



## DR. Z THE CURE



### FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF

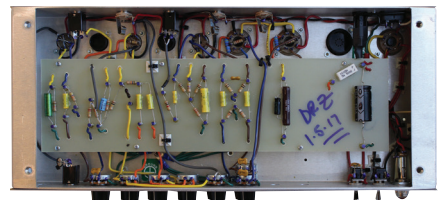
the Z-Lux, released a little less than two years ago, Dr. Z has stripped down the format to produce another broadly American-voiced combo called The Cure. Immediately impressive is the low price at which the long-established “boutique” maker brings in this hand-wired amp, and it’s worth noting up front that I can see no compromises made in doing so. The Cure eschews the Z-Lux’s onboard reverb and tremolo and halves the power to bring you 20 watts from a pair of cathode-biased 6V6s fronted by a single-channel preamp that merges tweed Fender and basic Marshall topologies, while also enabling some blackface-like shimmer and bark.

The amp does include, however, a footswitchable tone-stack bypass boost, with a Boost-level control right on the footswitch (which determines how much of the tone stack’s signal is dumped to ground, and thereby how hot your boost), as well as a lot of governance over gain staging and output levels. In addition to the Volume control, there’s both a pre-phase-inverter Master that follows the three-knob, cathode-follower tone stack (essentially Z’s Maz preamp), and a post-phase-inverter Level control. Around back is a simple series effects loop along with both Internal and External speaker outs. The first of these is routed to the combo’s single 12” Z-12, which is manufactured by Eminence and designed by Dr. Z to capture the rich, round sound of the mid-’60s Oxford speakers that came in many Fender amps of the day. Inside the chassis we find the usual neat Dr. Z construction, featuring a turret board loaded with Mallory signal caps and carbon-film resistors, plus a nifty surprise on the other side of the aircraft-grade aluminum box: a Triad output

transformer, made by the same company that supplied transformers for the most desirable Fender tweed amps of the ’50s, and is now back in the game. The whole thing is housed in Dr. Z’s light, compact Studio cab, done in black with tasty Z-Wreck grille cloth, bringing the package in at a light 33 lbs.

Right out of the gate, The Cure proved itself an extremely versatile and great-sounding platform for whatever I had to throw at it. Just as it sits, it’s a dynamic and extremely playable little club-gig combo, with a richly textured sonic signature and a good range of punchy cleans to chewy tweed-inflected overdrive. It twangs and shimmers beautifully with the Telecaster injected, going appropriately gnarly with the amp’s Boost engaged, taking me easily from classic country to snarling garage-roots tones. Show it the Les Paul and adjust the gain stages accordingly, and it’s suddenly a surprisingly raucous blues- and classic-rock combo. The Level control works great, allowing you to dial in your degree of overdrive with the Volume and Master, and then set your desired output without radically changing the amp’s voicing or touch sensitivity—or just leave the Level full up for a surprisingly loud little better!

The series loop worked great with a Mad Professor Silver Spring patched in for reverb, and the amp interacted beautifully with overdrive pedals I showed it, including an Xotic BB Preamp, BMF El Jefe, and JHS Angry Charlie. I really dig the sound of this newer Z-12 speaker, too, which is full, responsive, devoid of peaky highs, and suits the amp extremely well. In short, like so many Dr. Z designs, The Cure is one nifty handful of tone, and earns itself an Editors’ Pick Award.



### SPECIFICATIONS

#### THE CURE COMBO

CONTACT	<a href="http://drzamps.com">drzamps.com</a>
PRICE	\$1,299 street
CHANNELS	1
CONTROLS	Volume, Treble, Middle, Bass, Master, Level
POWER	15 watts
TUBES	Two 12AX7s, one 12AT7, two 6V6s, 5AR4 rectifier
EXTRAS	Single-button footswitch with level control for Boost function. Internal and External speaker outs. Passive series FX loop
SPEAKER	One 12” Eminence-made Z-12
WEIGHT	33 lbs
BUILT	USA
KUDOS	A sweet sounding and surprisingly versatile “club combo.” very well built and delivered at a great price.
CONCERNS	None.