



# DEAN MARKLEY TRILOGY

A COMPACT ACOUSTIC PICKUP SYSTEM OFFERING PIEZO, MAGNETIC AND MICROPHONE SOURCES. STEVE ATKINS ASKS IF THREE IS BETTER THAN ONE

... If you own a rudimentary electro you'll know how hard it is to get your natural sound up to band volume. A miked acoustic sounds best, but it's a pain to set up. Undersaddle piezos are easiest to use and most resistant to feedback, yet the sound in pure acoustic terms isn't great. Finally, magnetic pickups sound natural and warm, though tend to (but not always) suffer reduced frequency response and single-coil hum. So why not offer all three in one package? Enter Trilogy...

We fitted the Trilogy to a well-used Yamaha LD10 dreadnought, following the clear instructions. Out of its classy presentation tin, one concern is that the four rotary controls look rather fiddly to operate. After fitting, however, – best get a specialist to do this unless you have the relevant experience – it seems like a good balance of easy fitting and user-friendliness. The adhesive stickers used to retain internal



... and the gold-plated endpin jack socket screws in place of the old one. If you need to ream a new hole, it's 1/8-inch

wiring aren't fabulously sticky, and the wires themselves could be a little longer for tidy sidewall mounting. Apart from that, all good.

Right now I'm interested in getting natural acoustic sounds recorded into my laptop, and would normally be using a Blue Baby Bottle condenser – it'll take a lot of convincing to leave that unplugged.

## READY TO GO

The lead makes a reassuring clunk into the Trilogy endpin socket; a good positive connection. I'm not adjusting the polepieces yet, although the bottom E and A strings will almost certainly need taming on this guitar. Let's do as DM suggests and just play.

With the condenser mic on its own, things are fairly natural with lots of extra bottom end as the gain increases. With no EQ to hand, the only option is to turn down the volume.

Using the piezo alone means tons of gain, along with *that* undersaddle transducer tone and response. Some players like it, but to me [and me – Ed] it sounds 'quacky' and unnatural compared with a miked up guitar.

Using the magnetic pickup alone introduces single-coil buzz which becomes very annoying after a while. I thought there would be more gain available, but the tone itself has good dynamics without clanky compression. Mixing all three together yields best results of course,

■ The Trilogy clamps to the inner edge of the soundhole, the battery holder screws to the end of the neck block...



and for my tastes, I settled on volumes of 80 per cent condenser, 65 magnetic and around 10 piezo for general strumming; increasing the latter for single-note playing. One thing that is apparent however, is a noticeable drop in natural acoustic resonance with the pickup fitted, due to the mass of the Trilogy partly impeding the free movement of the top. [Our Lowden-playing friend who installed the Tahoe didn't find this a problem – Ed].

## PLUG IN, THUMBS UP

While the Trilogy won't replace a high-quality condenser mic in a studio situation, it nevertheless offers a lot of tonal potential for live use, and also for recording great acoustic demos.

It has the significant bonus of offering you three mixable sound sources in one package. In pure electro-acoustic terms, it outperforms any undersaddle-only system we've heard, and so represents a good choice for any acoustic player wanting to plug in most of the time. **GB**

■ Also shown, the Trilogy, magnetic pickup-only system (£77)

## GBINFO

### DEAN MARKLEY WEST COAST SERIES TRILOGY

PRICE: £299  
BUILT IN: USA  
TYPE: Acoustic pickup system

FEATURES: Magnetic pickup, built-in condenser mic, undersaddle transducer, individual volume controls, master volume. End pin jack socket and all mounting accessories also included

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## GBOPINION

### GOLD STARS

★ Thoughtful design, good sound, easy to fit

### BLACK MARKS

● Needs modification if you have a thicker soundhole (Lowden)

### GBRATING

