

**Gitarre Magazine (Germany) J.F.
Naylor Super-Drive Sixty**

We know Joe Naylor for his Jensen influenced speakers. These are loved as replacements for old Fender amps. From the Musikmesse in Frankfurt, he now presents his tube amplifiers. The Super-Drive Sixty comes in a classic single-channel design with 60 watts, to the hot, competitive amp market. On the outside, the amplifier shows a truly outstanding quality of craftsmanship that is very impressive. It's reason enough to sound test the amp much more thoroughly.

It looks British! While blonde tolex and leather accessories were the fashion in fifties everywhere, the Naylor amp reminds us more of the early Marshall or Hiwatt heads of the swinging sixties. True, it's not really new but nevertheless refreshing. The head is somewhat as big as a small 50 watt Marshall Plexi head and neatly covered with black tolex. The corners become unobtrusive as they are covered by four black metal caps. The front panel is made of brushed stainless steel and holds six knobs. To allow for the necessary cooling, a narrow strip of cane-wicker grill cloth is found above the front panel, which appears as a single line and is pleasing to the eye. This matches the grill cloth of the cabinets, loaded with 2 x 12" or 4 x 12" J.F. Naylor Special Design speakers. Finally, the big nameplate with the Naylor logo seamlessly fits in well with the English style. As everyone knows, we cannot argue about taste. Because of these tasteful details and quality workmanship the Naylor Stack fits well in living rooms and practice rooms of the players, and with it's cool British charm has aroused interest and found fans.

Construction - The Naylor Super-Drive Sixty is - as expected - a legitimate tube amplifier. The 60 watt output is delivered by a duet of 5881 tubes from Ruby Tubes. On the front panel are: Hi and Lo Gain Inputs, 6 controls for Gain, Volume, Treble, Mid, Bass, and Presence. In this way the Naylor also corresponds with it's British heritage. A small toggle switch reveals it's function with the writing "Bite". The power, standby and ground switches, as well as a red power indicator light completes the array of the front panel. For the foot control or channel switch, one seeks in vain - a clear example of the "Less is More" concept of manufacturers. On the back panel, again consisting of brushed stainless steel, are two fuse holders and two speaker outputs, and an impedance selector for 4, 8 or 16 ohms. To the left are the Send and Return jacks for the tube buffered effects loop. Particularly noticeable is the sturdy and loving workmanship of the amplifier head. For example, I am in a position to say that even after a long search, I could not find a seam in the tolex. Everything sits perfectly and the components are absolutely solid. The owner of a Naylor amp will most likely be able to pass on this amplifier to his children and grandchildren. Thus far, here for once is praise to the skies.

The Cabinets - J.F. Naylor offers a 2 x 12" as well as a 4 x 12" cabinet. Both are made of 7 ply birch plywood that was hand-picked for sound by the craftsman. Both cabinets are not very deep, thus reducing the weight. On the cabinet back, there is a vent which enhances both the bass as well as the dispersion and is an homage to the tone of the old Fender Tweed and Vox AC30 combos. Surprisingly, the stock speaker is not the old blue Naylor speaker, but a new model, that was developed with the amplifier series and delivers a thicker tone. The power handling of the new 12" speaker is specified as 50 watts.

Technology - Here it gets very thrilling as the expectations that the exterior of the amplifier brought about are further raised by

the interior of the high-end chassis. Point-to-point handwiring with color coded wire, the best components on a thick phenolic eyelet board are features which make the hearts of tone purists beat faster. The four preamp tubes (12AX7) and the two output tubes (5881) fit firmly in ceramic sockets and are additionally protected with tube-retainers. The transformers were naturally developed with a paper bobbin and sit together with the choke in the massive sheet metal chassis. The rectification is carried out incidentally from diodes. To be honest I have yet to see any amplifier whose interior system has been so perfectly put together. That is a delight for the serviceman should this system ever need to be serviced. Here I suppose no more improvement is possible. The amplifier appears to be built for eternity.

Sound - With the knobs at 12 o'clock we plug in a vintage Strat and are on our way. There is little else to say about the convenience of such simply built amplifiers. In the Lo input, the amp sounds unbelievable direct, earthy and warm. Pure tone goes without saying. It is not only incredible sounding but also has an assertiveness about it, and with 60 watts of power, it is quite unparalleled. The "Bite" switch lends more intensity to the sound in the upper middle, and with that gives it's name all the credit. The amp with the 2 x 12" cabinet surprisingly develops much dynamics without sounding harsh. Big chords and singing notes are strong because of this combination. The Master Volume is surprisingly effective and even set to the extreme, the tone is not ruined. The spectrum of tones thereby ranges from SRV-like Texas sounds up to crunchy Strat-chords ala Tweed amp. In Hi Input, we really get down to business. This channel is actually louder than it's neighbor, but please don't get alarmed. The sounds are less clean here with our Strat. The amp screams big sound at me. The chords thereby remain transparent with lots of harmonic overtones. Thus, I have seldom heard such a sound. The distortion thereby holds itself always within range, so that the amp never talks but always maintains its singing quality. It sounds like a very, very good Plexi-Marshall with a strong dose of Tweed Bassman, but the Naylor always maintains its central and distinctive character. Slash or Gary Moore should send their regards. With a Les Paul and some AC/DC riffs the sounds swirl around the room and the tester becomes a headbanger. In the next test phase, I plugged the amp into a 4x12. Wow, the difference from the 2x12 is unbelievable. The Super-Drive sounds, without exaggerating, twice as good. Incredible! The midrange is slightly reduced and the sound becomes more open. Nothing against the Naylor 2x12 cabinet, but if someone wishes to try this amp, they should certainly try the 4x12 version since this displays the entire spectrum. The effects loop functions clean and without background noise. I had no adjustment problems with a digital effects processor.

Summary - Whoever has 3,000 marks to spare and seeks a top-of-the-line amp that need not do many things all at once, but is looking for Rock-n-Roll sounds should certainly try out the Super-Drive Sixty from J.F. Naylor. It's excellent tone and exceptional handwork take it up to the top of the class. The price is completely justified, considering the loving and high-quality workmanship that went into building it. In particular, people who love vintage British distortion tones will derive a lot of satisfaction from this amp. With the Naylor 212 Compact Cab, it sounds quite super, but with what the amp can really do, one can hear better with a 4x12.