is being applied to the instrument's pickups to get the best possible tone right from the instrument. This allows you to fine-tune the DI box exactly to the instrument you are using. The high-pass filter allows you to cut out the lower frequencies and control the transient sub frequencies on stage for better clarity and stability. These features can be turned on or off with the press of a button on the front of the unit.

In classic Radial fashion, the Firefly utilizes the Eclipse transformer for the output signal, and also comes with recessed switches to affect the balanced XLR output. The three switches can flip the phase 180 degrees (by swapping from pin 2 hot to pin 3 hot,) pin 1 lift (ground lift), and aux post or pre. There is also a recessed switch on the side of the unit that allows you to choose how the



aux out travels through the circuit. You can choose between Direct and Isolated, giving you ultimate control over ground loops.

What this all boils down to is another big hit for Radial Engineering in its series of tube-driven direct boxes – truly a piece of art for those wishing to capture the warm tone of a tube with a solid isolation from the source. I see it being a huge hit amongst the live and session bass players and hope to see many more of these on stage in my travels.

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