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Subject: New on the block

Posted by [SisGuitar](#) on Tue, 16 Apr 2002 02:32:32 GMT

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Hi everyone I'm the new kid on the block. I presently own a kustom Challenger amp - I would like to be a collector, but first I must learn more about these outstanding amplifiers. I know nothing about my amp except it was made in the late 60's - early 70's. Can anyone tell me more about it and also if there are any vintage magazines that I can obtain and increase my knowledge about Kustom amps and what to look for as a collector.

Thanks guys

Sisguitar

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Subject: Re: New on the block

Posted by [BC](#) on Tue, 16 Apr 2002 02:42:20 GMT

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Welcome SIS! Always great to have a new Kustom friend. We have a lot of fun here and usually learn something along the way! For a start check out the literature section.....go to other tuck and roll....then combos...then check out the Super Sound series! (I hope I have steered you right!) Challengers are great little amps. Pleat and ET play the earlier version of the 1x12 combos found in the SC series.....and you should hear the tones those guys can get! I am not sure if Roy owns one yet but I heard him playing one at Indy.....same thing! Has to be the amps!!! Just kidding guys! BC!

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Subject: Re: New on the block

Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Tue, 16 Apr 2002 10:04:31 GMT

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Welcome aboard Sisguitar. I used to play a challenger back in 72/73. I loved those amps. BC is close, the tone of those amps do sing. I do add a Digitech RP1 in front of the amp. I don't have any challengers in my collection as of yet, so I favor the the K25 and the K50's. Replace the AC mains cord with a grounded three pin and somewhere on the post I have spoken of what I do to add a line out jack and the amp will do any venue I have ever played. The Challenger amps came out in late 71. I have a few pictures of me using dual challengers with my original Flying V back in 73. Long hair, bell bottoms, and Kustoms, now those were the days. Well back to reality, Don

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Subject: Re: New on the block

Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Tue, 16 Apr 2002 20:38:04 GMT

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well...since my name was drugg into this...here's my 2 cents...yes..the great tone is in the amps...not in the hands..nor the guitars...nor the pickups..nor the foot pedals..nor the gravitational

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flux of the stage of the moon on any particular Saturday evening...its all about the amps!!! There I admit it... I'm a hack...a sham!...Thank God for those lil tuck n roll beauties...all this to say Sis...don't let go of yours.

I have to admit that I don't own any of the challenger series..its just that I'm an old fart and grew up with the earlier models emblazoned on my brain from hours of staring lustfully at the catalogs and into the store windows...so those are the rigs that have impoeverished my bank account these past few years...and seriously...which I never am... I too run a simple but effective array of pedals into the front of my kustoms...which is where the real surprise comes in...these amps take better to pedals than any other rig I've ever encountered...keep it simple...some compression, overdrive, a little wet fx like some delay tap...you'll be set for guitar hero status all night. my little 1x12 SC is the older K25... I don't know if the SC 50 is any louder...but for small clubs..with a mic at the grill cloth, I can usually hear myself on stage fine and get great tone...but if I'm packed on a small stage with the drummer on top of me and the lil amp on the floor then its usually not enough volume and so I have to endure the monitor system for my tone...the next step up is to grab the little 2x12 cab and stack the 1x12 on top..makes a really kool micro stack..gets the 1x12 up in the air at a good height so you can hear much better, and adds both volume due to the drop in ohm load, as well as a lot more low end thanks to the ported cab...you'll get through most any night with that rig and look great too. my 1x12 has been with me since I was 13 so it has the most play time on it...but for the past couple years my favorite way to do the small clubs has been to run a pair of the 2x10SC combos...more volume, still open and airy...and in stereo its a great experience on stage...so my advice..grab yerself a cab for those times when you need the beef, and a second 1x12 challenger for stereo joy...its a madness....that never ends...and I pray it never will... Play Loud! ET

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Subject: Re: New on the block

Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Mon, 01 Dec 2003 18:04:11 GMT

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Hey! I just this weekend retrieved my old 70's Challenger from my parents basement where it had sat, forgotten, for maybe 20 years. Turned it on- it works! The Tele sounds ok thru it. Reverb's decent, trem is pretty good. It was always a pretty dark sounding amp- I have to pull the treble out & turn it almost all the way up for it to sound decent. I played a LP at the time and eventually decided the amp was too muddy but with single coils it seems ok.

I searched the web for info on these things and there aint much there- even on this site. I thought I'd bump this thread and see if anyone knows anything.

Anyone know how I can date my Challenger? I bought it used in about '81- traded in a fender champ and paid (I think) \$50. Do these things have any vintage value these days? Anyone know anything else about these beauties? It sure looks cool.

Thanks

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Subject: Re: New on the block

Posted by [LesS](#) on Tue, 02 Dec 2003 03:24:45 GMT

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The Kustom SS series of amplifiers (Charger, Challenger, Commander, Sidewinder, etc.) were introduced in June of 1971 at the summer NAMM show  
That series of amps were manufactured after Bud Ross sold Kustom to the Baldwin Piano Company. Many Kustom collectors prefer the older plexiglass-front amps. The newer amps used IC's and there were many changes made during this time.  
You can find info on this website - click on Other Tuck and Roll icon and then combos and you will find info on the SS series.  
Myself I like the old plexi ones better, but I also find the SS series interesting.

To date yours, open the amp and check the dates on the pots or semiconductors.

hiss than my K100.

new speaker. A change to a Jensen, a JBL, or Altec might make a big difference.

Value varies greatly based on the condition and the color. If everything works I would say \$100-up for a black one.  
-Les S.

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**Subject:** Re: New on the block  
**Posted by** [stevem](#) on Tue, 02 Dec 2003 12:48:56 GMT  
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Your problem with little high end responce has all to do with your speakers. A upgrade to something like the gb12 eminence model will make you smile, or better yet a electrovoice EVM model, or a JBL if your pocket can handle it.The metal top they put on the cast metal face amps was to keep dirt and dust out of the amp , although it might help with shielding some. The new metal face was like a huge heat sink added to the amp so the could do away with needing airflow into it and so closed it up to keep dirt and mice out of it. Mice you say? I know all to well!

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**Subject:** thanks!  
**Posted by** [Anonymous](#) on Tue, 02 Dec 2003 14:22:24 GMT  
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Thanks for the info, guys. Funny you should mention mice because the back of the chassis had a bunch of dead bugs on it and around it when I took it out of storage.

I may try a new speaker but for now I'll leave it as is. I have other amps and, frankly, I was interested in taking this thing back mainly for its cool looks. Guitar amps as pieces of furniture- I'm sick I guess.

One other thing about it is that there is some distortion at any volume. Obviously this should not be but I have no idea what could be causing it and, considering the value of the amp, its probably not worth having it serviced. I guess I'll just hang on to it as a momento of my high school daze.

Thanks again

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Subject: Re: thanks!

Posted by [pleat](#) on Wed, 03 Dec 2003 02:03:41 GMT

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I would try a different speaker, just to see if the distortion clears up. If not, I would say that the amp isn't worth fixing. I know that there is a 8 pin IC in the amp that looks like a transistor. I know of only three in existence. The IC has not been produced since 1975 and there is no cross reference for it.

Hope a speaker change is all that is needed.

Don

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Subject: Re: thanks!

Posted by [KustomBlues](#) on Sat, 03 Jan 2004 04:25:02 GMT

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I know who has some of these 8 pin things..... Me!!!! Deb :-)

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