

MESA/BOOGIE®

STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER

Owner's Manual

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:

- Read these instructions.
- Follow these instructions.
- Heed all notes and warnings.
- Do not use this device near water.
- Clean this device only with a dry cloth.
- Keep these instructions for future reference.
- Damage to this device by improperly connected and/or grounded equipment is not covered under warranty.
- This device contains no user-serviceable parts and includes components which are susceptible to damage by electrostatic discharge (ESD).
- Be sure to use only a properly rated "wall-wart" power adapter or universal pedalboard power supply, with extra attention paid to the correct polarity, voltage and current. Applying the wrong polarity, improper voltage or insufficient current to this device may cause poor and/or inconsistent tone, performance, and even damage! Refer to the CONTROLS & CONNECTIONS and SPECIFICATIONS sections for more information.
- Do not defeat an amplifier's safety ground - which is provided by the 3-prong AC power-cord plug! Doing so may not only be ILLEGAL, but it may also pose a SHOCK or ELECTROCUTION HAZARD.

Congratulations on your choice of MESA/Boogie® and welcome to the MESA® Family! The same passion for excellence, commitment to quality and dedication to customer satisfaction is present in each and every product we make in our one-and-only shop in Petaluma, California, U.S.A. Rest assured that the very same people that hand-build the finest amplifiers in the world, also built your STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER and you have access to the same resources for help that all our customers do. Call on us anytime and enjoy!

STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER

The STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER provides a quick and easy fix to the deep-rooted signal loss and inconsistent tone issues faced by guitarists due to; capacitive loading, impedance loading and mismatching, and changes to a pickup's resonant frequency/peak, as a result of varying effect pedals and interconnecting cables. It accomplishes this by providing the weakest link in every guitar rig, the guitar itself, with a resolute load which segregates it from the many variables on a pedalboard and the long cable run to a back-line amplifier. It does so by converting the guitar's high-impedance signal to low-impedance, which also minimizes its susceptibility to noise, interference, and even some of the switch "popping" associated with true-bypass pedals. As a result, the variations in sound and tone will be predominantly from the actual effect of the pedals, and not from a guitar related high-impedance signal issue.

The buffer is a 100% discrete Class-A circuit with an input impedance and other finely tuned characteristics which mimic that of a high quality tube amplifier, and it includes an RFI filter to minimize the possibility of radio-frequency interference and noise. It presents a dynamically ideal load to a guitar that remains steadfast, resulting in a tone that is consistent, while still allowing the guitar to breathe, live, and react - like plugging directly into the front of a tube amplifier.

CONTROLS & CONNECTIONS

It's always a good idea to make any audio connections with every piece of equipment in a guitar rig turned off, or at least the amplifier volume(s) turned down, to avoid loud bursts of sound from damaging speakers or other components.

For optimal results in the preservation of a guitar's tone, the STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER should ideally be the first device the guitar is plugged into.

NOTE: A few vintage fuzz pedals will function and sound differently when connected directly to the guitar because they are meant to be fed with a high-impedance signal source, as opposed to a low-impedance signal source, which is why they need to be used first in the signal path. It's recommended that such pedals either be modified with true-bypass switching, if not already so equipped, or used in conjunction with a true-bypass loop-box to ensure the pedal is completely bypassed when not in use.

LED: When illuminated, this blue LED indicates the STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER is powered-up and ready to go!

IN: This 1/4" phono jack is the input and accepts the signal from a guitar.

OUT: This 1/4" phono jack is the output and provides a buffered low-impedance signal. Connect this jack to the input of a pedal or an amplifier.

NOTE: When using shielded 1/4" TS (tip & sleeve) instrument cables, always aim for the best quality and shortest length possible.

9-18VDC: This standard female DC receptacle is the external power supply jack and accepts a 2.1mm x 5.5mm male barrel connector from a standard 9-18Volt DC "wall-wart" power adapter or universal pedalboard power supply, with a NEGATIVE CENTER polarity plug. Refer to the SPECIFICATIONS section for additional information.

NOTE: An external DC "wall-wart" power adapter is not included.

WARNING: To avoid immediate damage to this device and voiding the warranty, do NOT connect an AC-Voltage, or ANY other DC-Voltage power supply to this jack, other than that specified above and in the SPECIFICATIONS section!

FAQ & HELPFUL HINTS

Can I use the STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER for my bass?

Yes you can!

I'm using a switched-mode power adapter/supply (SMPS) and hear a high pitch "whine", why is that?

Some of these SMPS adapters are noisier than others, especially those that aren't from a reputable or brand-name MI manufacturer. Another reason could be that you're trying to run to many devices from a single adapter. Though many of them have a high current output and tout being able to power many devices, doing so can result in the development and/or increase of noise, for some reason. If this is happening, we recommend either trying another adapter, or better yet - using a universal pedalboard power supply with enough isolated outputs to power every device on your pedalboard individually; better power = less noise = more tone!

What's the maximum length of cable I can use between my guitar and the STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER's input?

Always aim for the best quality and shortest length possible shielded 1/4" TS instrument cable between the guitar and buffer, but also keep in mind that zero capacitance is not ideal, or practical. It's safe to say that there's no way a pickup has been designed without expecting there to be some length of cable, and therefore capacitance, hanging off the output of a guitar. A certain amount of cable capacitance is good, and necessary! We're not trying to eliminate it, but we are trying to control and prevent it from changing unexpectedly. So if you can afford it, experiment with a variety of brands and lengths, to fine-tune the tone, until you find what suits your tone best! There's no one-size-fits-all cable length, but generally speaking shorter cables will yield a brighter tone, and longer cables will yield a darker tone. Once again the key is consistency, so when you've made your choice, always use the same cable.

I would like to use a vintage fuzz pedal, but have been told that they don't work well with buffered signals, is this true?

These pedals will function and sound differently when connected directly to the guitar because they are meant to be fed with a high-impedance signal source, as opposed to a low-impedance signal source, which is why they need to be used first in the signal path. It's recommended that such pedals either be modified with true-bypass switching, if not already so equipped, or used in conjunction with a true-bypass loop-box to ensure the pedal is completely bypassed when not in use.

FAQ & HELPFUL HINTS continued ►

Can I use another STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER at the end of my pedalboard to drive a long cable run to my back-line amplifier?

Theoretically you could, but we have another device which is better suited as an output line-driver, the CLEARLINK™ BUFFER/BALANCED LINE-DRIVER. It's capable of driving up to a 330ft/100m balanced or shorter unbalanced cable run, via standard XLR microphone or shielded 1/4" TS instrument cables, respectively, to the back-line amplifier. Alternatively, we also have a two-in-one device called the HIGH-WIRE™ DUAL BUFFER / OUTPUT BOOST which includes both circuits, plus a boost and tuner mute.

Using the STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER in tandem with a CLEARLINK™ BUFFER/BALANCED LINE-DRIVER resolves the deep-rooted signal loss and inconsistent tone issues faced by guitarists due to; capacitive loading, impedance loading and mismatching, and changes to a pickup's resonant frequency/peak, as a result of varying effect pedals and interconnecting cables. They accomplish this by providing the two constants in every guitar rig, the guitar and amplifier, with a resolute load and source, via the STOWAWAY™ and the CLEARLINK™, respectively. The two form an effects loop, which segregates the guitar and amplifier from the variables on a pedalboard, easily handles many pedals, interconnecting cables, and effortlessly drives a long cable run to the back-line amplifier, either balanced or unbalanced. As a result, the only variations in sound and tone will be from the actual effect of the pedals on the pedalboard, and not from a guitar or amplifier related loading or impedance mismatch issue.

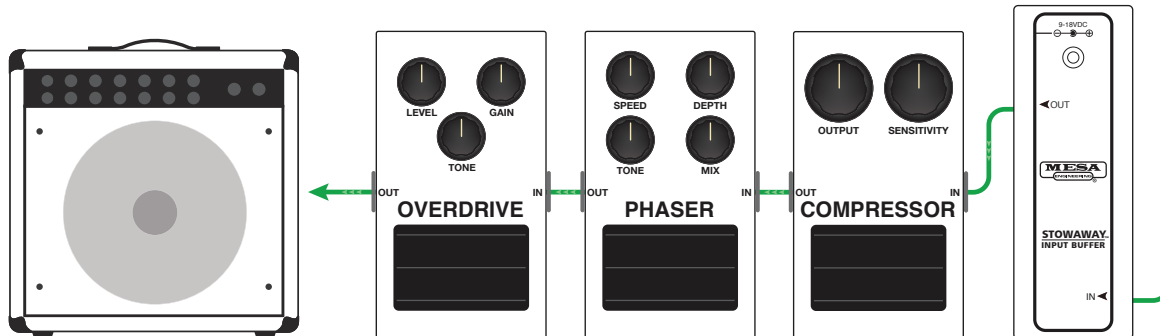
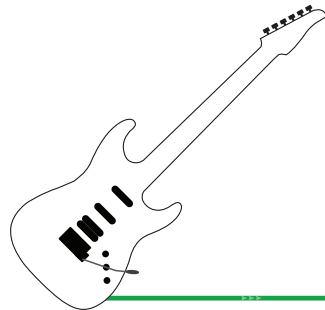
SPECIFICATIONS:

- Input Impedance: 1Mohm
- Buffer Design: Discrete Class-A
- Maximum Operating Voltage: 20VDC
- Nominal Operating Voltage: 9-18VDC
- Typical Current Draw: 10mA @ 9VDC
- DC Adapter (Optional): 2.1 x 5.5mm Barrel Plug Negative Center
- Weight: 0.27 lbs (121 g)
- Dimensions (W x D x H): 1.42 x 3.98 x 1.24 inch (36 x 101 x 32 mm)

NOTE: Device specifications are subject to change without notice.

Application Diagrams are available at www.mesaboogie.com

STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER – SETUP #1



QUICK AND EASY TONE IMPROVEMENT

The STOWAWAY™ INPUT BUFFER presents a dynamically ideal load to the guitar that remains steadfast, converting its high-impedance signal to low-impedance, and segregating it from varying effect pedals, interconnecting cables, and the long cable run to the back-line amplifier. This first step results in consistently better tone from the guitar regardless of what's connected after the buffer.

MESA/BOOGIE
The Spirit of Art in Technology™



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