

## Metropoulos Amplification 69er Plexi Replica

*Original German article and English Translation by Alexander Heimbrecht*

### Metropoulos 69 Plexi Replica

This amplifier, made to classic specs by George Metropoulos, somehow recalls a scene from the movie Back To The Future, with Michael J. Fox, when Marty McFly is about to give the crowd a first glimpse into the world of Rock 'n' Roll by rocking the crowd playing a red 335 through a Fender Tweed amp. Anyone who plays a Gibson Les Paul through a Metropoulos amplifier may have similar feelings. It's like going on a musical journey back in time.

When I was a kid, I never completely understood how Eddie van Halen, Warren DiMartini, or George Lynch managed to get a sound out of the Super Leads so fat and sustaining without using front end gadgets like Jimi did by making his Germanium Fuzz Face an essential part of his sound! Today I can see how they did it: the secret is to simply practice and turn it up! Simply put, a Plexi must be cranked in order to get the power amp working! Obviously, it is possible to create equally stunning sounds by using stomp boxes just like Jimi did back in the day or Eric Johnson does nowadays, but it's definitely not the legendary *roar* of a cranked Super Lead. So is it possible to get that classic sound out of a Plexi without blowing the crowd's heads off? It is, provided you are going to use a load box, carefully adjusted, set up not too low, in order to work with the speakers, but not too high, to protect your hearing.

### The Builder and His Time Machine

Despite his young age, George Metropoulos holds a reputation as being one of the leading experts on Vintage Marshall amps. About three years ago, he decided to quit his job as a pro musician to focus his passion as an amp tech and share his knowledge with other guitar players around the globe. Making great use of the world wide web, he instantly managed to successfully establish his small company. There is nobody around who offers more authentic Marshall clones than George does!

Next to me is sitting an exact replica of a 1969 Super Lead. Even the amp cab reflects the simple beauty of the original. Metropoulos Amplification offers different head cabs depending on the manufacturing year of the original amp. This shows us how painstakingly these amps are recreated. But there is a difference with respect to the original: each and every vintage amp sounds different but every Metropoulos sounds like a good old one, since George owns several vintage amps that have served him as templates for tweaking his own amps. The transformers in our amp are faithful recreations of the originals wound to George's exact specifications by one of the leading manufacturers in the business. The block logo plate boldly spells the name of the builder using the same font as on an old amp. The main difference between this amp and the competitors lies in the perfection of George's work: NOS components if possible and exact reproductions of original parts, whenever old parts are no longer available or ridiculously expensive.

It shouldn't be necessary to explain the control panel of a Super Lead. Basically, there is nothing but a simple four band eq and the two channels' volume controls but you won't believe how many different sounds can be created by so few controls. The two channels and their four input jacks leave plenty of room for experimentation. Originally, the idea was to use the amp with two instruments but since the two channels sound quite different, they have been used differently since the beginning. The formula is to use a patch a cord to connect the lower input of the first channel with the upper input of the second and mix the loudness of both channels by adjusting the individual volume controls.

### **Sound Encyclopedia**

Sound is always a matter of taste, but the *old* sound can be best achieved by using a good guitar, no gadgets, and a cabinet loaded with Celestion Greenbacks. Using my Gibson Historic Collection Les Pauls, an aggressive sounding 1958 model and a smooth 1959 model with Duncan Antiquities installed, as well as my old faithful Kramer from the 1980's I could easily get the sounds of Kossoff, Clapton, Angus Young, EvH, and George Lynch. You name it and it will come out of the speakers provided you have got the technique. Those who want some icing on the cake should take a line level signal from the load box to feed some delay unit sent to an extra amp.

If you love these classic sounds, check out that setup and you will be spoiled forever, guaranteed! I have rarely been so deeply impressed by the sound quality of an amp like when I played the Metropoulos for the first time. This modest box holds an entire encyclopedia of classic rock tones. It doesn't matter how you set up the controls, the sound remains warm and stays very dynamic, even with all controls cranked it is still possible to get a magnificent clean sound by simply turning down the guitar's volume control without losing too much volume. This amp proves the common prejudice of Marshall amps not being able to offer a decent clean tone completely wrong! This amp has gorgeous clean tones to offer just like a good vintage Marshall amp. Of course, a Super Lead is far from being a high gain amp, but a good one is a lot easier to play than one might expect. All it takes is some self-confidence in one's own playing!

Apart from these painstakingly hand-built vintage recreations, George is offering an extremely hot alternative: amp kits that you can build yourself.

### **Back to the Future**

One fact must be mentioned: certain amp components undergo an aging process that has a positive impact on the sound. That is why vintage amps are so sought after these days. But one should keep in mind that all legendary recordings from the 1960's and early 1970's had been done using new equipment. So whoever wants to travel back in time and intends to faithfully recreate the old sound, shouldn't go to the movies but rather go to George Metropoulos. Only a flux-capacitor isn't being offered by George...