

Millennia HV-37 Two-Channel Preamplifier

Dual HV-35 preamps in this 1U chassis is an excellent front end for acoustic instrument recording jobs, and much more.



Some reviews are easier than others. Luckily, we at *PAR* get to use a lot of what I've previously referred to as "the good stuff," and Millennia's HV-37 preamp squarely fits into the "good stuff" category. In my extensive use of the HV-37 in various acoustic recording applications, it gave me everything I needed.

Features

Incorporating a pair of HV-35 500 series module preamps into a fully self-contained single space rack unit, the HV-37's layout is quite simple. Included is a quarter-inch Hi-Z instrument input with a small gain knob (15-60 dB), followed by buttons for instrument input, 80 Hz roll-off filter (3 dB per octave), DC coupled ribbon mic mode (with 10 dB gain boost), +48 VDC phantom power, polarity switch and 15 dB pad. Finally, there is a signal present light indicating signal at -46 dB (green) or a +22 dB peak (red). Double the above description, add in a power switch and a small power-on light, and that's the front panel. On the rear, there is XLR I/O per channel and the IEC power cable connection for the internal power supply (120 – 240 V operation) completes the package.

In Use

With its transformerless input and ultra clean design, it provides just what you'd expect it to: an uncolored and accurate

signal path. When recording, I use different preamps for different purposes; it has to do with the player, instrument, mic, room and purpose. Sometimes a colored preamp is just what's called for, and other times 'invisible' is needed. The HV-37, in my opinion, is invisible: It steps out of the way of the mic and allows recording like no amplifier was there. I like that.

I've had a handful of projects recently that called for an almost classical approach in purity of sound, even though it wasn't classical music. I broke out some of my favorite go-to mics, including an Earthworks QTC-1 matched pair and DPA 2011C matched pair. Working in both my Pro Tools HDX and UA Apollo mobile rigs, I used the HV-37 on cello, violin, overheads, acoustic guitars, vibes, shakers, percussion and even voice.

The noise floor of the HV-37 is hardly even there; it is low enough to use in super delicate recording situations. Sure, I used very good microphones and very good Mogami cable (for both my HDX and Apollo rigs) with fine

players and exceptional instruments—that never hurts—yet the beautiful thing is those instruments translated to the end recording almost like I was standing in front of them. This is thanks in large part to the HV-37.

I realize this is a *PAR* review, and I was probably supposed to use the DI to make it "official," but hey—I'm focusing on the real-world use of this preamp. Honestly, I didn't need the Hi-Z input, so this application would have been forced.

One suggestion for Millennia: How about making the power-on light a little bigger, or brighter? If you aren't standing directly in front of the unit, it's very hard to tell if this guy is on until you hear the mics go live. It's a minor issue, and if any sound degradation was a trade-off, I'll just look closer.

Summary

Overall, for a street price of under \$750 per channel, HV-37 buyers get a high-end preamp that excels at capturing acoustic music. The HV-37 delivers on all the adjectives you might expect to hear; it's clean, pure, invisible and musical. It helps me make great music and is now a valuable part of my acoustic recording rig.

Price: \$1,439 street

Contact: Millennia | mil-media.com/HV-37.html

second opinion

by Lynn Fuston

Millennia Media HV-35

As a longtime Millennia Media preamp advocate—having owned both the 8-channel HV-3D and the newer 8-channel HV-3R—I'm a huge fan of these preamps. I frequently record orchestras through them, with the signal path being Mic > Preamp > Pro Tools. With the right combination of player, mic and mic position, all I need is gain and no other modification to the signal. Everything from strings to woodwinds to brass to harp, when paired with the right mic and the Millennia preamps, is really easy to get a great sound for without any knob turning at all (except for gain).

My singular frustration with my Millennia has been the lack of a high pass filter. When recording in studios with air conditioning rumble or wood floors that conduct low end, unwanted low frequency excursion is often an issue. I hate going from the preamp out to an EQ or console (additional circuitry) just to dump unusable or inaudible frequencies, but frequently I am required to do that when working with mics that have no highpass filter, like all of my numerous ribbon mics.

So, I am delighted that the HV-35 (500 Series, \$799 retail) incorporates all the features of the HV-3R and adds a highpass filter. On my last orchestra session, I had the opportunity to use a pair of these alongside my valued HV-3R and they sound just the same—something that cannot be said about all 500 Series realizations of preamps. I welcome the inclusion of a ribbon input, with the additional 10 dB of gain, though I didn't have a chance to check it out on that date.



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