

STUDIO UPGRADE ROUNDUP



Black Lion Audio: PG-P Portable Power Conditioner

Primarily known for its audiophile preamps and famous converter upgrades, Chicago-based Black Lion Audio makes the logical leap into the power game with its new PG series power conditioners. The PG-P is the 6-outlet portable member of the line.

Few things are less exciting than buying a new power strip for the studio. Most low-cost, off-the-shelf power strips are not filtered for audio. Many offer minimal surge protection, and while some offer six outlets, those chunky wall-wart power supplies can make it hard to be able to easily use them all at once. The Black Lion PG-P addresses all the above, and then some.

The 9.25" x 4" x 1.5" six-outlet PG-P features an extra-long 9' power cable, recessed rubber non-skid feet, and mounting slots. Each of the six outlets is purposely spaced to accommodate most standard wall-wart power supplies, and each row of three faces opposite the other rather than the standard straight line scenario found on most power strips. Not only can three large power supplies live happily side by side, since they face away from each other, you never have to try and finagle, bend and jam the bottom of one cable precariously onto the top of another—yes, this is a big deal! This also means that at least two side-facing supplies can also live unobstructed on the PG-P.

One of the hallmarks of a Black Lion interface upgrade, in addition to stellar converters, is an upgrade of the stock power supplies. The PG-P filtering includes Panasonic caps, and Black Lion claims the hum and interference filtering is three times better than most competing units. The PG-P offers a 540-joule power absorption rating to protect your gear from surges and spikes. Across the top of the unit, three LED lights let you know the PG-P is on, and your equipment is clean, protected, and grounded.

If you get the impression that I am obsessing about a power strip, I am. The PG-P is one of the most well thought-out audio-centric power strips I have ever used.

Price: \$69

More from: blacklionaudio.com

Coleman Audio: HP6 Stereo Headphone Amp

When talking studio upgrades, Glenn Coleman and Coleman Audio are front and center in the discussion with an extensive line of monitor controllers, analog summing solutions, VU meters and more. Glenn's latest creation is the HP6 stereo headphone amp offering a simple and effective headphone distribution system for any studio.

The HP6 is a 1U 19" rackmount unit built in a rugged all-metal enclosure finished in matte black with white nomenclature. The HP6 is a discrete transistor-based design with an internal power supply. It has a 20 Hz to 20 kHz frequency response and a 90dB signal-to-noise ratio.

Across the front are six ultra-smooth pots with white plastic caps. Next to each is a 1/4" balanced stereo headphone output and a push-button Cue switch. There is also a master power switch. On the back are two sets of +4dBu line-level inputs on 1/4-inch TRS/XLR combo jacks, and a standard IEC power socket.

In use, connect any two stereo sources (most likely the main mix and/or cue mix) from your audio interface or mixing desk to the rear stereo inputs. Each headphone output on the front features ample amounts of clean, clear and powerful gain. Switching between the dual cue sources is seamless and silent, with zero artifacts. Nicely, if you only need a single input, the Cue button can act as a handy mute switch.

I connected the HP6 to the alternate set of headphone outs on my Dangerous Music DBOX+, as well as to the alternate monitor outs from a Universal Audio x4 Apollo on a remote tracking session. In each instance, the HP6 worked perfectly to send six strong, clear headphone signals to the talent.

While there is no shortage of headphone amps on the market, many with a plethora of input, insert and routing options, this is often at the expense of cramped and tiny controls and even a compromise in sonic quality. Where the HP6 excels is in its utilitarian simplicity and the notable Coleman Audio sonic clarity.

If you need a straightforward but stellar-sounding headphone distribution amp for your studio, look no further.

Price: \$450

More from: colemanaudio.com

