Subject: What Is The Definition Of A Good Amplifier?
Posted by woodfree on Thu, 23 Dec 2010 07:06:05 GMT
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What would you consider the finest qualities of a good amplifier? There are so many to choose from, I hardly know where to start. I want to know what you guys think so I can make an educated purchase.

I'm looking for something I can use to perform music with my guitar and mic and also something I could use for speaking engagements using only a mic. Any recommendations?

Subject: Re: What Is The Definition Of A Good Amplifier?
Posted by Shane on Thu, 23 Dec 2010 16:40:19 GMT
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Well, what kind of guitar? What kind of music? How loud do you need to be? I might be able to help with the guitar end of it. Also, what venues might you be performing at as many places have their own PA system of one sort or another.

Subject: Re: What Is The Definition Of A Good Amplifier?
Posted by Adveser on Thu, 23 Dec 2010 19:55:25 GMT
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You are probably not going to get any amp that is good for guitars and vocals. Bass amps can easily double as voice amps due to their high excursion limits and high wattage capabilities, however.

You might want to consider getting a PA speaker with an amp/input section built in and mic up a 10watt guitar amp. Throw in some pedals for tone shaping and you should have everything you need there.

I can't ever seem to duplicate the ear-splitting levels or saturation that occurs with a proper half/full stack that tends to fill the room.

The major reason I probably have never taken guitar as seriously as I could is because of the prohibitive costs associated with the amps. A quality Mesa Boogie or Marshall head is about 1200 used, maybe you can get it a little cheaper.

My initial suggestion is the cheap way, but if you want it done right, get ready to bust out 2 grand and get it over with. There are cheaper solutions, but you probably need the wattage for playing out anywhere. Drums are loud and there is no way around having to match the volume.

50 watts for nu-metal levels of distortion and overdrive, 150 watts for metal and hard rock, 500 watts for blues or anything else semi-clean.

Subject: Re: What Is The Definition Of A Good Amplifier?
Posted by Shane on Thu, 23 Dec 2010 20:50:23 GMT
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Plenty of amps out there used for less than $1K if you're playing in a band. Contrary to popular belief Marshall and Mesa are not the end-all-be-all of amps. I've only played thru one Marshall I liked and they haven't made it for along time (original JCM-800, not the reissues). That model you will spend some $$$ on.

I've got a 50W Peavey 5150 combo (2x12") that used to blow the doors off of our other guitar players Marshall JCM900 1/2 stack. If you're playing anywhere that regularly hosts bands they will have a PA system you can plug direct into or run a mic from your speakers to. I think out of 6 years of doing gig's I only had to use the full volume out of the 5150 2-3 times, when the PA system went down.

Adveser is right about the vocals being amped. No guitar amp is going to do both, and it'll do vocals very poorly.

I've not looked at acoustic amps before, though, if that's your thing.

Subject: Re: What Is The Definition Of A Good Amplifier?
Posted by Adveser on Thu, 23 Dec 2010 22:52:09 GMT
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Of course there are other amp brands out there, but I like to go back to what the players used on the classics. 9 times out of ten either the Marshall or Mesa SOUND gets the job done. There are some great companies making good stuff. I like to keep it simple. Marshall for Hard Rock, Mesa's for metal. Only a fool would take my word for it on buying an amp without trying everything out first. So that's a start. I am not a big fan of modeling amps at all.

I'm also working under the assumption that the vocalist is the only one using the PA system. I never liked using the PA when there is enough wattage in the amps. It's the two extremes for me personally, either miked up with low wattage or high wattage and no mics.

If you are playing to a big enough room where a classic stack is too uni-directional then I think the PA is a good option, which is why a lot of amps now are being made to cut their wattage down to recording levels.

My main point is to get something good that you want to last forever. To Shane's point. I too have heard small combos kick the full stack's ass in SPL... until you are 30 feets away from the "stage" that is. His experience may be totally different.

Simply put. Figure out what wattage the rest of the band is working with and go from there. The PA and Bass should be double what the guitars are putting out, unless you can sing at levels that threaten to break the microphone's voice coil. Which is, If you can hear yourself with no electronics with a full blast amp 5 feet away.

That is another beast altogether. Some singers need 500 watts, some need 100 watts. Get your equipment to deafening levels and see if you can hear yourself sing.

You didn't ask for it, and there is no way for me to know what technique you are going for, but you should be able to sing to very very loud music (not necessarily a live band) without any sort of amplification. Proper singing technique sort of forces far more volume than you'd think you'd possess. You'll know it when you hear it.
