

SRV amps

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This is a list and description of the amplifiers played by musician Stevie Ray Vaughan.

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Early 1980's

Stevie started out with just two Fender Vibroverbs, amps with single JBL E-130 15" speakers^[1] inside them. The Vibroverbs stayed in his rig often, as he would blend other amps together. His collection grew, however, as did his fame, and money. Here is a list of the amps, along with settings, that he used through his career, in chronological order.

1981

Along with the two Vibroverbs for distortion, he added a Marshall Club & Country combo amp, with 2 12" Celestion G12-80 speakers, for the "clean" part of his tone. He would use the 4x10" model made as well.

Settings

On the Marshall, he would set all the controls to "7", but would run his hand down the bottom of the knobs, setting them all to "10".^[2] He would do this when he covered Jimi Hendrix's cover of "Manic Depression (song)".

1982

Around this time, he switched to Fender Twin Reverbs: one "blackface" and one "silverface".

For the recording of the debut album *Texas Flood* in November 1982, he discovered, as it was Jackson Browne's studio in Los Angeles, a Dumbleland power head with 6550 tubes laying around in the studio. Stevie loved the clean sound of this amp and ordered one later on.

At the infamous concert at Montreux in 1982, he used a Music Man amplifier from the late 70's. It can be seen on stage, on the drum platform.

1983

Going back to the Vibroverbs, he added a "blackface" Fender Super Reverb in early 1983.

In mid-1983, Stevie ordered a Dumble Steel String Singer, which had 6550 tubes and 150 watts of clean, but loud tone, and was used with a Dumble 4x12" cabinet.

He briefly used a Dumble Overdrive Special, but preferred the Steel String Singer.

Settings

On his Super Reverb, Stevie had the "bright" switch off, input 1 into the Vibrato channel, Volume on 6, Treble 4 ½, Mid 4, Bass 3, and Reverb 2 ½.^[3]

1984

Stevie kept the Vibroverbs with the Dumble Steel String Singer (SSS) and 4x12" cabinet. All of the speakers were upgraded to Electro-Voice speakers.

He acquired a Fender Vibratone, a Leslie speaker-style cabinet, in which a styrofoam rotor with 2 slots in the sides was rotated around a 10" speaker. He would always use one Vibroverb to drive the Vibratone.

He also added a decal to the Dumble SSS which read "King Tone Consoul".

In September 1984, Stevie used two Fender Vibroverbs, a Super Reverb, and the Vibratone.

Settings

In early 1984, one Vibroverb was set with the volume and tone controls on 7. The other was set with the bright switch on, Volume on 5 ½, Treble on 10, and Bass on 5 ½.

The Dumble SSS was usually set with "FET volume low, but master setting high. The treble and middle was set on about 6, bass on 4, hi-step and low-step filters on 7, Reverb Send and Returns on 6, and Master on 7 ½.^[4]

In late 1984, the top Vibroverb was set with the volume and tone controls on 7, allowing him to turn up to 10 if he wanted. The bottom Vibroverb was set with the bright switch on, with Volume on 5 ½, Treble on 10, and Bass on 5 ½.

The Super Reverb was set with the volume and tone controls on 7 as well.

1985

In January 1985, for the Japan Tour, Stevie had two Vibroverbs, one driving the Vibratone; a Super Reverb, and two Twin Reverbs: one "blackface" and one "silverface".^[5]

For the recordings of *Soul to Soul*, he brought in every amp he owned at the time into the studio.

In the remainder of the year, he used the two Vibroverbs, one driving the Vibratone; Dumble SSS driving a 8x10" Marshall cabinet, and a Super Reverb on top of a Dumble 4x12" cabinet.

Stevie once used 4 JCM 800 combo amps and a JMP power head with a 4x12" cabinet.

1986

The amps stayed the same throughout 1986. He ordered a newer "blackface" Dumble SSS and used it along with the older "silverface" version.

1987

After getting clean and sober, he returned on the road with a new energy and purpose. The amps that were on the road at the time were usually the two Twin Reverbs, and two Dumble Steel String Singers (in this case, one driving the Vibratone) on top of a Super Reverb.

Settings

On the Dumbles, the "silverface" version was set with FET Volume on 1, Normal Volume 4, Treble 4, Middle 6, Bass 5, Hi-step filter 6, Low-step filter 4 ½, Reverb send 5 ½, Reverb return 5, and Master on 7. The "blackface" version was set with FET Volume and Normal Volume on 3, Treble 6, Middle 5 ½, Bass 6 ½, Hi-step filter 7 ½, Low-step filter 4 ½, Reverb send 4, Reverb return 3 ½, and Master on 6.

The Super Reverb was set with the Bright switch "on", Volume on 10, and Treble, Middle, Bass knobs on 9.^[6]

1988

Around 1988, he used less amps, but amps with more power. He started using a Marshall Major, a 200 watt power head, which was used with the Dumble silverface SSS that drove the Fender Vibratone. These were placed with two 4x12" cabinets.^[7]

1989

In mid-1989, most notably from the Live From Austin, TX video, he had a Fender Vibroverb driving the Vibratone, the blackface Dumble SSS and Marshall Major, both power heads driving two Super Reverbs.

1990

Stevie took a couple of Fender '59 Bassman Reissues in 1990, and used these with a Vibroverb driving the Vibratone. The Bassmans were kept with stock tubes, but changed out the speakers for Electro-Voice EVM speakers.

Settings

On the '59 Bassman, as guitar tech Rene Martinez reports, Stevie used the 1st Normal Input with Volume on 8, Treble 8, Middle 7, Bass 6, and Presence on 8.

Tubes

In his Fender amps, Stevie liked the 5751 tube in socket 2 (reverb preamp) for lots of headroom and gave his signature clean, but loud sound. He would also prefer Philips 6L6's and 12AX7's, as well as GE 6550's. Mesa Boogie STR387's and STR415's were used in his Vibroverbs and Super Reverbs.

The Dumbles used 6550 output tubes.

The Marshall Majors had four KT88's, and were replaced with EL34's often when they could be found.

Transformers

Stevie's amps contained 3/4" baffle boards. As a result, with the extra weight on the speakers, it required some repositioning of some transformers in the chassis. For example, the Vibroverbs had Super Reverb-style transformers because of the extra power.

Rectifiers

Most of Stevie's amps had solid state rectifiers in order to keep the transformers from blowing up.

References

- [^] Info about SRV amp setup
- [^] SRV Fan Club article on SRV's rig
- [^] A story on SRV's settings
- [^] Photo of SRV standing next to the Dumble SSS
- [^] A picture of Stevie's Japan Tour rig
- [^] 1987 amp setup
- [^] Photos of 1988 tour setup

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