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Ser. #001

CARLOS ANAN PEREIRA

WITH REVERB 7000

ROAD TEST...

THE KENDRICK
2112 AMPLIFIER

By Ken Fischer

The Kendrick 2112 is the latest offering from Gerald Weber and Kendrick Amplifiers Inc. out of Pflugerville (Austin), Texas.

The 2112 is the "Texas Tone" version of the Fender 5E3 Tweed Deluxe. In case you don't know how Kendrick model numbers work it's like this... The first number is the amount of output tubes; in this case two. The second number is the amount of speakers; in this case one. The last two numbers are the speaker size in inches; in this case 12. So if there was a model 9511 it would have 9 output tubes and five speakers each being eleven inches in diameter.

Since this amp is based on the Fender 5E3 Deluxe let's cover a little pre-sixties Fender Deluxe history.

First my traditional disclaimer. While both the Kendrick 2112 and pre-sixties Fender Deluxe amps are not large or heavy, Ken Fischer, Trainwreck, and *Vintage Guitar* can not be held responsible for damage caused by dropping one on your foot or kicking one in anger. Your toes are your business.

The first Fender Deluxe appeared in the mid forties. It was called the Model 26 Deluxe and came in a solid hardwood cabinet and had a wooden handle. It used a 10 inch Jensen and used one 6SC7 tube, one 6N7 tube, two 6V6 tubes, and one 5Y3 tube. An interesting feature was a tone control circuit across the primary of the output transformer. Back then nobody used distortion and if the 26 is pushed to distortion the tone circuit protests with clouds of smoke and flameout. When this was discovered Fender issued a service notice with instructions for changing over to a more reliable tone circuit. I'd tell you how it's done but I'd have to write another disclaimer.

The next Deluxe is the 5C3 model, also known as the T.V. Front Deluxe. It was called this because the wide front panels and rounded corners of the grill area looked a lot like a T.V. screen. This amp was covered in tweed and used a second 6SC7 in place of the 6N7 as used in the model 26. Fender also added a feedback loop which reduces gain and distortion. The 5C3 is the Deluxe with the least gain of the series. It's also the only Deluxe to use grid leak biasing of the pre-amp. The 5C3 produces a soft, low gain blues sound and doesn't rock n' roll.

The next Deluxe is the 5D3 model. It's tweed but no longer T.V. front. The two 6SC7's used in the 5C3 model were exchanged for a 12AX7 in the first position

and a 12AX7 in the second position. The feedback loop was dropped from the 5D3 and cathode bias pre-amps were once more employed making it the highest gain Deluxe up to that time.

The last of the Tweed Deluxe amps is the 5E3 model. The 5E3 used the same tubes as the 5D3 but by switching to a distributed load phase inverter Fender freed up one triode of the 12AX7 and used it as an extra gain stage. This gives the 5E3 by far the most gain of any early Deluxe. It also has cathode bias pre-amps and no feedback loop.

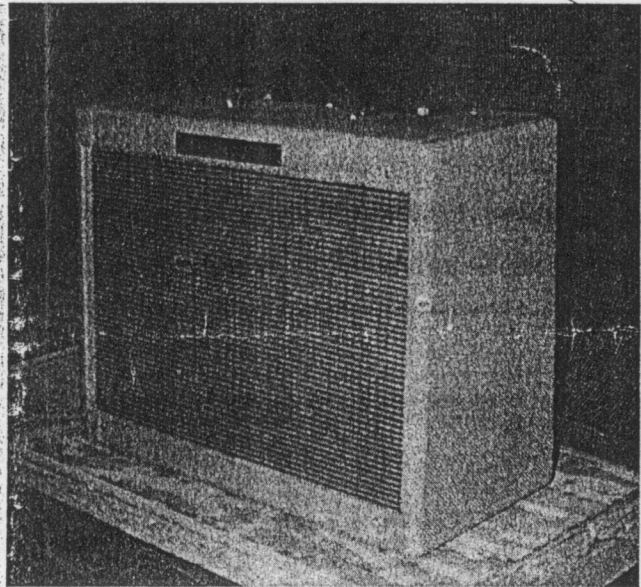
I also should mention that all Tweed Deluxes used a Jensen Alnico magnet 12 inch speaker.

The Kendrick 2112

The 2112 arrived well packed in many layers of bubble wrap. Upon removing the bubble wrap from the outside of the amp I spotted a second bubble wrap package inside the amp which contained the tubes layed out in the order that they plug into the sockets from left to right. An enclosed note explained that they were selected by ear especially for each position to obtain maximum tone and performance.

The amp is made and looks just like an original 5E3, except, of course, the logo says Kendrick. It has a finger jointed pine cabinet, floating baffle, and hand wired interior. Closer inspection revealed flawless tweed work, ruler straight seams and the tweed pattern matched perfectly across all seams. The grillcloth was taut and even and lined up evenly with the edges of the grill opening. The chrome work and silk screening are first rate as is the workmanship of the finger jointed cabinet. A look inside confirmed that the top notch workmanship is not merely cosmetic. All components are of high quality and the amp is neatly hand wired using cotton covered wire. The layout of the amp is exactly like the original. The amp has a 3 wire power cord as required by today's electrical codes but also retains a polarity switch.

The jack on the bottom of the chassis, used for an extension speaker on the original 5E3, has been converted to a line out for studio use. It can easily be wired back to an extension speaker jack if that's how you want to run it. The main speaker is connected via a high quality 1/4 inch plug and jack so you can connect the amplifier to an external speaker if desired. I also noticed the transformers on the 2112 are beefed up compared to the old Fender. Also, the amp contains the Kendrick black



frame speaker.

The top layout is the same as the 5E3. That is from right to left: High and low gain microphone inputs, high and low gain instrument inputs, microphone volume, instrument volume, tone for instrument channel, pilot light, power switch, fuse holder and ground switch. Some notes on the workings of the controls on the 5E3/2112 worth mentioning are, the volume controls interact. For example, if you're plugged into the instrument channel and turn the volume all the way up on the microphone channel you'll cut the gain on the instrument channel rather drastically. Also, the tone control will cut highs on the instrument channel with the instrument volume at any setting. The tone control can add highs to the instrument channel at lower volume settings but as you turn up the volume the tone control loses the treble boost effect.

THE 2112 UNDER TEST

For my main test guitar I used a Tele with a custom Lindy Fralin pickup at the neck and a custom Joe Barden at the bridge. I also used a Strat with Fralins, a Paul with Fralins, and a Jr. with a P-90.

Firing up the amp I noticed that the volume controls came on very quickly. As an amp builder myself I can explain the problem. The controls used for volume on this and many other amps are 1 meg, 1/2 watt audio taper carbon controls. In the past you could get these controls in up to 6 different audio tapers from very fast to very slow. A slow taper spreads the rate of change out over the entire control. For example, on a slow taper control marked 1 to 10, half volume of the amp may occur at number 5 or 6. On a fast taper control, half volume may occur at 1. 1/2 or 2. Full up they are the same, but on a fast taper most of the action occurs below 4. Here's the problem—the control companies stopped making slow audio taper controls years ago. What's left is no choice of tapers and the companies still making this type of control only make them in the fastest taper. The cost of having slow taper controls custom made is beyond the reach of most amplifier companies. The point is the controls come on fast on the 2112, but Kendrick amplifiers can't be blamed. If Mr. Weber owned the control company I'm sure he would make the vintage tapers.

O.K. Now that I've done my nit picking let's get on to the good stuff. The 2112 turned out to be a very dynamic, touch sensitive amplifier. The clean tones are excellent, big, thick and warm. The black frame Kendrick speaker has more bottom and headroom than you could ever get out of a vintage Jensen. It also has a bell-like chime on the top end. The 2112 simply blew away—both in volume and tone—the clean sounds I've heard on original 5E3 Fenders.

The 2112 also sounded great under distortion. Many shades of distorted tones are available simply by altering your touch. Many more shades are available by using the tone and both volume controls. Remember, even plugged into one channel the unused channel volume affects both gain and tone. The Tele and Barden pickup screamed through this rig.

As an aside, I was testing original and prototypes for the Dallas-Arbiter-England reissue Fuzz Face and they both worked great in this amp. A real wild ride of harmonics and controlled feedback!

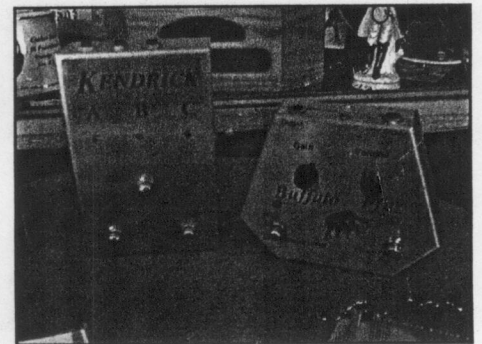
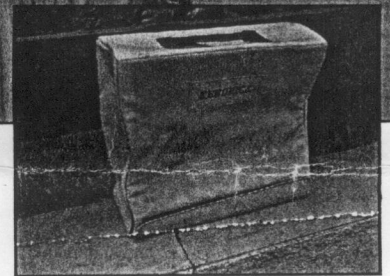
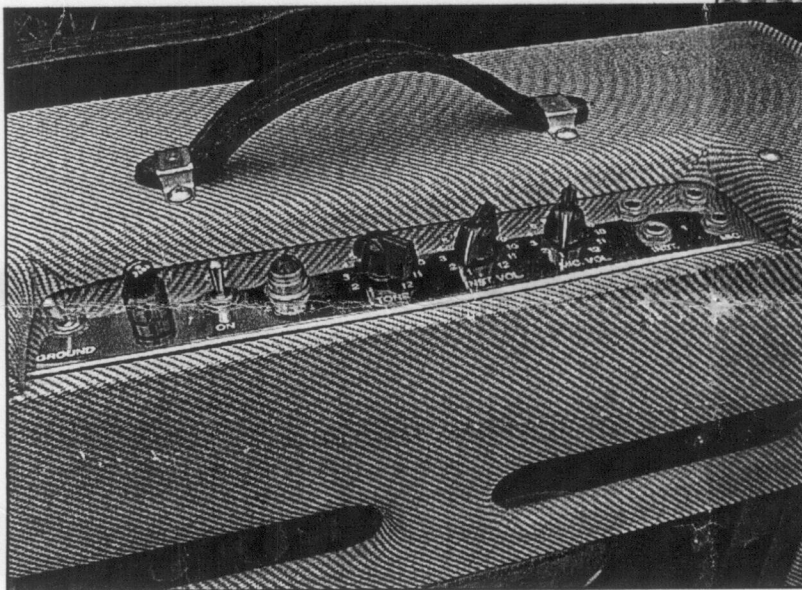
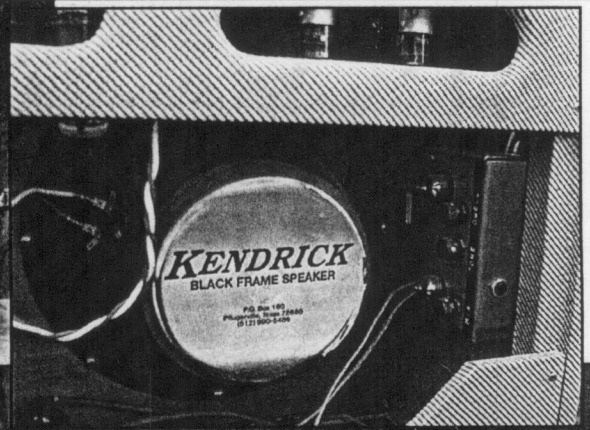
When I got to the P-90 Jr., I didn't get the grunge I expected from that guitar. I temporarily installed a pre-Rola 25 watt Celestion in the 2112 and the Jr. developed its trademark grunge. I couldn't say if the black frame and this particular Jr. just didn't couple up or if the high power Kendrick speaker doesn't like P-90's. A minor point, as I think most people will like the black frame and those who want more grunge and care less about their clean sound can substitute their favorite low power speaker. Overall the Kendrick black frame speaker gave an excellent balance between clean and dirty.

So to sum it up, the Kendrick-2112 delivers killer clean tones and when you turn the volume up to burn it gives you some of the best vintage tweed tones money can buy. To my ears this is the best tweed reproduction amp ever by any company, including you know who. In fact, the 2112 under test for this report would smoke most of the originals I've played over the years. Kendrick amplifiers have only been around for a couple of three years. With the 2112, they're getting downright dangerous!

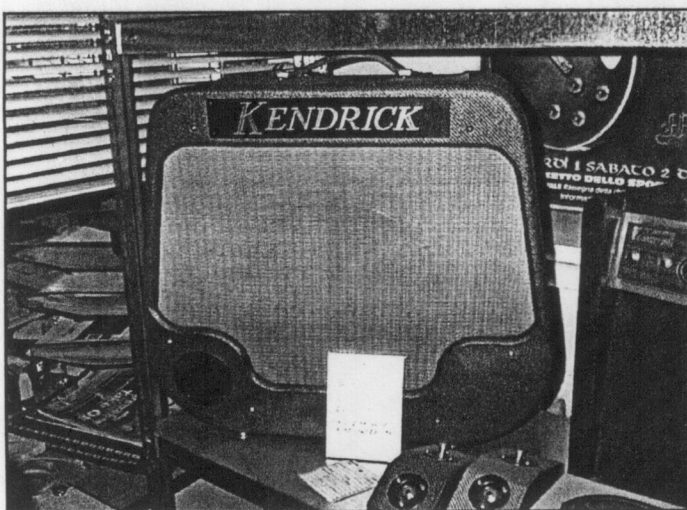
Ken builds his highly-touted Trainwreck Amplifiers in Colonia, New Jersey.

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