

Rocking with dials (Revised), by Andrew Moskowitz on 5/9/2023

I recently acquired a new guitar amplifier that I am very much enjoying now that I have mastered the controls. The process of learning all the buttons and dials was quite the ordeal though, as there are multiple words and symbols that up until now, I did not know could be used to describe effects that manipulate the sound of a guitar. My **overall goal** of interacting with this new amp was to find my perfect sound and volume to resume my playing.

Once I unboxed my new amp, I took a minute to look it over and started to make a **mental model** of how this piece of technology worked and how I was going to interact with it. I had used a number of amplifiers before but this was a different brand and had more buttons and knobs that I had ever previously seen along with words I had never seen before.

After building a sufficient mental model, the **first action** I took with the amp was to plug in the power cord between it and the wall socket. This was very intuitive since I assumed something this size required an outside power source and did not run on battery power. All of my previous amps had power cables as well. After this, I turned the power button on and connected my guitar to the amplifier via the guitar cable. All of this was going great but now it was time to figure out just what all these buttons and knobs were for. I decided to set all the knobs to the lowest setting and strum a note while slowly increasing the volume until I had a decent sound that was loud enough to hear and enjoy but quiet enough to keep my neighbors from calling the police for a noise complaint.

The easy part was over, diving now into uncharted territories I started to slightly turn the knobs from left to right until I liked what I heard. One aspect of the amplifier that initially captivated me was the array of **effects** and features it offered. As I dived into learning the buttons and knobs, I encountered a whole new vocabulary of effects that could shape and manipulate the sound of my guitar. For example, effects such as distortion, reverb, and delay intrigued me with their ability to add depth, texture, and character to my playing. Each new knob I tried I went back and slightly modified the others if I felt like it would sound better or more **enjoyable**. Exploring and understanding these effects allowed me to experiment and find the perfect combination that suited my musical style, contributing to a more immersive and personalized guitar-playing experience.

After I had found a sufficient setting which sounded like a good rock guitar, I started to mess with the looping and echo effects. These I did not really care for since I have not spent the time to learn how to properly use them in the past and I was on a mission to find my perfect guitar sound that I had found in the past on previous amps. Although I didn't invest much time in exploring the looping and echo effects on the amplifier, I found them to be interesting **features** worth mentioning. While I didn't fully understand their potential or complexity, I did experiment with them to some extent. However, due to my limited familiarity with these effects, I faced challenges in creating my desired sound. Despite my initial setbacks, diving deeper into understanding and utilizing these effects could potentially unlock a new wave of creative possibilities for my guitar playing. Once the knobs were all turned in the **correct**

position that was close enough to what I desired, I looked to the buttons on the top left of the amp and cycled through each of them to see which sound I liked best. Between Clean, Crunch, Metal, and Insane, I settled on the metal setting since I enjoy playing Metallica songs and this sounded the most fitting.

In the end, I ended up finding my perfect sound that I had been searching for which made for a very high **effective** grade for this amp. As for **efficiency**, without a guide on how to specifically interact with everything this amplifier had to offer I had to resort to testing each and every element of it to fully understand what I was dealing with and how it related to my **intended outcome**. The lack of a user guide for the amplifier presented both advantages and challenges in my interaction with the device. On one hand, not having a guide allowed me to approach the amplifier with a sense of curiosity and **exploration**. It pushed me to engage directly with each control, leading to a more hands-on and memorable learning experience. On the other hand, having a user guide would have provided a structured approach to understanding the amplifier's functions, saving time and potentially uncovering hidden features more efficiently. Despite the initial hurdle of lacking a guide, the process of manually testing and interacting with the amplifier ultimately contributed to a **deeper understanding** of its capabilities and a greater sense of accomplishment.

Aside from wanting to kick the amp from time to time for not getting the exact pitch I was looking for, and the occasional turn of the volume knob too high, I would say the **safety** of this amp was top notch. When I mention the safety of the amplifier, I refer to the design and construction that influence the way a user will interact with this device. This particular amplifier seems to be very solid and sturdy, providing a sense of **security** when lugging it around or adjusting the dials. Through research I have found that this amplifier actually has safety features regarding the sound output such as overcurrent and overload protection that prevent damage to not only the amp, but to the ears of those who play music through it. While the **sensitivity** of the knobs and buttons can be frustrating at times, it actually contributes to the overall safety of the device. The **immediate response** to slight adjustments ensures that I can precisely fine-tune my desired sound. However, this sensitivity also means that I need to be careful not to accidentally turn the volume knob too high, as it can result in an unexpectedly loud output. Nonetheless, this sensitivity is a testament to the amplifier's **quality** and responsiveness.

When it comes to the **satisfaction** of this amplifier, I cannot give a high enough grade. The vast spectrum and quality of sounds it is able to create as well as the sleek layout and smooth portability is a **major strength** and makes this one of, if not the best amp I have ever played on. As mentioned before, this amp did not come with a users' guide which required that I manually test and interact with everything to figure out and understand what all the words and symbols meant which in my opinion would be a big weakness. While this took a while and was aggravating at times due to the system not being the most **error tolerant** (meaning the knobs were very sensitive and a slight bump against one would change the sound drastically), it only took a day or two to start to understand what knob to turn or button to press when searching for a new sound effect which gives the **learnability** score above average. But to make up for a

mediocre learnability score, having to go through everything on my own made it that much more **memorable** and in the long run, fun! After this whole experience, I would say that I am extremely satisfied with my purchase and interaction with this new amplifier and it is exactly what I was looking for making it have a perfect score of **usefulness**.