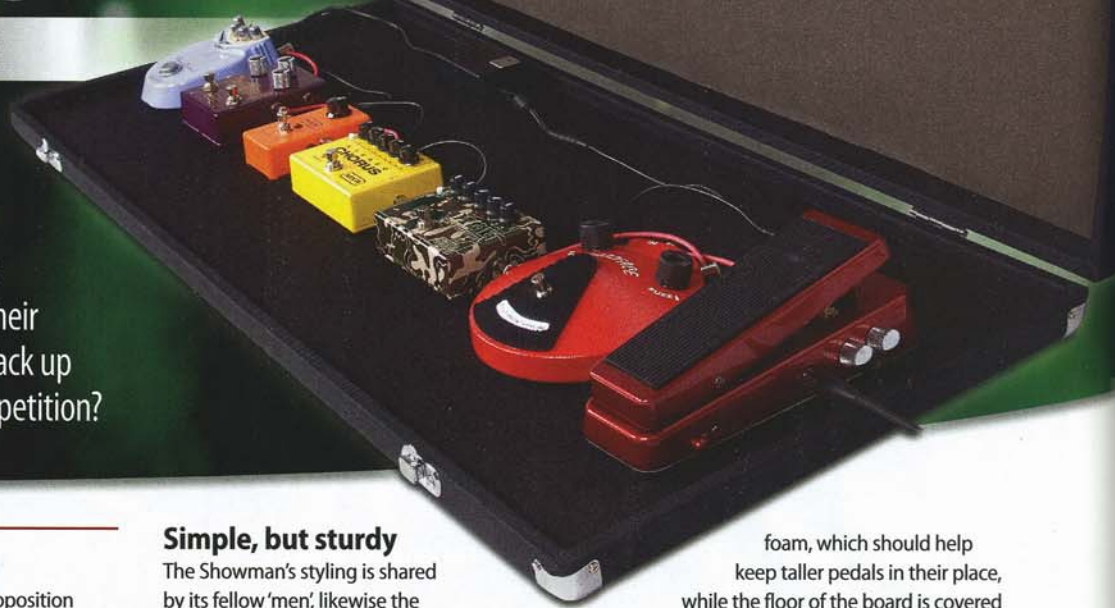


Diago Showman

Pedal case

Diago are another brand name vying for attention in the still-growing pedal case market. But how does their Showman pedal case stack up against the current competition?



Roger Cooper

A pedalboard is a practical proposition for any player employing more than a single stomp box. It offers safe and convenient transportation, plus faster setup and the reliability that comes with permanent cable connections — no more dry joints caused by constant plugging in and out.

A board qualifies for pedal case status when it's equipped with a detachable hard lid. This provides all-encompassing protection and prevents inadvertent alteration of control settings when carried around. The higher price usually involved buys better insurance against damage plus corresponding peace of mind.

A decent proprietary pedal case was once quite hard to find and DIY often offered the only answer, but in recent years the choice of ready-made examples has increased dramatically. This much-improved situation matches the market for this useful accessory, which shows no signs of diminishing, no doubt due to the need to house the vast number of pedals produced over the past 40 years, not to mention the huge quantity currently available.

Diago range

Diago market a number of musical equipment products, including some bearing the company's brand name, such as a British-built guitar combo and effects pedal cases that combine UK design with Chinese manufacture.

The latter have been around for a while and the line currently comprises three models that differ only in pedal-carrying capacity. Smallest is the Gigman, which can accommodate up to 10 compact-style stomp boxes, while the biggest is the Tourman and this monster will hold about three times that number, being the size of a small stage! The middleman in the Diago line is the Showman, reviewed this month and intended to host around 15 standard-proportion pedals.

Simple, but sturdy

The Showman's styling is shared by its fellow 'men', likewise the simple rectangular design, with a shallow board section topped by a deeper detachable lid. Construction is another common factor, being sturdy but lighter than a fully-fledged flightcase. This is a practical approach, because the latter are often too bulky and heavy for users who simply don't need this extreme level of protection for their precious pedals.

Plywood is employed throughout and radiused edges create a smooth, well-finished image. This is enhanced by nicely applied black-vinyl cloth covering, which is contrasted by chromed metal corner protectors. Other hardware is equally up to par, with a comfortable strap handle on the front of the lid, partnered by two equally beefy catches that latch both sections. Round the back a brace of lift-off-type hinges also helps keep things together, while making separation as painless as possible. Rubber feet provide further protection, but somewhat surprisingly none have been fitted to the bottom of the board, making it more likely to move around in use.

The lid is lined inside with reassuringly thick

foam, which should help keep taller pedals in their place, while the floor of the board is covered with black Velcro. This provides suitable anchorage for the partner half of this material, supplied in quite wide, self-adhesive roll form for fitting to the underside of all effects. This should be sufficient to secure most stomp boxes, but bigger-built examples might require firmer fitting.

The case base is sensibly shallow, which should ensure there are no problems with the height of the sides interfering with operation. The lid is obviously deeper and should certainly offer more than enough clearance for the average pedal, as well as many more-muscular examples. However, it's flat-topped rather than sloping in shape, which does mean there's insufficient internal headroom to allow the rearmost pedals to be raised, which is something that's often necessary on a board of this size to ensure easier reach and safer operation.

Unlike some, Diago pedal cases don't come with a built-in power supply, but the company offer an appropriate add-on in the form of the logically titled Powerstation (£69), plus assorted connecting cables and adaptors.

Conclusion

There are less expensive examples out there, but the Showman makes an appealing case, being well made and certainly tough enough for all but the most demanding pro work. It does the job simply but effectively, and the only real question mark concerns lack of internal headroom, which might pose problems for elevating effects.

This may not be the biggest 'man' in the Diago range, but measurements should be more than enough to meet most pedal-packing demands. Players with smaller needs can go for the Gigman, while those requiring greater space will find the Tourman offers the necessary extra acreage. ■ PM

Performing Musician

Diago Showman £124

The Showman offers a straightforward and sturdy solution to stomp-box storage and protection. It costs a little more than some competitors, but the money buys a fair-sized case that should be big enough to suit the needs of all but the most avid effects freak.

John Hornby Skewes
+44 (0)1132 865381
www.jhs.co.uk
www.diago.co.uk