

I'm fairly new to the world of live sound, but wanted to share about an inexpensive piece of gear I acquired. The DBX GoRack sells for a shade under \$30 and is about the size of a paperback book. It has auto feedback suppression, compression, 15 or so preset EQ settings, and a "sub-synth" that reproduces the lowest note in the signal an octave lower. Also has a mute button and gain & volume controls. The controls are all easy to use and fairly intuitive. I had my first chance to use the GoRack at a gig this weekend. My system is 1 or 2 (depending on how many of us are there on a particular date) condenser mics into a Carvin AG300 amp, with an extension cabinet when we want it. Amp and cabinet up on stands. Mics are used for all of the instruments (no pickups) and vocals. No monitors. This is kind of a loose application of the "one mic" approach, and I love it. We just lean in, lean out, and play together in a semi-circle, much like we do (unamplified) on jam night back at the house. But, this approach is a bit more feedback prone than the standard live sound rig. Because my mics need phantom power and must go straight into the amp, the GoRack runs on the FX loop of the amp. This gig was about 50-70 people packed into a square room. Birthday party. Three of us on various stringed instruments and vocals. People weren't there for the music, so there was a fair amount of background noise (people talking, eating, drinking).

The GoRack was, in a word, spectacular. First, I used the sweepable mid cut on the amp to cut the first feedback producing frequency. Then I engaged the feedback suppression on the GoRack and goosed the master volume. You could hear it work; feedback starts up, then it stops within a second or two. No noticeable degradation of sound quality, just death to the annoying feedback. I have no way of quantifying it, but the GoRack definitely enables a significant gain in gain. Gotta be the loudest \$30 you can spend. Plus, the auto feedback suppression deals with that random stuff that comes up from time to time. Meanwhile, we're playing music and not running sound. The subsynth could seem gimmicky, but it was a cool addition on a couple of songs. One of my guitars is a 12 fret Martin dread with a big, big bottom end. The subsynth took that bottom end and replicated it an octave below. It sounded kind of like a bass player was there, playing the root. Very cool when you want it. I played with a couple of the EQ presets. There was nothing dramatic evident in trying different pre-sets, but there are some that seem likely to be helpful in particular situations. I wouldn't buy a GoRack just for the EQ. I added a little compression (set at about 20 on a 0 to 100 parameter), but didn't play with it much and so don't have much to report on it.

To my ear, and given the context, this system sounded great. Very natural, but with a bit of the presence and punch you get from judiciously applied FX and processing. For under \$30, and at the size of a paperback book, the GoRack is a no-brainer addition for the small semi-pro setting.