

RiffBox Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use RiffBox like a traditional looper?

In some cases, such as fast playing or if audio passages are used with no clear notes or chords, it may be better to use RiffBox like a traditional looper where recording starts and stops with the press of the footswitch. This can be done in any operating mode by setting the Event control to 90.

How does RiffBox identify a pattern that I am playing?

RiffBox can create a loop based on a repeated rhythm pattern or a repeated sequence of notes that you play. Rhythm patterns are based on the time between the notes that you play, so you need to make sure there is a unique timing pattern between notes. A sequence of notes is based on the pitch of the notes that you play, independent of the timing. You need to play the pattern at least twice before RiffBox recognizes it as a pattern. In some cases, you may need to play it several more times. Once RiffBox locks on to the pattern, it will automatically start playing it back in perfect synch to your playing.

Why does nothing happen when I turn the unit on?

When you first turn RiffBox on, the two LEDs will be yellow and the display will be blank. It takes about 10 seconds for the firmware to run a complete self-test. After that, the presets are loaded from memory as the display cycles through the preset numbers (0-99). Once this is complete, it is ready to use.

Why does the external footswitch not work?

The external footswitch is in parallel with the internal footswitch. Both are latching type footswitches, so if either footswitch is engaged, the other footswitch will not work. Simply press the internal footswitch once to disengage it. Now the external footswitch should work fine.

How do I set my input level?

You should make sure the decimal point on the display does not blink during your highest volume playing. For example, if you plan to solo over the loop, you should adjust the input volume with your solo tone engaged. If you forget to do this and start playing a high volume solo during loop playback, RiffBox will automatically reduce the input level to avoid digital distortion.

How does RiffBox recognize the notes or chords that I play?

RiffBox examines the incoming audio to identify several changes in the signal that represent a new note or chord that is being played. After RiffBox is armed for recording, the strength of the first note or chord that is played is used as a reference for all subsequent notes or chords. This allows RiffBox to work for both loud and soft musical passages while still recognizing audio events. It also serves to filter out background noises such as your hands sliding on the strings.

What note or chord determines the end of the loop?

The loop begins on the first note or chord of a musical passage. The loop will start playing back at another note or chord that you identify. This is typically at the point in time when you start playing the same thing again (same as the first note or chord). If you are using automatic looping and have set up the correct event count, the loop will start automatically when you start to repeat your playing. If you are using manual looping, press the footswitch any time between the last note or chord of the musical passage and the first note or chord when you start to repeat your playing.

When should I use automatic looping and when should I use manual looping?

Automatic looping can be used on many types of short musical passages. In some cases, it is better to use manual looping. These include:

- 1) You are playing a long musical passage, and you cannot guarantee that you can play it exactly the same way each time.
- 2) You are using a high-gain amp or a lot of effects, and cannot use the suggested way to trigger these types of loops using the right input channel as described in the users manual.
- 3) You are playing in a noisy environment where audio energy from other instruments is vibrating your strings or you have a noisy high-gain amp in your setup.
- 4) You drank too many beers during the show.

How can I create loops if there are no distinct note or chord events?

If you are playing some sort of soundscape passage that does not use any distinct notes or chords, you can start and stop the loop recording using an external audio source such as a drum machine, or you can start and stop recording at any time using MIDI start and MIDI stop messages which do not require audio events. You can also set the event count to 90 to start and stop recording when the footswitch is pressed.

How do I create loops if I have distorted or high-gain tones?

High-gain amplifiers have a large amount of sustain, which makes it difficult to recognize distinct notes or chords. One way to solve this is to use a high threshold setting and manual looping. You could also use the Mono2 mode of RiffBox and send your clean signal to the right input and your high gain input to the left input. In this case, the clean signal will be used to recognize notes or chords, and the high gain signal will be recorded and looped.

How do I create loops if I am using a delay pedal?

Delay pedals output two or more audio events for each note or chord that you play. This may make it difficult for RiffBox to recognize the correct audio event. There are several solutions to this problem. You could use RiffBox before the delay pedal in the audio chain. You could use the Mono2 mode of RiffBox and send your clean signal to the right input and your wet delay signal to the left input. In this case, the clean signal will be used to recognize notes or chords, and the wet delay signal will be recorded and looped. You could also make sure the delay value is timed to your playing or that the delay feedback signal is not too strong.

What is the best threshold setting to use?

This depends on what you are playing. For single note passages, lower settings are best. For typical rhythm or double-stop type playing, a mid-range setting may work best for you. For power chords, use one of the highest settings. If you set RiffBox into the learn mode, you can see the effect of the threshold setting on the number of events recognized. If you want consistent auto-looping, use the highest threshold setting that you can.

What recording mode should I use?

Most people will only use Stereo mode if they are using a stereo effects pedal or stereo effects rack. Otherwise, one of the two Mono modes will give you twice the looping time. You can always switch between any of the three recording modes since each of the 100 presets also store this setting.

How do I synch a loop to an external audio source?

To do this, you must use Mono2 mode and connect the external audio source to the right input and your instrument into the left input. In this case, the external audio source will be used to recognize audio events, and the signal from your instrument will be recorded and looped.

How do I save a loop that I really like?

Once you have recorded a loop that you really like, you can stop the loop playback. RiffBox will retain the last loop in memory until you turn the power off or you record another loop. You can then connect the audio output or headphone output of RiffBox to an external recording device input. After setting the MIDI channel to zero, you can output a single playback of the loop by pressing down on the right control knob. You can output the loop as many times as you like.

Can I send MIDI signals to RiffBox if it is sending MIDI clocks to a drum machine?

RiffBox combines its MIDI output signal with the MIDI In/Thru signal. If RiffBox is sending MIDI clock messages to a drum machine to keep it in synch, you should not send a stream of MIDI controller messages (for example from a MIDI volume pedal) into RiffBox as it may interfere with the MIDI clock output signal. Since RiffBox sends MIDI clock messages relatively infrequently, it is OK to send single MIDI CC messages into RiffBox. MIDI program change messages are also OK to send to RiffBox at any time.

Where should I place RiffBox in my signal chain?

Generally it is best to place RiffBox after any tone shaping effects in your signal chain. For example, this allows you to create a loop with a clean tone and then play over it with a lead tone. It is also a good idea to place RiffBox after a volume pedal so that you can adjust your lead volume relative to the loop playback volume. An alternative method is to use a MIDI continuous controller pedal, which you can connect to RiffBox to control the input volume, the loop playback volume or both while the loop is playing.

When should I use a remote footswitch?

To operate RiffBox, you can use the built-in footswitch, a remote footswitch or a MIDI controller. You can use the built-in footswitch if you want to place RiffBox on the floor along with your other effects pedals. If you want to use RiffBox in the effects loop of your amp, you can place it next to the amp, and operate it using a remote footswitch. Of course using MIDI, you have many more ways of using RiffBox.

What MIDI channel should I use?

This depends on your MIDI setup and how many MIDI devices that you may be operating from a MIDI controller. The MIDI channel in RiffBox must match the controller MIDI channel. When RiffBox is set to MIDI channel 1-15, MIDI program change messages are recognized on the specified MIDI channel and MIDI continuous controller messages are recognized on the next higher MIDI channel. This is because you may wish to use MIDI program change messages from an effects pedal to control RiffBox looping functions, but you don't want MIDI continuous controller messages (which are also output from the effects pedal) to change parameters within RiffBox. For example, if RiffBox used the same MIDI channel for both message types, changing the bass control on the effects pedal could also change input volume of RiffBox. If you do wish to receive both MIDI program change messages and MIDI CC messages on the same MIDI channel, set RiffBox to MIDI channel 16.

When should I use MIDI program change messages?

Many effects pedals and guitar amps have MIDI outputs that send MIDI program change messages when you press a preset button on the floorboard. You can send these MIDI PC messages to RiffBox to control the looping operation. This means that you do not need to press a

footswitch on RiffBox and can use the same footswitches that you use to change you effects or amp settings. See the RiffBox Users Manual for more information.

When should I use MIDI continuous controller messages?

MIDI continuous controller messages can be used to control many of the functions in RiffBox. You could use a MIDI control surface to set many of the RiffBox parameters. You could use a MIDI footswitch to control several parameters during loop playback such as the loop length or looping mode. You could use a MIDI pedal to control the input volume or loop volume during loop playback. These are only some of the examples.

Can RiffBox store multiple loops?

No. RiffBox was designed for performance situations where you record the loop 'live' and then play along with it. When we developed RiffBox, we were not trying to create a hardware recorder, but a unit for performances. If you need to trigger multiple pre-recorded loops, you could do this with a laptop or a MIDI sequencer.

Can RiffBox store loops after the power is turned off?

No. This is the same as the answer above. But, RiffBox does provide the capability to easily save a favorite loop to an external recording device as mentioned above.

Can RiffBox time-stretch or pitch-shift the loop?

No. RiffBox plays back the loop using the same timing as when you recorded it, unless you use half speed mode. In this case, the loop plays back at half the speed and one octave below the original recording.