

Tech 21 Trademark 300 Amp



by Nathan Chamberland

The Tech 21 Trademark 300 is quite a piece of ingenuity. It is solid state, though you already knew that I'm sure! It is an amp emulator – it mimics the sound of the great tube amps that you have always dreamt of having ... and it's packed with 300 formidable watts to push those dreams! It has three basic amp tones styled after Fender, Marshall and Mesa Boogie – (parameters fully controllable of course). You can build other styles of including your own custom-styled amps.

Here is a large tube-amp style head. Heavy and solid in build. To be honest, I spent quite some time looking for any visible tubes within its futuristic, yet vintage-like structure. It's very weight alone feels like there are some tubes lurking about within its caverns. Well, let us now delve into the performance side of this famed company's newest product – The Trademark 300:

It's big ... really big. It is the size of a Marshall TSL 100. The brushed aluminum front is a nice touch. The rest is black tolex with silver piping. This amp boasts three channels. All three are identical but are fully adjustable. So, you could have three different distortion sounds, all of them switchable by virtue of the supplied footswitch. Or, you could have a clean tone in channel one (Fender Style), thick chugging distortion for rhythm in channel two (Mesa Boogie style), and you can have a searing lead sound in channel three (Marshall style). Whatever combination you dream up is possible. What's more, you have a boost function on the footswitch. So, essentially, you could have three channels of whatever settings you want and still have a lead boost for each channel you use, be it clean or dirty. The boost is also fully controllable and you can boost your current signal anywhere from 0dB to 9dB all without changing any of your tone. Now that is cool! The footswitch only requires any ¼-inch instrument or speaker cable instead of those expensive 5-pin or 300-pin special proprietary cables. What a lovely gift.

The Trademark 300 also possesses two FX loops: FX1 is a standard effects loop while FX2 is a parallel loop allowing you to keep your analog

guitar sound present while you adjust how much effect you would like to blend with it. Everything I have mentioned here is divided into four sections: Channel one (section one) consists of drive; amp selector, low, mid, high EQ settings; and level. Channel (section) two and three are the same. The fourth section is the Master section containing the FX2 mix, boost level and Master output. What about direct output you ask? You may not have asked that, but I heard you thinking it! Well, this amplifier is a product of the same people that gave us SansAmp. So, naturally, there is a SansAmp included onboard. Yes folks, a fully balanced (XLR) miked-amp type output for you to run the amp direct into your board either for live or studio, complete with a ground lift switch and a 0dB/10dB switch! And just to top it all off, they threw in a tuner output – an output that is unaffected by any of your channel or FX switching and is continuously on. Technically speaking, this amp has a lot of great options for any guitarist in all sorts of genres of music. But I have not mentioned the sound quality of the Trademark 300 yet, have I? I have saved the best for last, as it were.

There are, as I have previously stated, three basic styles of amps. Here are the sound reviews for each amp model:

TWEED: This is just amazing! The sound is so clear and full! The Tweed setting is where this amp shines! It has the Fender clean almost down pat. The SRV sounds are incredible! This is by far my favourite part of this amp. I give this a 10.

BRITISH: OK, this sounds very British indeed, but more like a Vox than a Marshall. It comes very close to that Marshall sound. Most people, I'm sure, will hear Marshall but with very careful scrutiny one would hear the difference. I will comment though, that when you back off on the volume on your guitar, it emulates the tube with respect to less distortion and almost into a clean sound – like the tubes are no longer being overdriven. This I give a 7.

CALIFORNIA: It sounds to me like solid-state distortion. Which in some cases is not so bad. I don't hear the Triple Rectifier here. It is much more crunchy, fuzzy than the British. It also has more low



end. Nevertheless, it is a fine reproduction of a tube amp again. I give this a 7 also.

SANSAMP OUTPUT: I give this a 9 for the excellent miked amp sound!

Overall, it is a good quality amplifier with some really great features. I would buy this amp just for the cleans. That's how good they are! I think it needs mentioning that I was also given the Tech 21 4 x 12 cabinet to go with the head. It handled well at high volumes. Celestion powers the cabinet but the speakers are no Vintage '30s. Although I was seemingly hard on the sound review, it is a very well made amp. I would trust this amp on the stage without a backup. If you're in the market for a solid-state amplifier, buy this one! It beats them all!

The manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$1,350 for the amplifier, and \$1,075 for the 4 x 12 cabinet.

For more product information, contact: MOL Marketing, 6773 Wallace Dr., Brentwood, BC V8M 1A2 (800) 992-7845, FAX (800) 992-0015, www.molmarketing.net.

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