

Reviews

Millennia Media Twin Direct TD

By [Mitch Gallagher](#) | [Eq Magazine August 2006](#)

When you send your signal into your recorder, send it first class



The TD-1 isn't just cute, it sounds great.

Millennia refers to the Twin Direct TD-1 as a “Half-Rack Recording System,” and a “collection of core Millennia products designed into a sophisticated recording channel + direct box.” I prefer to think of it as the ultimate device for getting signal into your recorder — here's a short list of what the TD-1 does:

- Solid-state mic/line pre (using the same circuit as Millennia's HV3 preamp)
- Solid-state instrument DI with three selectable input impedances
- Tube instrument DI with three selectable input impedances
- Guitar amplifier Speaker Soak DI
- Dual-band fully parametric equalizer (using a circuit similar to the solid-state part of Millennia's high-end NSEQ equalizer)
- Dual-output re-amp interface

In other words, the TD-1 covers a lot of ground (for the full set of specs, a block diagram, and the manual, go to www.mil-media.com/docs/products/td1.shtml).

The heavy-duty steel chassis is a half-rack wide, and two rack spaces tall. Options include a padded gig bag, and kits for rack mounting a single TD-1 or two units side-by-side. The stock TD-1 comes gloss black, but a platinum-crackle finish is also available.

In some ways the TD-1 is a scaled-down version of Millennia's ultra-flexible Origin STT-1 channel strip (reviewed Oct. '02) — it has two-band EQ versus the four-band in the STT-1, no VU meter, no compressor, no tube mic pre, and so on. In other ways, it takes the “input strip” concept in a different direction than the STT-1, with headphone out, re-amping, enhanced DI capabilities, and more. If you

want a tonally flexible, highly capable mic channel strip with EQ and compression, the Origin STT-1 is your box. For a great mic pre with EQ and tons of electric guitar and bass recording power, the TD-1 is the way to go.

APPLYING THE TD-1

As a mic pre, the TD-1 has the top-of-its-class, clean-but-big Millennia solid-state sound. I A/B'd the TD-1 against my HV3; the tone and response are identical. The headphone out is handy for mic placement, and quick checks (although I wish it had a real level control knob rather than a volume trim pot). I'd also appreciate a way to mix a stereo signal back into the headphones for latency-free monitoring when overdubbing to a DAW, although how Millennia could cram anything more into the box is anyone's guess. . . .

As a direct box, Millennia's Twin Topology can switch between solid-state and tube circuits. The solid-state path is clean, smooth, and transparent; dropping into tube mode adds girth and chewy-ness, and rounds out the tone's top and bottom — the direct signal gets bigger, which can help with single-coil pickups. The three input impedance settings for the direct input allow more tonal flexibility with acoustic and passive pickups.

The instrument direct in jack also serves as a "Speaker Soak" input, allowing you to feed the speaker level output from a guitar amp direct into the TD-1. Note the TD-1 has no speaker simulation, so the sound is that of the amp itself. I preferred using it for clean tones, as amp-direct distorted tones sound like you'd expect: fizzy, anemic, and direct sounding. However there's another option: With modeled guitar processing plug-ins, you can record the Speaker Soaked guitar amp tone, then send the resulting track through a speaker modeler. Native Instruments' Guitar Rig 2 worked great for this — you can call up just cabinets (no amp or distortion) and run the direct amped guitar through it. This is ideal for those who find the distortion in modeler plug-ins unconvincing, but need the options offered by different cabinets, mics, and processors.

When re-amping, you have the choice of using either Strat- or Les Paul-flavored outputs — the TD-1's re-amp outs are driven using transformers to emulate (but of course, not duplicate) the output of a single-coil or humbucker pickup.

The TD-1's two-band equalizer is fully parametric, and offers wonderfully clean, smooth, musical tone adjustment. The EQ can be switched on for any of the signal paths, including the direct instrument in and re-amp out, in addition to the line and mic ins. Thus, you can use its EQ both during tracking and mixdown. The two bands can overlap, and each has an "x10" switch for increasing its range.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you're looking for an incredibly flexible input device that can also provide useful functions during mixdown, the TD-1 may be your Holy Grail. Furthermore, the \$1,675 price is an amazing deal when you consider how much it includes. Highly recommended — actually, I recommend that you get two, so you can track and EQ stereo sources!