

Gear

ROUNDUP



DR. Z THERAPY



IN A LONG RUN NEAR THE FRONT OF the boutique amp pack, Dr. Z has touched on several classic flavors without ever lifting directly from any playbook. In designing the new Therapy, the Doc had the legendary sound of Fender's late-'50s low-powered Twin in mind, but approached it from his own perspective for added depth, flexibility, and touch sensitivity. The result is an amp that nails a goodly wallop of the Twin's sonic appeal, but has the bonus of impressive versatility. The Therapy is a fairly simple amp, and therein lies much of its beauty. With a single channel at play, there's just a pair of 12AX7s for preamp and phase inverter, with a nifty take on a post-gain-stage EQ section that provides a surprising amount of control over your entire frequency range. Turn down all tone knobs and you get nothing but silence. Turn up Bass, and you get just the low band, while each subsequent knob dials in its own slice of the spectrum. The result is an extremely intuitive tone stack, but one that's quite different from the classic blackface, tweed, Top Boost, or Marshall topologies that we find on the vast majority of boutique amps. Other than that it's just a Volume knob for gain and Dr. Z's own take on a post-phase-inverter Master intended to retain the amp's high-end clarity even when turned down low.

The amp is tube rectified, and a pair of cathode-biased 6L6s delivers around 35 watts, with no negative feedback around the output stage for a juicy texture with plenty of harmonic overtones. Within the laser-cut aircraft-grade

aluminum chassis the Therapy has the Spartan yet elegant look we've come to expect from this Cleveland-based amp maker, and from the high-quality sealed PEC volume pot to the dual-ganged master and everything in between, it's all top-notch stuff. There's a single thick eyelet board laced with tidy hand-wired connections, and the majority of signal-carrying positions use the new Jupiter coupling caps, designed to be a faithful reproductions of the hallowed yellow Astrons used in tweed Fenders of the '50s.

Firing up this Therapy, it's quickly apparent that Dr. Z has captured the essence of great mid-sized tweed tone (and something that might be better than the reality often proves to be), but packed in so much more besides. The versatility available between this unique three-knob tone stack and the very effective master meant that with either my Les Paul, Tele, or Strat plugged in, I was also finding anything from Voxy chime and grind to stout blackface jazz and twang to Marshall crunch, all within a few degrees of knob rotation. It all came with a superb richness of tone, too, with a gorgeous combination of sweetness, depth, and bite to each note. The juicy tactility of this amp made the entire experience utterly enjoyable, and I couldn't get enough of it. In short, it's truly everything I'd want a classic 6L6-based amp to be, with none of the superfluous junk that too often gets in the way of making great music. Thumbs up for Dr. Z's new Therapy—for sheer tone, versatility, build quality, and price, it earns an Editors' Pick Award. —DAVE HUNTER

MODEL

THERAPY

CONTACT	drzamps.com
PRICE	\$1,699 list/street

SPECIFICATIONS

CHANNELS	1
CONTROLS	Volume, Treble, Mid, Bass, Master
POWER	35 watts
TUBES	Two 12AX7 preamp tubes, two 6L6 output tubes, 5AR4 rectifier
EXTRAS	Individual 4, 8, and 16Ω speaker outputs
SPEAKER	Tested through a Sourmash 2x12 with Celestion Creamback and G12-65 speakers, and a Port City 1x12 OS with a Scumback M75.
WEIGHT	30 lbs
BUILT	USA
KUDOS	Great build quality. Surprising versatility amid appealing simplicity. Exquisite tones and superbly tactile playing feel.
CONCERNS	None.