
Subject: 'Nother New Member

Posted by [ampaholic](#) on Sun, 28 Jan 2007 05:07:16 GMT

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Hi, folks:

Just today I picked up a 1970 Kustom K200 bass amp with a 3x15 speaker cabinet, tuck & roll, in black, with its original covers, in great condition. I'm still learning a bit about it, having been a Marshall/Fender guy all my life, and luckily, I happened upon this website.

Normally, I'd never have thought of acquiring a Kustom, but I recall them being well-regarded in my youth (I'm 55 now). And last summer, at a county fair, I happened to hear a pretty good rock band, whose name I forget, who exclusively used vintage Kustom gear (except for the guitars, I'll add). I was impressed, and didn't forget about that evening. Well, I got an itch to try playing bass guitar lately, bought one, and I didn't care for the sound through my Marshall stack. No depth or presence. So I've been amp hunting. And today I made the purchase, only a little bit on impulse. I have to say the Kustom sounds very good with a Fender Jazz Bass, the little I've played it so far, and I'm looking forward to working with it a lot more. Yeah, it'll rattle the windows, but at my age, 100 watts isn't as loud as it used to be. But it does have a nice tone.

Anyway, I may post some pics and ask if anyone can help ID the amp and cab for me, if I can't figure it out based on the literature available here.

Regards,
Ampaholic

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member

Posted by [rodak](#) on Sun, 28 Jan 2007 13:33:48 GMT

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Welcome, and congrats on what sounds like an excellent purchase! If you can post the serial#, someone else will come along and help you date the amp.

A band with all Kustom gear! Not something you see often these days. I have a good picture of such a band at my website: <http://www.combo-organ.com/> Click on the "Kustom" tab, and scroll down four or 5 screens to see it.

Interesting story about that pic. I found it originally here at this site, in the Literature section. The organist in the shot had an unusual name, and I was able to find him on the Internet, and he sent me the large color photo from the same shoot, as well as the pic of him taking a picture from behind the organ in the studio.

BTW, as you can see from my site, organs are my hobby, but I'm actually a bass player. A K200/3x15 does make an awesome looking bass rig, doesn't it?

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [RoyC](#) on Sun, 28 Jan 2007 15:39:15 GMT
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Welcome to the Board!

I'll bet that 3x15 rig is impressive - both visually and audio-wise.

I'd forgotten just how good and punchy a 200 B1 could sound until recently, when a spare B1 I have got called into temp duty on a 2x15 cab that I normally run with a 250.

It sounded good enough I was tempted to leave it on there for awhile.

Nice rig!

(although the thought of hauling that cab around makes my back hurt . . .)

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [ampaholic](#) on Sun, 28 Jan 2007 16:34:01 GMT
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Hi, and thanks for the welcomes.

The back of the amp has a tag clearly marked K200B1, and the serial number is 57041. The speaker cabinet, which measures 57" high x 25" wide x 14" deep has a tag with serial number 10144. The stack is darned near as tall as I am. The cab's speaker jack is marked "CTS", so I'm guessing that's what's inside. I don't see any evidence that the back has ever been off of the cab. All the screws are intact and pristine (disregarding a bit of rust). Yep, it's a heavy beast. Luckily, it's not going anywhere.

The previous owner gave me a speaker cable he claimed was original to the set, but I have my doubts. It's a pretty skinny little thing, and it looks like a guitar cable to me. Any thoughts on this? I think I'll use something I know has some meat to it, rather than the supplied cable, but I'd like to know if he was correct.

My younger brother is building a website at the moment, and I'm sure we'll get some pics of our gear posted one of these days. Meanwhile, you can see the very beginnings of the site at www.amparchives.com.

Thanks,
ampaholic

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [RoyC](#) on Sun, 28 Jan 2007 17:20:51 GMT
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The spkr cable that came with a 'almost new' K100 stack I bought in '70 was a generic looking thing, it had plastic/rubber molded right-angle 1/4" ends on it. I remember it (the cord) as being not overly impressive looking. It seemed to work ok though.

And I was told it was the original as well.

Maybe one of the experts will jump in here and render their opinion.

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [BC](#) on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 02:25:00 GMT
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Welcome Ampaholic.....I think you will find many of us here have the same sickness. I would be very interested in knowing more about the band you saw with all Kustom gear. Sometimes I can get my classic rock band to set up an all Kustom backline for outdoor gigs....6 or 7 3x15s and a couple of 3x12s.....I love the look! I would love to exchange ideas and experiences with others who feel the same. On the subject of the speaker cable.....Kustom used quality stuff in the old days. I bought a new 200 with 2x15 in 1971 and it came with a quality cord with an angle metal plug on one end and a straight metal plug on the other. I would say they were switchcraft plugs. In 8 years of collecting vintage Kustoms I have acquired a couple of the same cords. I do not know if they were Kustom original or just popular for the time. My senses tell me most music stores sent them out with whatever was handy at the time to make the sale! Good to see Roy is back on here.....you know it is too cold or rough to be outside when Roy is around! BC

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by daveobergoenner@gmail.com on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 20:58:19 GMT
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I'd recommend against using a guitar cord for a speaker cable.

The tiny little conductors in guitar cables are fine for the tiny little signal coming out of a guitar, but not so great for delivering 100 watts RMS into your speaker cabinet.

For my current K200 bass set-up, I use some 12ga. copper (like Monster Cable)...with decent metal plugs. This feeds two 8 ohm, JBL E140's. Sounds mighty nice.

I bought a brand new, K400 set-up in about 1970. As I recall, the original cables (from the factory) with that K400, 6-15 inch set-up came with some speaker cables which looked to be about 14 or 16ga. black lamp cord. Those had molded black connectors at each end. They were pretty long too...really, too long. Used to put one of the 3-15 cabinets on each side of the drummer...yup, he could hear my bass JUST FINE!!!

(and that's probably about all he could hear)

Dave O.

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [C4ster](#) on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 21:39:18 GMT
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Hi Dave,

I used to have the same cables. Now I have 1 and the other 1 and the footswitch left years ago. For the power we send to the speaker cabinets, #12 is overkill. Don't get me started on Monster cable. I use #14 or #16 lamp cord or SO cord. Buy or make cables that are just long enough to reach the speaker. There is no sense in having all that cord sitting on the floor. The longer the cable, the more power loss. So less is better. Also, there are other reasons for not using shielded audio cable besides the tiny wires. The higher capacitance can cause oscillations but that is another huge topic left to the geeks.

Conrad

P.S. Monster cable is overrated. I saw a receptacle advertised in an audiophile magazine that was selling for \$112. I could buy the same receptacle for \$15 from the wholesale house. Make outrageous claims and watch the price go up.

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by daveobergoenner@gmail.com on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 21:58:57 GMT
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Don't worry, I'm not a "cable nut".

What I used was "like" Monster...probably came from Radio Shack or something...just what I had laying around. You are quite correct, for a short run, #12 was overkill. Just made it long enough to make it from the head, down to the speaker cabinet jack comfortably.

The cable rip-off business makes me crazy in the high-end audio field. SO much money wasted, which could be put to so much better use in the form of better components...or just a bunch more CD's to listen too.

Dave O.

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [ampaholic](#) on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 23:31:47 GMT
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Thanks, all.

I'm currently using a stout, commercially-available, 6' cable (like Monster cable) that's meant for speaker cabs, and I've ditched the skinny one. Original or not, it said "Radio Shack" on it in small letters, so it's worthless as far as I'm concerned. I didn't see that until after I wrote the first time.

BC, I'll try to find out the name of the band I saw with all the vintage Kustom gear. For reference, they were playing the Ashtabula County (Ohio) Fair during August of 2006. I'll see what I can dig

up.

I gave the Jazz Bass a decent setup last evening and played the Kustom for perhaps an hour and a half. I'm starting to get a feel for the various tones available, and I'm surprised by the amount of variations I'm finding. And most of them are pretty darned good. About the only gripe I have, and my wife would disagree, is that the amp seems somewhat underpowered for the speaker cab. Yeah, turned all the way up it'll rattle the house, but the cab sounds like it could absorb a couple of hundred more watts without flinching. I've yet to take the back off the cab; I'm assuming I'll find CTS speakers in there. The dust domes are definitely black, not aluminum. But whatever's in there is about as stout as I've ever heard.

More later,
Ampaholic

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [ampaholic](#) on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 23:53:01 GMT
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Hey, BC:

The name of the band is the "Northcoast Cruisers." I couldn't find a website that they might have established, so I'm guessing they're a pretty local outfit. More if I can find out anything.

Ampaholic

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [BC](#) on Tue, 30 Jan 2007 02:37:28 GMT
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Many thanks for the band name....I am always interested in people using Kustoms. Nothing makes a statement like a backline of tuck and roll.

On the cable subject.....(I will show my non technical ignorance here.....and senility because I may have mentioned this before) We are so concerned with the gauge of the speaker wire....yet the wire from the power amp board to the output jacks is very small. WHY???

Now, for playing with the tone on the Kustom 200 and the Jazz bass. Use a splitter or an A/B box to use both channels and the tone gets fatter and seems infinitely variable because you can add or subtract from either side. This is really cool with a stereo Rickenbacker as you can split the pickups with one on each channel. Push the volume as much as you can and add bass and treble to the point of clean or distortion as you like. I find the more volume and less tone controls works best for my ears. Experiment and let us know what you like. BC

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [stevem](#) on Tue, 30 Jan 2007 12:39:49 GMT
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In a short wire run like from the power amp board to the amps back panel the wires resistance is not much of a concern, also due to the fact that where only pumping 200 watts thru it that short length of 18ga cable is ok. When you are driving a tri amped PA stack and you are trying to feed 3000 watts or more into 4 ohm subs that's over 27 amps of current, so if you are flying a PA stack off a halls roof and have 100 plus feet of cable off the power amps the resistance of a small cable will sap your amps current drive in no time.

Monster type cables at home for your 50 watt stereo or 5.1 system could not be more of a waste of money, save it for another Kustom!

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [BC](#) on Tue, 30 Jan 2007 13:43:14 GMT
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Thank you Steven.....that reminds me of something. The heavy speaker cable that came with my Kustom 200 in 1971 had barely enough length to make the connection....(very much like the "in cabinet" wiring that connects the speakers to the jack).....which suggests it was manufactured for the amp. BC

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [ampaholic](#) on Tue, 30 Jan 2007 23:54:28 GMT
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Hey, BC:

Is an A/B box necessary or can you just jumper the two channels together, Marshall-fashion?

Thanks,
Ampaholic

Subject: Re: 'Nother New Member
Posted by [BC](#) on Wed, 31 Jan 2007 03:37:08 GMT
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You can play Marshall.....but the Kustom has high and low inputs so that has to be considered.....I usually cut the capacitor (Is that what it is???) on the high input as I do not use it anyway. BC
