

**Guitar Player, March 1992 issue:** Head to Head, Comparing 14 All-Tube Combo Amps, by Stan Cotey.

(On THD 2-10)

There's controversy among tone aficionados concerning the sonic differences between PC and point-to-point wiring. THD's method of using large ground planes (areas on the board that act as extra shielding) tends to negate some major complaints. The tube sockets are mounted directly to the chassis and connected with Teflon wire for durability. This extra step removes 90% of my gripes about PC-board construction.

This amp comes in two versions; the 40-watt blues combo we tested, and a super-charged rock model. The blues combo has a solid-state rectifier; there's no provision for installing a tube. However, THD went out of their way to design a reactive circuit to mimic the response of a tube rectifier. On request, THD will supply blues combo buyers with a standard solid-state rectifier at no cost. When installed by a qualified tech, this device boosts the power to around 75 watts.

The 2-10 has a footswitchable tube-driven effects loop with variable send *and* return controls. For major tonal versatility, you can use this as a lead boost with two gain controls. The amp uses 6L6 power tubes with 12AX7s for the preamp and phase inverter stages. The front panel is identical to the original Fender tweed. As with the Kendrick, the loop controls and jacks are mounted beneath the chassis. Better bring a flashlight to your gig.

There's an output mode switch under the chassis as well. According to the manual, this selects different output transformer impedances. THD touts this switch as another tone control (as opposed to an option for matching speaker impedance). The manual says, "We are not even telling you what the two positions' impedances are." Okay, we'll experiment. According to THD, as long as there is at least some speaker or load connected, you can't damage anything. The switch seems to affect the amp's dampening factor-its ability to control speaker travel. Amps with lower dampening factors often have a rich, loose low end; the speaker's resonance colors the sound. In a highly-damped power amp, the low end is tighter and sometimes thinner. It's cool that THD feels so confident about their design that they'll let you play with load impedance for the sake of tone. The switch makes a difference with the internal speakers; we liked one position for clean sounds and the other for stinging blues stuff. The THD pumped out the most high and low end of any amp in our test-amazing considering its 2x10 configuration. A final note: THD amps are warranted for the life of the original owner. If there's a problem, just swap your chassis for a new one. Wow.

(Last two paragraphs of article):

**The envelope, please.** At the end of our mega-testing sessions, we polled reviewers and *GP* staffers for shootout winners. Here are the results: The Matchless is our hands-down fave because every tone it creates is exceptional. It sounded great no matter

who played through it with what guitar. The Marshall JCM 900 got our “most versatile amp” award. It has tons of Marshall crunch with a very appealing clean tone in the bargain. Our reviewers gave THD the “best clean and retro-blues tone” award. Staffers, however, disagreed with this decision, voting instead for the Kendrick’s sweet Texas soul. The blonde Vox AC30 wins our “if looks could kill” trophy and the Carvin gets our “most bang for the buck” award.

There you have it—the good, the bad, the awesome, the awful. I just hope my medical insurance covers the cost of a hearing aid.