

INSTRUMENT AMPS FOR VIOLIN, CELLO AND ACOUSTIC GUITAR

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Electric guitar amps are designed to sound good with electric guitars. But they make acoustic instruments sound midrangey, grungy and low-fi. If you want to amplify a violin, cello, or acoustic guitar on stage, a better choice is an instrument amp.

An instrument amp is an amplifier/speaker with a clean, natural, hi-fi sound. Unlike an electric-guitar amp, an instrument amp is designed to have low distortion and a smooth, wide-range frequency response. So your amplified instrument sounds real, not harsh and fuzzy.

Typically you place the amp behind you and a little to the side so that your body blocks feedback from the amp into the mic.

Let's look at five popular instrument amps. All are easily portable, and all include a phantom-powered mic input -- so you can use them with a Bartlett Fiddle Mic, Guitar Mic, or Spark Mini Mic. Simply plug the mic into the amp's XLR input and turn on phantom power.

Fishman Loudbox 100 about \$599



Photo and information from www.fishman.com

This amp provides 100 watts RMS, bi-amped into an 8" woofer and 1" neodymium soft-dome tweeter. Weighing under 25 pounds, the Loudbox 100 features 3 bands of EQ with feedback-fighting controls. It can get loud: 114 dB SPL at 1 meter.

A nice feature is the 10dB pad. If you have a high-output pickup or mic, and the clip LED comes on at low gain settings, press this switch to prevent distortion.

Inputs include two 1/4" phone jacks and an XLR mic input with 24V phantom power. There's a direct output (XLR) for the instrument channel, instrument/mic channel and main mix.

Other features include:

- Tuner output
- Headphone output
- Auxiliary stereo input with level control
- Digital effects: hall 1 & 2, plate 1 & 2, chorus, with master level
- Mute for instrument and inst/mic channels
- Dimensions: 16" H x 15.5" W x 11.2" D (40.5cm x 34cm x 29cm)

AER Compact 60 about \$1099



Photo and information from www.aer-amps.info

This amp pushes 60 watts into an 8" twin-cone speaker. Weighing only 17 pounds, the AER Compact 60 features 3-band tone controls (EQ) for channel 1 and 2-band tone controls for channel 2. There's also a "colour filter" which cuts the mids and boosts the treble.

Inputs include a 1/4" phone jack and XLR-1/4" combo jack with 24V phantom power. The amp can handle a line input signal with a pad and gain control.

Other features:

- Digital effects processor with 3 reverbs and 1 flanger
- Analog signal subsonic filter
- Limiter

- Headphones, line output, direct output
- External effects loop via send and return, footswitch turns internal/external effect on or off
- Cabinet is 0.59" birch plywood
- Black spatter finish

Dimensions: 265 mm x 330 mm x 235 mm (10.40% x 13.00% x 9.25%), HxWxD

Schertler Unico Classic about \$1089



Photos and information from www.schertler.com

The Schertler Unico Classic provides 200 watts into an 8" woofer and 1" dome tweeter. Weighing in at 34 pounds, this amp features three independent input channels and a spring reverb. Dimensions are 34x31x43 cm - 13.4x12.2x16.9 inches.

Acoustic Image Coda+ about \$1369



Photo and information from http://www.acousticimg.com/#/coda_plus/lp

This amp delivers 800 watts into a 10" woofer and 5" midrange/tweeter. Weight is only 20 pounds.

Inputs include a 1/4" phone jack (10 megohm and 1 megohm choice) and an XLR mic input with phantom power. The unit features a 3-band EQ in each channel, an effects loop, and a selectable notch/highpass filter to control feedback or reduce low-frequency boominess.

A direct-out XLR connector has a ground-lift switch and master level control. The cabinet can be tilted upwards toward your ears if desired.

Features:

- Digital effects with 6 presets and level control
- Switchable low-cut filter per channel
- Phase (polarity) reverse switch per channel
- Balanced direct out with ground lift
- Mute switch and pre/post EQ for direct out
- Stereo-capable with external power amp
- Headphone output
- Switchable dual-voltage operation (115/230V)

Acoustic Image Ten2 about \$1599



Photo and information from <http://www.acousticimg.com/#/ten2/lp>

The Ten2 offers a more "up-front" sound than the Coda+. Its power amp delivers 800 watts into two 10" woofers and a 2.5" coaxial tweeter, connected by a phase-correcting crossover. Weight is 28 pounds. Each channel has 3-band EQ. Inputs are combo jacks (either 1/4" or XLR) with phantom power on the XLR inputs.

Features:

- Exclusive Room Coupling Control(tm) to help tame boomy acoustic settings
- 17" high molded polymer enclosure
- Cabrio Docking System(tm) let you remove the head amp for use as stand-alone unit
- Input and master level controls
- Effects loop with return level control per channel
- Switchable low-cut filter per channel
- Phase (polarity) reverse switch per channel
- Balanced direct out with ground lift
- Digital effects with 6 presets and level control
- Mute switch and pre/post EQ for direct out
- Stereo-capable with external power amp

- Headphone output

There you have a quick look at some of the more popular instrument amps. If you want to project a clean, accurate sound to your audience, consider purchasing one.