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IK Multimedia IP-ZTONE-BB-IN

IK Multimedia Z-Tone Buffer Boost Guitar Preamp Pedal User Manual

Model: IP-ZTONE-BB-IN | Brand: IK Multimedia

1. Introduction and Overview

The IK Multimedia Z-Tone Buffer Boost is a versatile guitar preamp pedal designed to enhance your instrument's signal and provide powerful tone-shaping options. It features a high-quality instrument preamp, switchable boost for added drive and volume, and a signal buffer to maintain clarity over long cable runs or complex pedalboards. This manual provides detailed instructions for setting up, operating, and maintaining your Z-Tone Buffer Boost pedal.

2. Key Features

- **Buffer and Boost Functionality:** Integrates advanced Z-TONE tone controls and DI box capabilities, along with a signal buffer to energize your pedalboard.
- **Active/Passive Pickup Selector:** Allows matching the input impedance to your guitar or bass pickup type (active or passive) for optimal tone.
- **Switchable Channels:** Offers a choice between a PURE ultra-linear, transparent sound quality, and a JFET channel for warm, tube-like guitar tone.
- **Z-TONE Impedance Control:** Features a patent-pending variable impedance control to shape your sound, providing a wider range of tones from a single instrument.
- **Adjustable Boost:** Provides adjustable gain to increase volume and drive, allowing you to hit your amp or other pedals harder.
- **True Bypass:** Ensures your signal remains unaffected when the pedal is disengaged.
- **Transparent Output Buffer:** Maintains crystal-clear signal integrity, preventing degradation over long cable runs.
- **Rugged Metal Housing:** Designed for durability and road-worthiness.

3. Setup and Connections

Before connecting your Z-Tone Buffer Boost, ensure all audio equipment is turned off to prevent damage. The pedal can be powered by a standard 9V battery or a 9V pedal power supply.

3.1 Power Connection

The Z-Tone Buffer Boost requires a 9V DC power supply (not included) with a center-negative barrel connector, or a 9V battery. Insert the power supply into the 9V DC input jack on the rear of the pedal. If using a battery, open the battery compartment on the underside of the pedal and connect a 9V battery.



Figure 3.1: Rear view showing the 9V DC power input.

3.2 Instrument and Amplifier Connections

Connect your guitar or bass to the**INPUT** jack on the right side of the pedal using a standard 1/4-inch instrument cable. Connect the **MAIN OUT** jack on the left side of the pedal to your amplifier or the next pedal in your signal chain. The pedal also features a **BALANCED OUT** (XLR) for direct connection to a mixer or audio interface, and a**GND LIFT** switch to eliminate hum from ground loops.

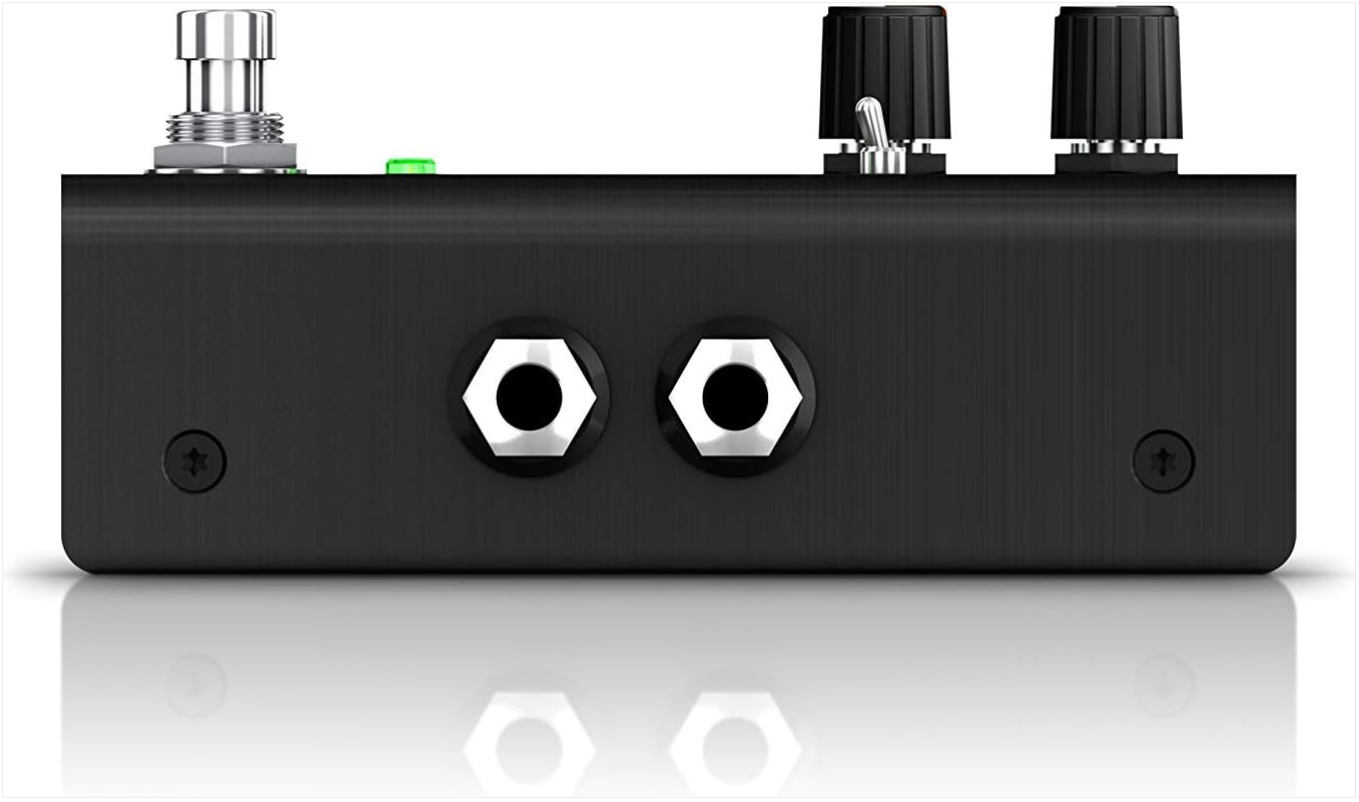


Figure 3.2: Right side view showing the 1/4-inch Input and Link jacks.

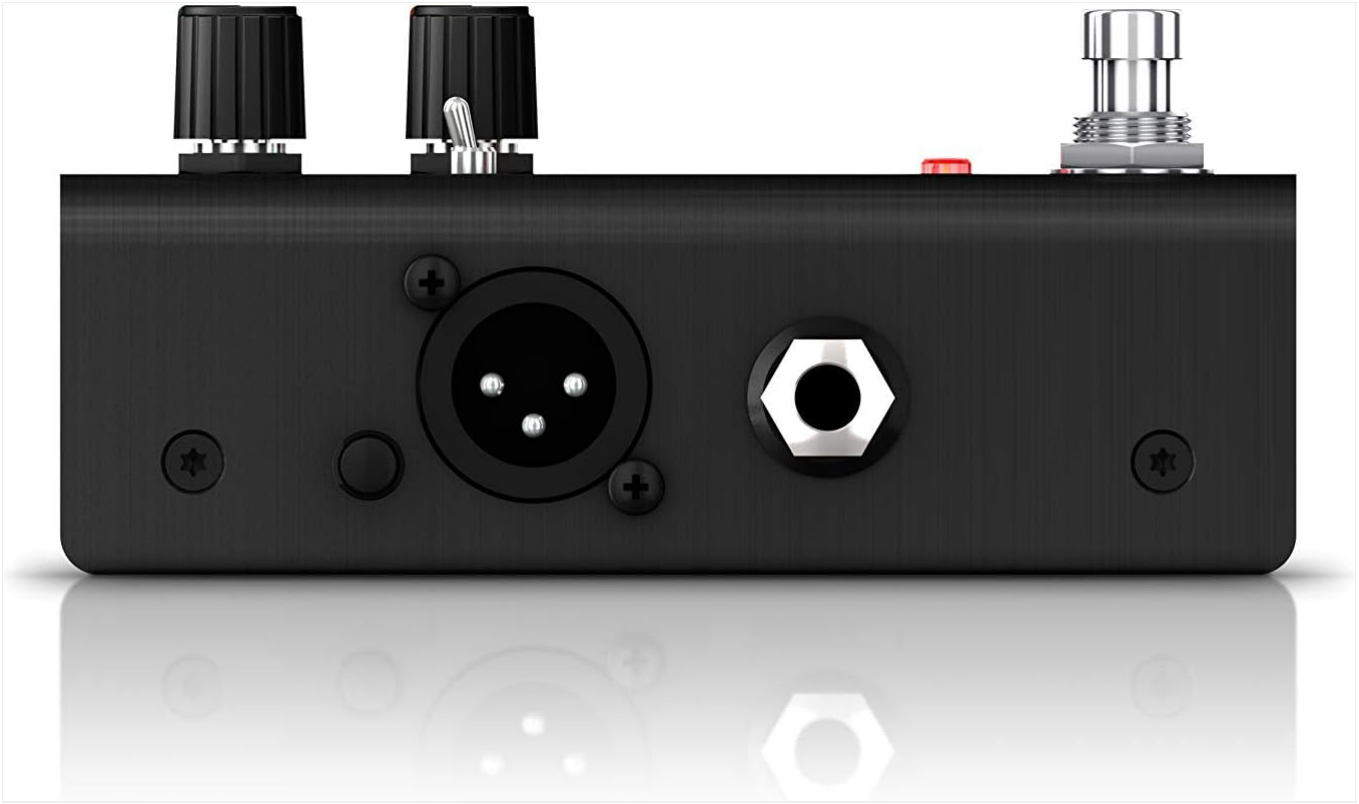


Figure 3.3: Left side view showing the 1/4-inch Main Out, XLR Balanced Out, and GND LIFT switch.

The **LINK** output mirrors the input signal, allowing for instant re-amping or sending the unprocessed signal to another device.

4. Operating the Z-Tone Buffer Boost

The Z-Tone Buffer Boost offers intuitive controls for shaping your guitar or bass tone. Familiarize yourself with the controls shown in Figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1: Top view of the Z-Tone Buffer Boost pedal with controls labeled.

4.1 Controls Overview

- **GAIN Knob:** Adjusts the input gain of the preamp. Use this to set the overall level of your instrument's signal.
- **BOOST Knob:** Controls the amount of boost applied when the BOOST footswitch is engaged. Provides up to +10dB of clean boost.
- **Z-TONE Knob:** This unique control allows you to vary the input impedance from "Sharp" to "Bold."
    - **Sharp:** Higher impedance for a tighter, sharper, and more precise sound.
    - **Bold:** Lower impedance for a thicker, bolder sound.
- **ACTIVE/PASSIVE Switch:** Selects the appropriate input circuit for your pickup type.
    - **ACTIVE:** Bypasses unnecessary gain stages for a direct, transparent, and clean signal path when using active pickups.

    - **PASSIVE:** Engages the preamp for passive pickups.
- **PURE/JFET Switch:** Selects the preamp channel.
    - **PURE:** Provides a completely transparent and ultra-accurate instrument preamp that does not color your sound.
    - **JFET:** Engages a Class A JFET input buffer to add subtle harmonic enhancement and a slight midrange focus for warmth.
- **BYPASS Footswitch:** Toggles the pedal's effect on/off. When off, the pedal is in true bypass mode, passing the signal directly. The red LED indicates bypass mode.
- **BOOST Footswitch:** Engages or disengages the boost function. The green LED indicates when boost is active.

4.2 Using the Z-Tone Buffer Boost

To begin, ensure your instrument is connected and the pedal is powered. Start with the GAIN and BOOST knobs at their minimum settings. Engage the pedal using the BYPASS footswitch. Adjust the GAIN knob to achieve a healthy signal level without clipping. Experiment with the ACTIVE/PASSIVE switch to match your instrument's pickups. Then, explore the PURE/JFET switch to find your desired tonal character. Finally, use the Z-TONE knob to fine-tune the impedance for optimal feel and response. Engage the BOOST footswitch and adjust the BOOST knob for added volume or to drive your amplifier harder.

[redacted].

Video 4.1: Official Z-Tone trailer video demonstrating features and sound. This video provides a visual and auditory overview of the Z-Tone Buffer Boost pedal's capabilities, including its tone-shaping features and how it integrates into a guitar rig.

5. Maintenance

The Z-Tone Buffer Boost pedal is designed for durability. To ensure its longevity, follow these maintenance guidelines:

- **Cleaning:** Use a soft, dry cloth to clean the exterior of the pedal. Avoid abrasive cleaners or solvents.
- **Storage:** Store the pedal in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight and extreme temperatures.
- **Battery Replacement:** If using battery power, replace the 9V battery when the pedal's performance degrades or the LEDs dim. Disconnect the battery if the pedal will not be used for an extended period.
- **Cable Care:** Always use high-quality instrument cables and handle them carefully to prevent damage to the jacks.

6. Troubleshooting

If you encounter issues with your Z-Tone Buffer Boost pedal, refer to the following common troubleshooting steps:

Problem	Possible Cause	Solution
No sound or weak signal	Incorrect cable connections, dead battery, faulty power supply, pedal not engaged.	Check all cable connections. Replace 9V battery or verify power supply. Ensure BYPASS LED is off (pedal engaged).
Hum or noise	Ground loop, faulty cables, interference from other electronics.	Engage the GND LIFT switch. Try different cables. Move pedal away from power sources or other noisy equipment.
Boost not working	BOOST footswitch not engaged, BOOST knob at minimum.	Ensure BOOST LED is green. Increase the BOOST knob setting.

Problem	Possible Cause	Solution
Tone is too bright/dark or thin/fat	Z-TONE knob setting, PURE/JFET channel selection.	Adjust the Z-TONE knob between "Sharp" and "Bold." Experiment with the PURE and JFET channels.

If the issue persists after trying these steps, please contact IK Multimedia customer support.

7. Specifications

- **Item Weight:** 1.28 pounds
- **Product Dimensions:** 4.72 x 3.74 x 1.65 inches
- **Item Model Number:** IP-ZTONE-BB-IN
- **Batteries:** 1 x 9V battery required (Alkaline recommended)
- **Color Name:** Transparent (referring to the pedal's effect on tone, not physical color)
- **Hardware Interface:** 1/4-inch Audio, XLR
- **Signal Format:** Analog
- **Power Source:** Battery Powered, Corded Electric
- **Voltage:** 9 Volts DC

8. Warranty and Support

For detailed warranty information and technical support, please visit the official IK Multimedia website or refer to the warranty card included with your product. You can also find additional resources and FAQs on their support pages.
IK Multimedia Store: Visit the IK Multimedia Store on Amazon

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