

Waves GTR Ground £470

Ground control to major chord: Waves introduces a controller for its GTR3 software *by Trevor Curwen*

We recently took a look at Waves' GTR3 amp and effects simulation software [issue 304], which provides a classy set of sounds for recording guitarists. However, Waves has just released a new product that will greatly extend GTR3's practicality, perhaps even tempting some to use it onstage. The GTR Ground is a foot controller that connects to a computer via USB 1.1 and has 11 assignable buttons and dual dedicated expression pedals for transmitting MIDI messages to control all aspects of the software.

GTR Ground has a radical and very elegant design that also manages a great deal of practicality. The unit is metal and ruggedly built. It sits firmly on the floor courtesy of seven rubber feet and a pair of elongated supports that look like hydrofoils, raising

the front edge of the unit so it sits at an angle that makes foot-control feel very natural.

Apart from the A/B footswitch that sits alone at the left end, the footswitches are placed in two rows, four at the top, six at the bottom, separated by a rounded

stainless steel bar that not only serves as a carrying handle, but also has the immensely practical function of being a barrier that allows you to operate the top set of switches without inadvertently hitting the lower ones. It can also function as a foot-rest where you



The middle bar acts as a barrier between upper and lower buttons as well as a foot pivot

pivot your foot and operate both sets of switches using heel and toe.

Slightly set apart from the switches are a pair of treadles for continuous control over effect parameters and real time wah and volume control. Power is via a supplied 12V DC adaptor and there is an additional RJ45 socket, like an Ethernet socket, which Waves enigmatically says is for "future use".

The Rivals

The **IK Multimedia Stomp IO** (£657) controller, which comes complete with all of the different **AmpliTube** software versions, is the closest rival to the **GTR3** and **GTR Ground** package. Stomp IO comes with just one pedal treadle, but has inputs for up to six more external controllers. **NI Guitar Rig 3 Kontrol Edition** (£399) offers a fine set of amp sims and effects and comes with the Rig Kontrol controller/audio interface, which offers a practical set of functions with nine switches and a single treadle pedal plus two additional pedal inputs.



In Use

The GTR Ground is primarily designed to control GTR3 in its standalone mode, but it can also be used when GTR3 is used as a plug-in and thereby control other MIDI applications.

Connecting up GTR Ground and launching GTR3 in standalone mode results in the Ground's display windows lighting up in orange against the black background and showing the current status. The loaded preset is shown in the centre at the top below the preset/stomp switch, which is used to change the status of the lower six (A to F) switches from calling up presets to turning the virtual stompboxes contained within the preset on and off. Two of the upper switches are used to scroll up and down through the banks of presets while the last switch is a tap tempo button or, with a longer press, it can be used to call up the software tuner – on the computer screen only and not on the GTR Ground display, which would have been cool. Once the tuner is displayed, however, another press on the footswitch doesn't get back to the previous



page, which is disappointing – you have to use your mouse.

From a practical point of view, the operating system works really well with instant changing between calling up presets and being able to switch stomps on and off, which should see you through a gig with absolutely no fuss. The A/B button to switch between two parallel settings in each preset adds flexibility, and the two treadles can give you constant access to wah and volume or easily be assigned to any other parameter within a preset, each of which can be clicked to instigate a quick 'learn' mode.

Verdict

If you've already invested in the Waves software then the GTR

Ground is its perfect companion. It is functional and intuitive, but it certainly ain't cheap. If you are looking to buy a full package with software included you first need to make a decision about whether the particular flavour of the software is right for you. However, with the GTR Pro Pack you are getting an integrated and immensely practical system that is definitely comparable in price to its main rival. **G**

The Bottom Line

We like: Clever ergonomic design; two treadles built-in; easy switching between programs and stompboxes

We dislike: Can't get out of tuner screen using footswitch

Guitarist says: A practical asset; makes GTR3 more than a mouse-driven studio tool

The two treadles can give you constant access to wah and volume



You link the GTR3 software in your computer to the foot controller via USB. Please note: the software costs extra, see right...

Waves GTR Ground

PRICE: £470, controller only

TYPE: USB MIDI foot controller

ORIGIN: China

CONNECTIONS: USB, RJ45 jack for future use

DIMENSIONS: 766 (l) x 195 (w) x 100 (h) mm

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 4.2/9.26

POWER REQUIREMENTS: 12V DC adaptor (supplied)

RANGE OPTIONS: GTR Pro Pack (includes GTR3, GTR Ground and DI box) costs £705 (Native version) or £822 (TDM version)

Waves GTR3 Software

TYPE: Software guitar recording system

ORIGIN: Israel

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: See Waves website

AUTHORISATION: iLok required

AMPS: Direct, clean, warm, punchy, sweet, cream edgy, drive, overdrive, scream, crunch, crush, scorch, inferno, monster, hot, modern, shredder, supernatural

BASS AMPS: Directube, activator, solidstate, mo'town, supertube, thunder, overbass

SPEAKER CABINETS: Choice of 22

MICS: Seven guitar mics. Six bass mics. All available on axis or off axis.

EFFECTS: Overdrive, distortion, fuzz, metal, flanger, vibrolo, panner, phaser, octaver, wah wah, chorus, doubler, pitcher, bass pitcher, delay, lay-d, reverb, spring, gate/comp, compressor, gate, tone, EQ, axx press, volume pedal

AUTOMATION: Real time MIDI control including dynamic automation for the Stomps

Sonic Distribution 0845 500 2500
www.waves.com

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★