



T.C. Electronic PolyTune

TESTED BY MICHAEL MOLEND A

WHENEVER MAESTRO

Andres Segovia tuned his guitar during a concert, he tuned to a chord. I should have learned a good lesson from that, but I've always tuned my guitars by plugging into an electronic tuner and plucking individual strings to ensure every-

thing sounds sweet—an action that has one very critical drawback. I'm kind of freakish about playing in tune—and I bash strings real hard—so I stomp on a tuner after every song when I perform live, and do that “E okay, A okay, D okay, G okay, B okay, E okay” assessment. This operation can produce 15 to 25 seconds of dead time, so I've collected a fair share of anxious “Dude, are you ready yet?” stares from band mates and audiences over the years. But T.C. Electronic's game-changing PolyTune (\$149 retail/\$99 street)—a polyphonic tuner that allows you to simultaneously strum all six open strings and immediately see which ones are in tune and out-of-tune—has transformed me from an annoyance into a well-tuned guitarist who's always ready to rock.

The PolyTune works with guitar and bass, and it automatically determines whether you're tuning chromatically (by plucking a single string) or polyphonically. It also offers needle or stream (LEDs move right or left to denote flat or sharp) displays in chromatic mode, 0.5-cent tuning accuracy, a tuning range of 435Hz to 445Hz, true bypass, silent tuning (signal to

amp is muted when pedal is activated), a 9-volt output jack for powering other pedals, a USB service port for future updates, a handy “BATT” alert when the battery is getting weak, and a hellaciously bright LED with an automatic dimming feature that saves battery power when ultimate illumination is unnecessary.

ON THE GIG

The PolyTune's “one strum and done” operation dropped my between-song tuning time to 5 seconds or less. I can instantly see if my tuning is cool, or if I just need to adjust, say, just the *G* and *B* strings. Visibility is fabulous, whether you're tuning on dark stages, blasted by spotlights, or playing outside in direct sunlight. The pedal is tough, too. I did a couple of “clumsy” tests—such as kicking the pedal off a raised stage to a hardwood floor and dropping it out of a gig bag onto the street—and tuning accuracy was unaffected.

Although the manufacturer doesn't claim the PolyTune's polyphonic tuning function is accurate with barred or fingered open chords, I was could check my guitar's basic intonation by strumming the open strings, and then barring all the strings at the 12th fret and strumming again. Fingering an *Am7* barre chord on the fifth fret and strumming all the strings didn't produce accurate readings in poly mode, although the pedal does track individually fingered notes in chromatic mode. Future revs of the PolyTune may offer “chord tuning,” and the pedal's USB port ensures you're always in the loop for such updates. The PolyTune is innovative, fast, accurate, and versatile, and as it's the *only* polyphonic tuner you're going to get for \$99, how could it not snag an Editors' Pick Award? ■

T.C. ELECTRONIC POLYTUNE

KUDOS Polyphonic tuning. Extremely visible LED in all light conditions. Automatic chromatic/polyphonic tuning modes. Option to power other pedals with 9-volt output. Tough construction.

CONCERNS None

CONTACT T.C. Electronic, tcelectronic.com