

Dear 65Amps,

I am writing this to all the folks at 65Amps rather than just Dan Boul. The reason for this is because I view the company as a team and each person on the team has worked together to bring your products to the market.

I have had the London model of your amp for a bit of time now. Prior to receiving this amp I had worked with the London amps that belonged to other players or saw the amp at various shows including NAMM for two years and The L.A. Amp Show for two years.

My amplifier now has had hundreds of hours of very hard use and I have learned a bit more about the amplifier.

I should probably start this off by saying that the amp has no failures or issues of any type. I am saying NONE and I typically do not use absolutes in descriptions.

The amp has been used at maximum levels and settings for the majority of its operation time.

The amp has been used in many studio sessions, live playing and in major shows as a piece of loaner gear. The amp has traveled extensively via car, truck, and plane and has always worked flawlessly upon arrival to the venue. This is something that cannot be said of many other amps regardless of construction or build quality. There is something that a Kenworth pulled equipment trailer does to an amp after 500 miles down hard roads from one gig to the next.

I have learned that the amp has some aspects that have been a big asset in travel time. You use a rectifier that is the small bottle rather than a typical 5Y3 or GZ34/5AR4. These bigger bottle rectifiers can start to rattle after a bit of ground transportation. The smaller body rectifier does not have this problem. Remember, amp makers went to 9 pin bottles for preamp tubes long ago due to physical issues with the old octal preamp tubes.

The amp is basically five amps in one package.

- Color Channel
- Trem Channel
- Color Channel with boost on
- Low level inputs on each channel
- High level inputs on each channel

I suppose that combinations of inputs for each channel would change this number but these are the basic topologies.

Many amps today that are multi tone amps or channel switchers do little more than add an extra gain stage into the mix. You really do have to vary different amps.

I no longer look at the London as "an amp". It is a tool and a masterpiece of a tool at that. It is a prized piece of studio gear. I used to take multiple amps to sessions. Most of the time the London does the job in ways that surprise new players of the amp.

On one session that was for a very heavy rock piece of work we had borrowed a number of amps. We had a Rivera Rake head, Marshall 900, DSL and TSL, Bogner 101, and Mesa Dual Rectifier. All of these amps would not allow sensitive ribbon mics to be used without input pads enabled on the board and faders down below their optimum signal to noise settings. The old trick of small amps for huge tone shows up as a classic textbook example with the London.

Many smaller amps lack a bit of low end. Due to the design of the London and the output transformer mass this was never an issue. The amp remains articulate at every level and does not exhibit the

compressed lack of definition that all the other amps above showed when their front ends were pushed hard.

The color channel when using the low level input gave all the clean headroom one would expect from an amp rated at twice its wattage. The color channel in the high level input is a different amp once again and engaging the boost switch will please most any hard rocker. If the amp does not have enough gain for the serious metal-head then use your favorite pedal. You will learn what the pedal really sounds like as a side effect. You can bring up the level on the pedal more than you might be used to as a point of interest. You may have thought your pedal was "crapping out" but it was found that it was the front end of triode based amps that had this end result. The pentode front end of the color channel loves pedals.

While I am talking front end tubes I will digress for a moment. London owners need to understand that for each side of this amp there is only one tube in the gain and tone stage. This V1 is for the color channel and V2 is used for the trem channel. This amp is VERY responsive to tube changes. If I were to list the changes that can be heard in a matter of moments by simple single tube changes my list of 5 amps above would be much longer. I now have an extensive tube set of both EF86 tubes and 12AX7 tubes for each side of the amp.

One more critical aspect that contributes to the huge tone and harmonic content of these amps is the lack of circuitry in the signal path. High end amp builders in the Hi-Fi world have always said that the perfect amplifier would be a piece of straight wire with gain. Every tone pot in a circuit path will alter the phase relationship to the primary tone to a degree. As an example, the Fender Princeton two tone knob circuit has always been considered one of their best. When Fender added a mid range control to their higher end amps there was a bit of loss to this magic. Some feel that cathode bias operation in a Vox AC-30 was the main part of its magic. This was a big part of things but the lack of lots of tone pots and other pots was a factor as well. There are many grid biased amps with simple front ends that also sound huge and open. When GT developed its ViPRE preamp the phase relationship was well understood. There are not pots, even for volume. There are two \$250 stepped deck attenuators in the preamp. This unit is now used in most major studios and when A/B'd with the top of the line mic preamps it is generally the one that is used on the project.

Your color switch does not alter phase and it also works to make guitars that are just a touch bright or a touch dark come right into the picture without altering that single tone control.

The trem channel is the classic Marshall tones. Once again, the tone and gain stage is just one tube, V2. Change this tube and you can custom tailor the amp. High transconductance for more gain and a faster attack. Low TC for a smoother response. 12AX7 Ei smooth plate for more gain and more highs. Sovtek 12AX7WC for a dark amp. 12AX7C9 for a smooth jazz amp using the low level input will yield surprises from this side of the amp that is considered to be akin to Marshall in tone. 12AX7 Electro Harmonix will thin things out a bit and a Sovtek 12AX7LPS will thicken things up and darken them a bit over the EH or Tung Sol reissue.

In V3, the phase inverter, a long plate picked for high current drive will yield a very different feel and player touch dynamic over the stock shorter plate tube. It is all personal taste. In V2 I found an NOS Tesla ECC803S allows mic placement very close to a speaker cab where the tone is very tunable with small mic movements. You want a bit more bite, move closer to the center of the cone. Too bright? Try moving the mic away first not just moving it off center. This amp allows bigger changes in two mic placement axis directions and will delight the most picky sound engineer. Mic placement and phase inverter changes are the name of the game here and this amp responds to both in spades.

I suppose I can go on and on and as I hear more players use the amp I know that I will learn much more. The next outing for the amp may be on October 9th at the Gibson / Universal with Scott Patton of Sugarland. They have some big chart topping hits and Jennifer Nettles had a big hit with Bonjovi in addition to her own work. At the same show will be Brooks & Dunn and I would not be surprised that after they hear the amp at sound check they do not ask for the amp to be left on stage.

In closing; the caps, components, workmanship, cabinet, metalwork and everything about the amp are beyond reproach. If I had to pick something to change or improve I could not think of what to say at this time.

As far as value for the dollar, I generally stay away from going down that path. I for one think that people paying \$15,000 for a Dumble is not nonsense. If the amp floats their boat and gives them the tone they were seeking it is a bargain. How many of us have over the past decades (if you are close to my age) procured and got rid of tens of thousands of dollars in amps, gear, guitars or whatever. Finding something that does what it is supposed to can be hard enough. Finding something like the London that does much more than it was advertised or described to accomplish is just really great icing on the cake.

I know you have the Marquee Club and have played with this amp too. Yes, it too is a masterpiece. I know there is an amp or two in the works that from early reports are also going to raise interest in the future. No surprises from my point of view here. You see, you guys are players, you care, you do not build to a budget, amps are built as if they were going to be your own amps. You all have great ears and again, you care.

I have one offer I am going to make here. For folks that have your London or Marquee Club amps I will be willing to work with any of them for precise tube selection as a favor to 65 Amps at no cost to the player. I am also more than happy to offer the use of my own amp if they want to try one out if they have not played one. When I say try one out I am not talking about playing for a few minutes as in your typical store. I am talking about them playing for as long as it takes to have them find out whether the amp is right for them. I am talking about them using it on a gig or using it on a studio project. Learning about the amp in the real world is where this amp shines.

I detest sound clips. Recordings can be done in too many ways to begin to count. Settings can be all over the place. The big part of what is lost in sound clips is the interaction between the amp and the player. This is THE DIFFERENCE between a good amp and an outstanding amp. This is totally lost in sound clips. If you like sound clips, the next time you are in the market for a new car watch it drive by while you stand on the curb. Same thing. Somebody like Carl Verheyen or Brad Paisley can make any amp I own sound great as I listen. I can play any of their amps and I sound like me. Stay away from sound clips. Even a hack player like me can feel and hear that subtle movements on the fretboard jump out of the amp with the London and are lost or almost lost with many other amps.

One more thing

Recently JJ had a run of bad EL84 tubes. Nobody knew this was the case as they tested properly and did not show any problems. Mike over in your shop found a problem during final test of your amps. He worked with me and we documented the problem which was sent to the JJ factory and resolved. If you tested each output set for an hour you would have never found the problem. You could play the amp until a tube change was needed on your normal tube replacement schedule. It was your "test for days" at max levels with signal and without signal and the dog ears in your plant that surfaced the problem.

Regards

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