

Vase® NEWS

VICTORY AUDIOPHONIC SOUND EQUIPMENT

July 2009

Welcome back VASE enthusiasts. This month in addition to meeting another member of the VASE team, Paul Holland, we'll tell you some more about Owen Ray and his connection to VASE, bring you up to date on the new release of the Trendsetter 60 and share some more reader feedback.

PAUL HOLLAND'S VASE STORY

I was born in Brisbane in the fifties and my love of guitars and amps goes back to the mid sixties when I heard the Beatles for the first time on the radio.

I come from a musical family – but musical in a very traditional sense. My great uncle was quite a famous conductor and his sister, my grandmother, was a pianist and lyricist. Uncle Ernie was long dead before I came along but my grandmother, and her stories of her brother, was a constant influence on me during my childhood. I still have his violin and conductor's baton (made out of a piece of the Red Baron's triplane – a long story for another day). My grandmother's sister was married to a Scottish baritone, Jock Thompson, who played the music halls of England and Australia from the First World War till the 1940s. Theirs was the music of light opera and Elgar.

So all of this was the music of my childhood, along with my mother's love of post WWII musicals. She played piano and clarinet. My musical background was both traditional and eclectic.

I learned to read music early so when I picked up my first acoustic guitar (an old nylon stringed Yamaha) in my early teens I found I could understand and play stuff from sheet music. To this day I'm completely self-taught on guitar, which probably shows.

My love of electrics started when visiting a friend of my younger brother. His older brother played in bands and kept a Burns six string under his bed. Whenever we were down there and alone we'd sneak in and get this beautiful thing out. From then on all I could think of was owning one.

A couple of years later I started playing bands while still at school. Of course we also went to as many local gigs as possible and saw terrific local bands like the Avengers and Coloured Balls. VASE amps stand out in my memory as they appeared to be everywhere on stages in Brisbane. I had the great pleasure of being able to play through a Trendsetter 60 for a while. It's still the best amp I've ever used.

I continued playing off and on over the years but career, study and family soon shunted any sort of regular playing aside. In recent times I've been heavily involved in assisting business and enterprise to prepare for the challenges of the information economy by adopting and using new social technologies. This has included providing advice and education in the use of online blogging and micro-blogging environments and media sharing tools and sites as well as creating new classes of goods and services based on the use of Web 2.0 technologies. I collect beautiful instruments these days rather than playing (I can't find an excuse to do it or a band that needs an average rhythm guitarist). Among my pride and joys are a white teardrop Vox six string (Brian Jones model), a Gretsch White Falcon and a Gretsch White Penguin. These days I'm lucky enough to be able to collect guitars and when the chance to be involved in the rebirth of VASE came up I couldn't believe my luck.

I can't wait to plug them into a Trendsetter 60.



THE VASE REFERENCE COLLECTION



Last Month we ran a picture of Harry Lloyd-Williams and Toowoomba's Owen Ray with Tony Troughton's lap steel guitar. We promised you more on Owen Ray and his VASE history. (This will be coming next month.) Next to them was a picture of a collection of new and vintage VASE equipment. The equipment in the picture is, as Graeme Whitehouse describes it, our "Reference Collection". He goes on to explain "We've spent a couple of years and a stack of money to get hold of everything we can get our hands on." Some of the more recent acquisitions, including Tony Troughton's personal hand-made lap steel guitar came from the collection of Owen Ray. More about Owen in the next issue.

ONE STEP CLOSER TO THE RELEASE OF THE TRENDSETTER DELUXE 60!

Update by Graeme Whitehouse

Here's the proof! Pictured are the final chassis prototypes for the new Trendsetter Deluxe 60's which are being hand wired by Gary Broadhurst. This is the "pre-production" amp, the last prototype before we swing into full-scale production. In fact if it were to have a serial number this chassis would be TS60 (minus)-1. The screens are ready to print the face-plates and back panels; transformers and electronics are on the shelf, the cabinets are stacked awaiting vinyl, and there's half a dozen pallets of legendary Celestion Greenbacks practically germinating in their shipping cartons, desperate to be mounted into a speaker box with two of their mates and mercilessly flogged like a robbers' dog! Phew, getting a bit excited there myself.



STOP PRESS!! We've received the final samples of the knobs. We're going to go for the classic early 70's looking Trendsetter dials, the all-silver with black pointer stripe. Who would have thought it would be so hard to find the right knobs?? Anyway, that's done now, we've got the right one. The knobs were the last thing we needed to source so there's a big party at VASE HQ this week. All praise Harry. King of Global Parts Sourcing I know I've said it before, but it's getting close now...

FEEDBACK

Greg Trennery of Melbourne has shared some of his VASE history and posed some questions that I think may be of interest to many of you. He's also interested in acquiring an old VASE guitar or bass amp, if any of you can help him. Keep the feedback coming. The enthusiasm is great and spurs us on and it's good to know where your interests lie.



Greg Trennery of Melbourne

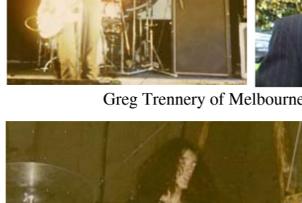
Hi Carol my name is Greg Trennery i owned a VASE 120 guitar head in the 70's which i pared with 2 VASE 4X 8 columns with celestions, later on a changed to 2 3 x 15 VASE cabs i brought off George Mcardle ex Little River band bass player with JBL'S.

I used this setup for many years playing and recording with some very very heavy rock bands, i was also very fortunate to have recorded many times with my VASE rig.

The reason for my email is to let you know that my VASE gave me many years of having one of the greatest fattest bass sounds ever and that i miss my old amp terribly to this day! I'm very exited that you may be reissuing some models,

I'll email some old photos of my amp please keep me informed regarding Vase AMPS!

Cheers Greg Trennery



Hi Carol i finally dug out some old photos of me and my two Vase amps i owned and used for many years boy do i miss em',

Are you able to make me a new 3 x 15 cab with JBL'S and a bass amplifier to match,

Hoping you can do!! (my t shirt size is medium by the way)

Cheers from melbourne, Greg Trennery



(At this point, I needed some help so called in Graeme Whitehouse)

Hi Graeme,

I'll take care of the tee shirt, can you address his other request?

Thanks, Carol

Hi Greg,

Graeme Whitehouse from VASE here. Carol has passed on your photos and e-mail; some fantastic shots there, love the heels and flairs. Those photos will definitely make it into a special place on the website. Which band was that one with the monstrous drum kit?

Now, to your question of bass speaker boxes. We have no plans to reproduce any of the original VASE bass speaker cabinets at this stage. Mainly because the cost of manufacturing a speaker cabinet prohibits any small runs and the original VASE bass designs would probably have only a limited appeal. As for the speakers themselves, well JBL don't really produce an economically priced instrument speaker anymore so again, costs get a bit out of control. However, having said that, we have just produced our first 1 x 15 cabinet loaded with a beautiful high-powered Celestion bass speaker that is getting great reviews. We've been talking about perhaps developing a 2 x 15 box along the same lines but again, it's about market demand. We're also making some incredible cabinets with 10" speakers. I know, the more mature school of thought says tens don't get low, but trust me, these ones get all the way down. We're making 210, 410, 610 and an 810 box that are designed to keep 5-string players happy. I'm a bass player myself and I love these boxes. Plenty of depth but the 10" drivers give great midrange detail as well. Now, onto amps. We're nearly finished developing our first bass amp which is an ultra high power lightweight head. It's a transistor style amp, no tubes. This amp is going to change what people mean when they talk about a "powerful" bass amp. Once that's out of the road we're getting to work on an all-tube design for release early-mid next year. Probably around 300 watts for the tube amp and probably styled a little like the VASE Bassman. Which amp was the one you used? I assume a Bassman 150 or maybe a 200? Stay in touch and thanks again for the photos, they really are great.

Regards,

Graeme Whitehouse

Victory Audiophonic Sound Equipment

G'day Graeme thanks for your quick reply, The band was called Volcano we came out of melb around 1977 it was an extremely heavy band sort of like Wolfmother but a lot heavier in sound, appearance and attitude.

Our singer was Dale Ryder who went on to front Boom Crash Opera, I'll send you a better photo, My earlier Vase amp was 2 columns each with 4 x 12 celestions with a 120 guitar amp head which from memory had a pullout middle which gave me more brightness, The later Vase was same top but 2 3 x 15 boxes with JBL k140's I think, I bought the cabs off George Mcardle, who was Bass player for the Little River Band.

Graeme I am passionate about getting another Vase rig, are you able to price and supply me with two of your 1 x 15 boxes and find or make me a 120 guitar amp top, What's the story with the array of Vase Amps that are in the photo on your website?

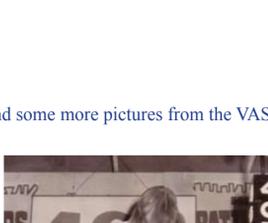
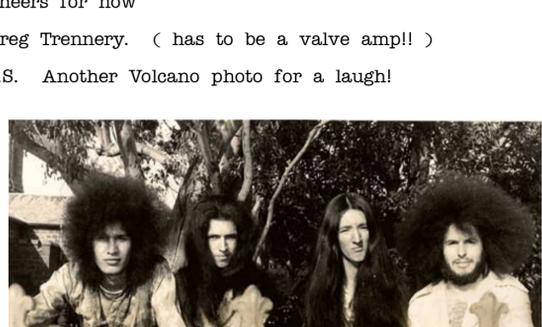
Around 1979 1980 I used the same rig with a band called Scandal it was the best Bass sound I have ever had!!

Cheers for now

Greg Trennery. (has to be a valve amp!!)

P.S. Another Volcano photo for a laugh!

And some more pictures from the VASE archives:



Editor's note: Old Rockers: W'HAIR have they all gone?

See you next month, Carol