

# TRAINWRECK

GUITAR  
AMPLIFIERS

EXPRESS

LIVERPOOL

ROCKET

*Owner's  
Manual*





# Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to purchase a handmade Trainwreck Tube Amplifier. Whether you have selected an Express, Liverpool, or Rocket, you can be confident that you now have in your possession one of the basic elements of a truly distinctive guitar tone. While it is ultimately up to each musician to make his or her own personal musical statement, we at Trainwreck Circuits believe that whatever your style and ability, you will be inspired to play better and with more passion than you ever envisioned when playing through your Trainwreck. Our goal is to provide you with an amplifier which is simple to operate, consistently reliable, and the ultimate in tonal response. Unlike most amplifier manufacturers, we build our products by hand, one at a time from the finest components and ingredients.

Our bottom line is also a bit different than most. We have over twenty years of experience building tube amplifiers for some of the top musicians in the world. With our thorough knowledge of electronics, we are able to build what we feel are the finest, highest quality output distortion tube amplifiers currently available. We listen to each amplifier individually rather than testing them on meters and oscilloscopes. At Trainwreck, we trust our ears. We think you will too.

# Precautions

Trainwreck Amplifiers run on 120 volts AC only. Each amplifier is equipped with a three-wire cord and the ground on this should not be defeated. When inspecting or changing fuses, the amplifier should ALWAYS BE UNPLUGGED. Always use a fuse of correct value. Using a fuse of larger value may severely damage your Trainwreck. The amplifier must never be operated without a suitable speaker or emulator load connected to the "speaker jack" on the back of the chassis. Failure to observe this warning may result in severe damage to the amplifier.

# Caution

**TUBES GET HOT!** When changing or touching tubes for any reason, always turn off the amplifier for several minutes or until tubes are cool enough to handle safely. **TO REMOVE TUBES:** Gently rock them in a circular motion while pulling upward. Be careful when touching vacuum tubes: they are extremely fragile and break easily. They are made of glass which is easy to break and dangerous when broken.

# Service

Trainwreck amplifiers contain no user-serviceable parts except for tubes and fuses. If a problem should arise with your amplifier, we advise you to call or write to Trainwreck Circuits for technical support. For problems which cannot be solved over the phone, we advise you to ship the amp back to Trainwreck for service. You may also bring the amplifier to a qualified technician for repair. If necessary, please suggest that the technician call Trainwreck for assistance. Trainwrecks rarely break. But if you run into a problem, the company stands behind each and every amplifier it has ever produced.



# Legend of Controls

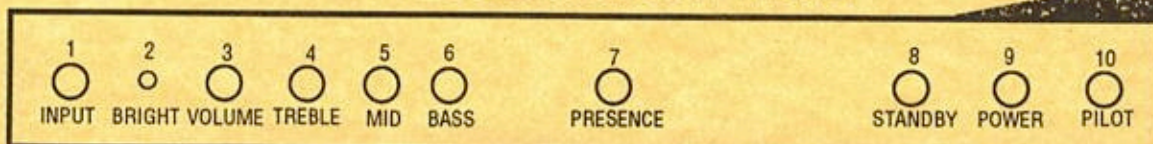
for

## EXPRESS & LIVERPOOL

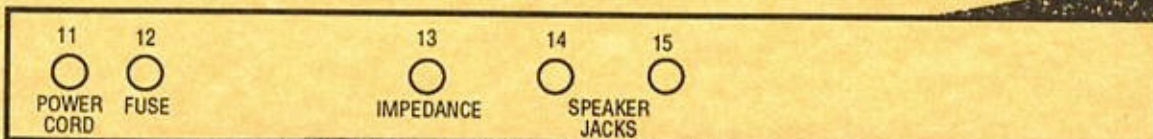
### Models

2

#### EXPRESS & LIVERPOOL FRONT



#### EXPRESS & LIVERPOOL REAR



**1. INPUT JACK:** Accepts standard quarter inch phone plug, one megohm input impedance.

**2. BRIGHT SWITCH:** Adds varying degrees of high end to sound. "OFF" in Center Position. "ADDS CLARITY AND SPARKLE" in top position and adds "JANGLY HIGHS" in bottom position.

**3. VOLUME CONTROL:** Controls overall volume or gain of amplifier.

**4. TREBLE CONTROL:** Controls treble frequencies.

**5. MID CONTROL:** Controls midrange frequencies.

**6. BASS CONTROL:** Controls bass frequencies.

**7. PRESENCE CONTROL:** Adds high frequencies in output stage. "Scratchy" sound while turning this control is normal.

**8. STANDBY SWITCH:** Allows amplifier to be turned on and warmed up, ready for performance by flicking this switch to the "UP POSITION".

**9. POWER SWITCH:** Turns on power. Always flick this switch to "UP POSITION" before placing "STANDBY SWITCH" in the "UP POSITION".

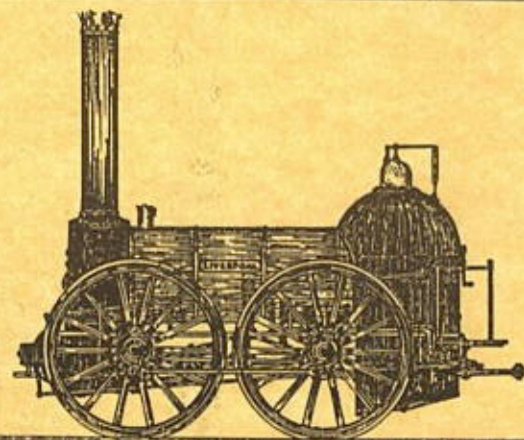
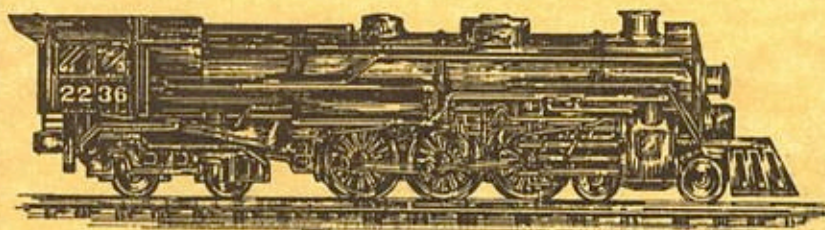
**10. PILOT LIGHT:** Should be lit when "POWER SWITCH" is in "UP POSITION". Indicates amplifier power is "ON".

**11. POWER CORD:** Three wire 120 volts.

**12. FUSE HOLDER:** Holds main power fuse.

**13. IMPEDANCE (OR OHM) SELECTOR:** Matches output transformer to speaker impedance. Impedances of 4-8-16 ohms are available.

**14/15. SPEAKER JACKS:** Standard quarter inch speaker jack accommodates any standard speaker wire.





# Legend of Controls

for

## ROCKET

Model

### ROCKET FRONT



### ROCKET REAR



**1. INPUT JACK:** Accepts standard quarter inch phone plug, one megohm input impedance.

**2. VOLUME CONTROL:** Controls overall volume or gain of amplifier.

**3. TREBLE CONTROL:** Controls treble frequencies.

**4. BASS CONTROL:** Controls bass frequencies. When adjusted to its maximum setting this control cuts midrange frequencies.

**5. CUT CONTROL:** Passive tone control in the output stage of the amplifier. Allows you to adjust the contour of treble frequencies.

**6. STANDBY SWITCH:** Allows amplifier to be turned on and warmed up, ready for performance by flicking this switch to the "UP POSITION".

**7. POWER SWITCH:** Turns on power. Always flick this switch to "UP POSITION" before placing "STANDBY SWITCH" in the "UP POSITION".

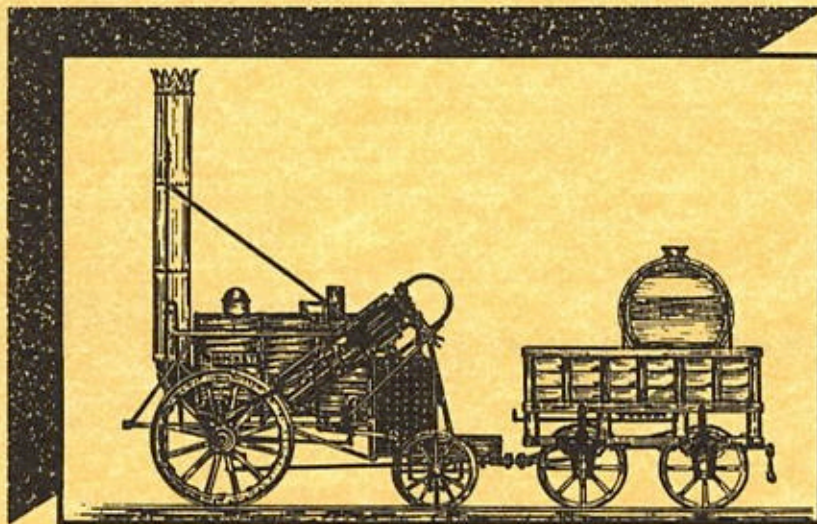
**8. PILOT LIGHT:** Should be lit when "POWER SWITCH" is in "UP POSITION". Indicates amplifier power is "ON".

**9. POWER CORD:** Three wire 120 volts.

**10. FUSE HOLDER:** Holds main power fuse.

**11. IMPEDANCE: (OR OHM) SELECTOR:** Matches output transformer to speaker impedance. Impedances of 4-8-16 ohms are available.

**12/13. SPEAKER JACKS:** Standard quarter inch speaker jack accommodates any standard speaker wire.





## Operation of Amplifier

Trainwreck suggests that due to the extremely high gain of Express and Liverpool models, isolate bottom of amplifier from top of speaker cabinet with flight case type foam to avoid microphonic and acoustical feedback. Do not position amplifier in front of speaker cabinet!!!

Be aware that the tone controls on all Trainwreck models are "PASSIVE", but very powerful. If you come across a set of parameters which does not work well with your guitar/speaker combination, simply change the settings and avoid that particular set-up in the future.

### To Make Your Trainwreck Sing for You

1. Connect speaker wire from speaker cabinet to "SPEAKER JACK" on rear panel of amplifier. If your speaker cabinet is 4, 8 or 16 ohms adjust "IMPEDANCE SELECTOR" to 4, 8 or 16 respectively. If you are running the amplifier to two 16 ohms cabinets set it to 8, or two 8 ohm cabinets set it to 4. The use of two 4 ohm cabinets is not recommended. In the case of using one 8 ohm and one 16 ohm cabinet, set the "IMPEDANCE SELECTOR" to 4 ohms.
2. Plug amplifier "POWER CORD" into a grounded 120 volt AC receptacle.
3. Switch "POWER SWITCH" up to "ON POSITION". "PILOT LIGHT" will illuminate. Allow amplifier to warm up for sixty seconds.
4. Connect guitar to "INPUT JACK" using high quality guitar cable.
5. "VOLUME CONTROL" should start down (in far left position) and all tone controls approximately mid-way, or at 12:00. This will enable you to work with the amplifier from a neutral position in order to discover your favorite sounds.
6. Switch "STANDBY SWITCH" up to "ON POSITION". At this point you should be hearing your guitar through the speakers. (If not, quickly adjust the "STANDBY SWITCH" back down. This will give you a chance to figure out why no sound is coming from your speakers without damaging your TRAINWRECK).
7. Gradually adjust "VOLUME CONTROL" and "BRIGHT SWITCH", "TREBLE", "MID", "BASS" and "PRESENCE" to access the sounds you prefer. Be aware that the "VOLUME CONTROL" will dramatically affect the gain or distortion of the sound, and will also cause harmonic feedback and sustain as volume increases.
8. "BRIGHT SWITCH" is "softer" in up position, "harder and more edgy" in down position. As "VOLUME CONTROL" is turned up close to full volume, the effect of the "BRIGHT SWITCH" becomes less dramatic.





# Performance

## Notes

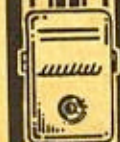
**USING EFFECTS WITH TRAINWRECK:** Trainwreck amplifiers do not employ effects loops. Ken Fischer has experimented with many different types of effects loops, and has determined that there is an inherent degradation of sound quality when an effects loop is introduced into the circuitry of an amplifier with the tonal purity of a Trainwreck.

The Trainwreck has been designed to work harmoniously with effects boxes which are meant to be plugged directly into the front "INPUT JACK" of amplifiers, such as floor boxes. Rack effects are designed to be used with mixing boards or amplifiers with effects loops. Plugging into a rack mount device and out into the "INPUT JACK" of the Trainwreck is not suggested. Rack mount units typically alter the signal, and degrade the sonic capacity of the Trainwreck, particularly under distortion.

However, if you wish to use rack mount effects, it is possible to do so by plugging directly into the front of your Trainwreck with your guitar. Run one cord from the "SPEAKER JACK" to your speaker cabinet, and the other "SPEAKER JACK" cord to a "slave box" which brings the amp signal down to "line level". You may then run the signal from the slave box out to the rack unit of your choice, and then out to another amplifier or mixing board. This way you preserve the original Trainwreck sound, and separately control your effects.

**SPEAKERS:** Ken Fischer has always built his amplifiers in a "head" rather than in a "combo" format. Early on, Ken realized that one can get many more sounds from a high quality amplifier by switching speakers and cabinets. You will find that the Trainwreck models each have their own distinctive flavors, but that there are huge variations which can be achieved by switching between one, two and four twelve cabinets. Experimenting with new and old, British and American, and particularly efficient and inefficient speakers can yield many palatable sounds when using the Trainwreck.

Trainwreck amplifiers can produce a wide range of tones, from clean and sparkling to dirty and menacing. Each model has its own character, but one feature that all Trainwrecks share is a warm, very controllable range of sounds. You will immediately notice that your clean sound has more impact. Crunch chords hold together with clarity and punch, and your leads will sing, sustain, and speak like never before. It's up to you to experiment with volume, settings, speakers, and effects to develop the sounds which are definitively yours. The process is fun, and the results are truly inspiring. The power is in your hands. Trainwreck suggests that you throw your preconceptions out the window, open your ears, and try everything. We guarantee that you'll surprise yourself.





**TUBES:** Like guitar strings, pickups, and every other aspect of your setup, tubes play a role in shaping the ultimate tone which you produce. Preamp tubes which are labeled "12AX7", "7025", and "ECC83" are all interchangeable. Many companies and countries are now producing both preamp and power tubes, and we suggest that you experiment with various types and brands to find the sound and reliability you are looking for.

The Liverpool and Rocket models employ four European EL84 output tubes. These tubes are also referred to as 6BQ5's in America. The fattest tube in The Rocket is a 5AR4 rectifier, also known as a GZ34. This rectifier may be substituted with a GZ32, 5U4, or a 5V4.

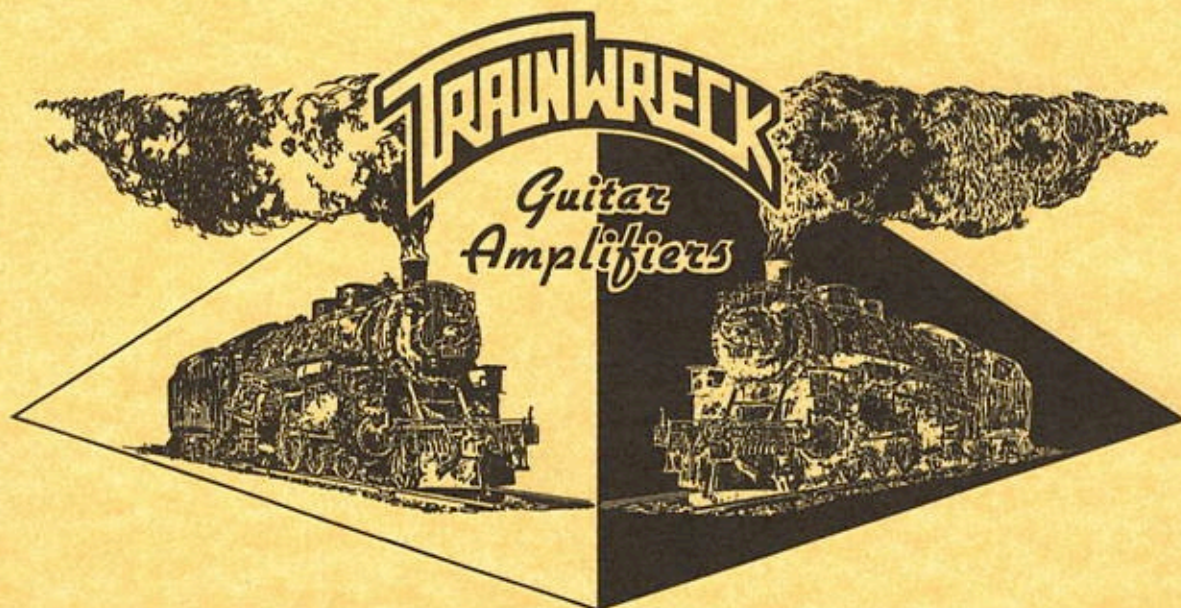
The Express uses EL34 output tubes, known in America as 6CA7's. KT77 and 6V6 output tubes also work in the Express Amp with no adjustment necessary. With proper bias adjustment, KT66, KT88, 5881, 6L6, and 6550's can also be used.



## Care of Your Handcrafted Wooden

### Trainwreck Cabinet

To maintain the beauty of your Trainwreck cabinet, occasionally polish with a soft cloth and any high quality commercial furniture polish. This will keep your Trainwreck looking as good as it sounds for years to come.



*Designed & Built by Ken Fischer*

WRITTEN BY: PHIL LIPMAN,

GRAPHIC DESIGN & ILLUSTRATIONS BY: ADAM APOSTOLOS

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