

The Grand Prix 100 is the culmination of a lot of things I've been working on. I've always been into the vintage thing and this one is a little bit more modern. It has the same octal preamp tubes but this is the first of my amps to have channel switching. My band has three guitar players, and getting louder for my solos has always been important. Amplifiers Number 9 and 10 both have a boost in them that you can engage with a footswitch, but with this one I came up with the idea of dual power amps. You can switch between 50 watts and 100 watts with a footswitch. It's the only amp I know that does that. So that gives you an increase in volume of about three decibels and that works whether you are playing the amp



at high or low volume. When you are working with 50 watts you are using two output tubes, and at 100 watts you are using four. It's just about the right amount of volume increase you need in a live situation. For those of us that don't have a sound man with his hand on a slider it's nice to know you can handle the volume increase easily.

TQR: What else should we know about the amp?

Well, this amp, like all of mine, uses 6SL7 preamp tubes. I use them because they have a more cranked preamp tube tone. And of course the true point-to-point wiring is the same technique I have used in my other amps – there is no turret board or eyelet board – the parts are soldered directly to the tube socket. It is true point-to-point wiring which gives it a clarity that other board based amps just can't quite deliver. It's something I do for my customers and the point-to-point construction lends itself to customization very well.

TQR: Who made the transformers?



BC AUDIO: VINTAGE TONES FROM THE PAST

The Grand Prix 100 Dual Power Amp

Bruce Clement is one of the most creative amp designers working today, and in this edition of the Quest we asked him to describe his new amp, the BC Audio Grand Prix 100. Enjoy!

TQR: Tell me about the new Grand Prix 100.

-continued-

Classic Tone out of Chicago. I really like them a lot. I've tested a lot of different transformers and these are built the same way they were built in the '50s. Layer wound, top notch metals, and they have a great sound.

TQR: What kind of tubes are you using?

I'm using the Mullard reissue output tubes, and for preamp tubes I'm using Tung-Sols. They sound a lot better and they are far and away better than anything else being made.

TQR: What about speakers?

I like the Celestion Creamback 75 watt.

TQR: What kind of cabinets do you offer?

A 1x12, a horizontal or vertical 2x12, and a square 2x12 that has a little more volume and it almost looks like a 4x12. Each cabinet has a convertible back so you can use them as an open or closed back.

TQR: Birch ply?

Yes and the speakers are offset just a bit to avoid internal resonant frequencies.

TQR: Caps and resistors?

Metal film resistors. I know a lot of people like to use carbon comp but I don't find that the tone advantage outweighs the significant amount of noise that you get. I prefer to hear the nuances of my playing. For capacitors I'm using Mallory 150's for coupling caps, F&T filter caps, and silver mica caps elsewhere.

TQR: What does the amp sell for?

\$3600.

TQR: How about tone?

Sure, channel one is the cleaner of the two channels. Crunch mode gives you a fair amount of gain and it's a good lead sound. Channel two also has two modes – vintage and modern. Vintage has a little less gain while the modern mode has a more saturated tone.

TQR: Very good. What else have you been up to Bruce?

Yeah, years ago when we first spoke I mentioned that I was interested in doing a four 6V6 amp. I finally have that one going and I'll be bringing a prototype to NAMM. It will have switches that switch the amp from four 6V6s to two, from pentode mode to triode mode, cathode biased to fixed bias,

and from a tube rectifier to silicon diode. The amp will put out about 44 watts and go down to a whisper. I love the sound of a 6V6 that's workin' hard, and that's what that amp is all about.

The BC Audio Grand Prix 100

BC Audio founder Bruce Clement has created another classic tube amp with the Grand Prix 100. This powerful beast can be used at lower volumes quite effectively, or unleashed at peak power to fill a large venue with classic tones that are reminiscent of days gone by, when 100 watts were common to the great rock amps of the day.

Inside you'll find three 6SL7 octal preamp tubes which are favorites in Clement's designs. They respond differently than typical 12AX7's, with a smoother, more organic tone. Powering the amp are four EL34 tubes that can be used as a duet or all four will deliver maximum volume. The difference between two and four output tubes amounts to about 3 dB in volume, which is significant.

Controls start with Power and Standby, Presence and Depth. Master volume for each channel follows, and a 3-band EQ.



Two Gain controls for each channel follow and two switches: Modern and Vintage for Channel Two and Crunch and Clean for Channel One. You also get a metal footswitch to switch between channels and jump from two to four output tubes.

Playing through this amp is a joy not to be missed. The Grand Prix 100 with two power tubes is a versatile amp with a wide range of voices, from clean and sparkling to overdriven and broken up with a beautifully distorted voice. Utilizing all four power tubes takes the Grand Prix into the rarefied air of a Marshall 100W or a vintage Hiwatt. Channel One and Two are slightly different, but both classically voiced with slightly different frequencies dominating the mix. And the 100 watt mode is every bit as useful at lower volume levels as the 50 watt/ two power tube setting. Best of all, the Grand Prix 100 covers the vintage tones of its classic predecessors with ease, and a more versatile range of power settings. At \$3600 this amplifier is not cheap, but it delivers a range of power and tone that is worth every penny. Quest forth!... **TQ**

bcaudio.com

-continued-