



Everything you need to record, overdub and play loops at a gig can be done via the JamMan's twin foot pedals

The JamMan features Digitech's usual gig-proof construction. It comes with a power supply too

£279

DIGITECH JAMMAN

WANNA LOOP YOUR LICKS AND RIFFS LIKE THE BIG BOYS DO? THEN READ ON... WORDS: SIMON BRADLEY

Loops? I'm not into dance music, you know...

C'mon, now. Musicians of all creeds use loops to add flavour to their songs, these days. Think U2 and Radiohead and banish all thoughts of MC Hammer – and his huge trousers – if you can. Not many guitarists would fancy lugging a sample rack along with their amps and effects to every gig, which usually means making use of backing CDs if you want your tunes to be sprinkled with loops. Hmm, that all sounds a bit Milli Vanilli to us...

Thanks to Digitech's JamMan, players on a budget – yes, that's you and the good folk of TG – can at last get into the use of loops in real time without clearing out their bank accounts. So let's take a closer look...

OK, what's the sizzle?

The JamMan has the capacity to record up to 99 separate loops and recall them instantly, onstage or in the studio. It's a floor-based pedal that allows you to record, overdub and access the loops with your feet: no need to bend down and blindly stab at small buttons.

At the heart of the JamMan is its generous storage facility. Most other stompbox loopers and samplers are restricted by their minimal internal memory: the smaller the memory, the smaller the number of loops and the shorter their length. The JamMan supports standard Type 1 CompactFlash cards and, the bigger the card you use, the more the unit can actually store. As an example, if you upgrade to a two-Gig card the unit offers 386 minutes of total record time. That's over six hours worth!

Is this a guitar mag or a high-tech mag?

The line between the two genres has become blurred, so you'd better get used to it. Take the unit's computer-compatibility, for

If you've been chomping at the bit to include great-sounding loops in your music, JamMan will solve all your problems

example. It's possible to link it up to either a Mac or PC via the JamMan's USB port. From there, a simple process allows you to transfer your own loops from the JamMan's CompactFlash card straight onto your desktop with the minimum of fuss. The loops are stored as .wav files – much higher quality than scratchy old MP3s – and you can chop and change the contents of the JamMan's now Herculean memory at will.

Do you need a degree to work the thing?

The JamMan should calm the technophobes amongst you – it really won't take long till you're looping like the Red Arrows. As with all units, you should at least flick through the accompanying manual so that any problems you may come across in due course shouldn't take too long to fix. Out of the box, the JamMan has several pre-recorded bass and drum loops you can experiment with, which is a great place to start.

There are 99 pigeonholes into which loops can be stored, and you can select any of these via the, er, Select knob. By following the series of LEDs on the front-panel, you will, with practice, know where you are in the recording at all times. As we said, by using both footswitches for starting and stopping recording, plus overdubbing and playback, you can get the job done without taking your eyes off your audience.

You can record from external devices too (via the aux input) and you can use the plethora of sample CDs available. If you're in a metal band and want to open your set with the stereotypical crash of thunder, you no

WHO'S IT FOR?

If you're sampling and looping daft, you will love this thing

INFORMATION

ORIGIN: USA
TYPE: Floor-mounted sampler/looper pedal
CONTROLS: Loop level, Rhythm level, Mic level, Instrument level pots, Select rotary pot, Exit, Store, Loop/Single, Tempo, Auto Record and Record Mode buttons, Record/Play/Overdub and Stop/Tempo footswitches
CONNECTIONS: Guitar input, XLR microphone input, auxiliary input, main output, footswitch input, USB socket, CompactFlash card slot
POWER: Digitech power supply included
CONTACT: Sound Technology 01462 480000
WEB: www.digitech.com

ALTERNATIVELY

Tascam CD-6T1 – £149
 BOSS RC-20XL – £249

longer need to entrust your grand entrance to the often disinterested guy on the sound desk. Instead, you can load up the JamMan with all sorts of special effects and recall them at will.

What's the bad news?

An onboard guitar tuner would have been useful, as would have been some sort of method for altering the tempo of a loop in real time other than fumbling for the Tempo button under dim stage lights. But we're just nitpicking, to be honest. It is worth bearing in mind that there's no sort of FX processing available here. That means if you plug your guitar straight in to record, the tone will be clean and ultra-dry and you really don't want to be artificially overdriving digital equipment because, quite frankly, it sounds pants! Obviously you can use your usual effects and even an amp DI to obtain different guitar tones and, once you're set, you will find yourself looping and sampling for hours.

So it's a useful piece of kit then?

Haven't you been listening? It's awesome! If you've been chomping at the bit for the chance to include great-sounding loops in your music and live set list, the JamMan will solve all your problems. Remember that other loopers of this ilk and price don't allow for the downloading of memory onto your computer and, for that reason, we're certainly up for a jam, man.

FOR: Easy to use... after a bit of practice; huge memory; awesome live tool
AGAINST: Can be confusing at first; the tempo button is a bit small; no tuner or onboard FX

TG RATING:

