

July 2011

Kevin Borich and Noel Borne got together this month to continue their collaboration on the "Kevin Borich" VASE prototype. With input from Kevin as to the sound he likes to achieve, Noel has worked his magic once again, it appears. Paul Holland gives us another *Social Media* inservice, and the VASE team begin to mull over an updated marketing plan. Read through then give us your feedback. You *ARE* part of the team after all!

The Kevin Borich Blues Express

Notes From Noel Bourne



Kevin Borich made the long drive down to the Vase workshop today and spent an hour test driving the BluesExpress 100 prototype coupled with a quad box.

He was blown away by how good it sounded...so harmonically rich, even on the clean channel.

Test played both the full power 100 watt setting and the half power setting and was impressed by both, indeed he said probably for most of the venues he plays he may not even get it out of the half power mode.

He asked if I could tweak a little more treble on the overdrive channel, move the mid control point on the clean channel to tend more toward treble and for his personal taste he doesn't need as much bass overall even though the current bass does not muddy up when turned up. These comments are all to do with tweaking to achieve his nirvana.

Kevin actually bought down two of his favourite amps thinking I may want to hear them to get a feel on the sound he achieves with them however after hearing the BluesExpress 100 he did not even want to turn them on because he was achieving his sound from the BluesExpress 100...likewise he bought down his pedalboard and said he didn't need his pedalboard to achieve his overdrive sounds!

Overall a very pleasing result and Harry he loves your kitchen appliance stovetop knobs. (BluesExpress 100...now your cookin' !)

The next step is to fully populate the preproduction chassis that I have fabricated, thanks to Paul and Darren at AT for folding and painting this, and trial LDR or relay switching with Richard F looking after the "intelligent" part of this once switching type is finalised on my part.

Reverb and buffered effects loop will be implemented, interestingly Kevin does not use effects loops even if available on amps however it will be implemented to satisfy those players that do and Kevin wholeheartedly agrees with that.

A headshell will then need to be fabricated.

Kevin also wants an open back 2 x 12" box as he tends to think he would personally prefer to use that purely from a weight /size perspective...he's not getting any younger. This would also allow us to see how the combo would sound remembering that the same chassis can be used in head only or combo format. I would trial the Celestion 75's we have at the shed.

Hi Kevin,

Just like to thank you again for making the long journey to the the Vase shed to trial the BluesExpress 100 and see our progress to date.

I'm glad that overall the BluesExpress 100 is to your liking. I have noted the tweaks that you would like to see implemented i.e. more treble on the overdrive channel, less bass or probably more correctly, more bass removed when turning down the bass controls and the mid control point on the clean channel shifted more towards the treble.

As mentioned, from this point the preproduction chassis will be populated, tweaks implemented, reverb and effects loop implemented and "intelligent" switching system implemented.

After this is done and has been trialled in house we can get together again to test drive.

We will do a 2 x 12" open back cab for next testing in addition to quad box driving.

Thanks and I will keep you posted on progress.

Hi Noel,

Yes mate - thankfully a very positive first run on the Blues Express. I'm confident we can, with tweaking experiments, get the best tone shape for guitar possible, and thicken up that high end mid frequency which is the ear pleasing spot.

Looking forward to next ride on the express.

cheers kevin

“ I’m confident we can, with tweaking experiments, get the best tone shape for guitar possible ” Kevin Borich

VASE In Social Media

Paul Holland is Managing Director and Principal Consultant of Creativity Well, a company established to provide services to knowledge-based and creative industries. He's also one of the VASE Board Members, guiding the reentry of VASE into the marketplace. He is working towards easing into the 21st Century those of us who aren't entirely up to date with the new ways to communicate. Relax, it's relatively painless, and to be honest, optional. You can still write, fax, phone or email us if you are so inclined!

Hi all. If you didn't know yet, VASE has active Facebook and Twitter pages and we'd love you to be part of our social meeting places and conversation spots on the net.

Like us on Facebook and post to our wall. We'd be keen to see pics and vids or hear stories of your interest in VASE. – both old and new.

Older VASE users have a passion for the brand that goes beyond the quality of the products. For many it brings back great memories of watching their favourite band or using VASE themselves in the garage, the shed down the backyard or the local school hall. Newer VASE users marvel at the warmth and power of the Trendsetters, which were often lovingly called 'Marshall-killers'.

Whatever part of the VASE Tribe you belong to (the elders or the new hunters) we'd like to see you on Facebook regularly. Make it a favourite meeting place. The VASE page is: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/VASE/340145740765>

Again on Twitter, the Tribe can speak and share their immediate thoughts. You might be jamming and need to tell the world about it. You may be at a gig and see VASE being used. Tweet us and maybe link to a pic or vid. Use the immediacy of Twitter to tell us what you're seeing and hearing when it happens.

Follow us on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/#!/vaseamps>

How about a VASE channel on YouTube? Let us know. The more vids we collect the more useful that will be.

Maybe you've just started playing with Google +. Do you think we should be there as well?

Let us know your thoughts at info@vase.com.au

Cheers, Paul

Build It and They Will .Com?

The VASE Inner Circle of "directors", for want of a better word, will be having one of their sporadic meetings this week. This group is comprised of Noel Bourne, Richard Faint, Paul Holland, Paul Lister, Harry Lloyd-Williams and Graeme Whitehouse (in order of alphabetical importance).

Previous meetings have dealt with all of the logistics in getting the VASE products ready for manufacture and then carrying out the construction. .

Efforts, ideas and research have been largely focused on getting the product "right" ie: as accurate in look, feel and sound as the originals as possible.

They are now getting feedback that they have indeed nailed these goals and have a wonderful, quality product ready for distribution.

Now that the VASE products are out and about being used and offered to the musical public for sale, some new challenges have presented themselves. Harry sums it up this way:

The amps are selling but we're not being knocked over in the rush, and one of the reasons for this is that the market has a different mindset than it had years ago. To explain, I was listening to the radio this morning and they were saying that online purchases were raised by 13% last year, with half of this going to overseas retailers. The MI (musical instrument) retailers are doing it really, really tough. For instance, I purchased a pack of 10 sets of guitar strings from Amazon and landed them here for \$40. Retail here is \$13.95 per set. Wholesale being \$8. So I got them for half the price. I do not see a future in VASE sitting in Music Shops, where there are lots of lookers but not an overwhelming amount of takers. The new young market make their decisions from magazine ads and pricing. Interestingly, the bass heads are selling like hot cakes, but they're a less expensive product considering they don't have a pair of high-quality, high cost transformers inside. There are plenty of good amplifiers out there which are being heavily discounted, especially with our dollar being so strong. It's all well and good to be selling a hand-made boutique amplifier but the dollar is king at the end of the day.

Noel brought to the other's attention an amplifier just being released by another boutique manufacturing company.

The company (which is selling a very good product) is selling their amp for less than a 60 W Trendsetter head with shipping anywhere in the world included. So if he is selling these online direct from the factory, how do you try one out? Well, he is offering to sell them to you with a 30 day money back period. So you pay your money, you get the amp, freight free, play it for a month and send it back if you don't like it and get your money back. I really see this is going to happen more and more..

Harry notes that VASE wouldn't be cutting out the retailer, VASE products could for example still be stocked at retail outlets so folks could have a hands-on play with them. The retailer could be given a percentage of the on line sales to recompense for this service. His directive to his fellow VASE principals: "So I would like everyone to have a good think. This is a time when the whole world is changing."

What do YOU think? As a purchaser, would you buy online to pay a lower price? Let us know your thoughts.



Bob, tour manager for the Grates sent feedback:

“ the VASE bass amp we have on tour is rocking, sounds really good, and is SO light. i cant get over how much it weighs, and the sound it puts out.

its a dream come true, and makes those ridiculous heavy ***** things look well, ridiculous.

***** name changed to protect the guilty

Quotable You



The Grates' Patience Hodgson and John Patterson

“ Best *\$#!
6x10 I have ever used. I want one!

*\$#! ditto



Peter Pittendreich of General Backline Hire reports a note attached to the VASE 6x10 case when it was returned from a short tour by hip hop artist Drapht <http://drapht.com.au/>



Questions, clarifications, corrections, all feedback is welcome! If you send something really momentous (read flattering, accurate well deserved praise for VASE) you may rate a big red quote box.

What are the plans for Vase Bass Amps?

I have a Vase Bassman 200 s/n circa 540. It is a solid state amp. I have owned it since 1977.

I had a 412 cab with Etone 12's. It fell apart in the 80's.

Will you be building Valve bass amps?

Cheers, Alan.

Hi Alan,

Not sure if anybody has replied to you yet, so forgive me if this is a double-up. At this stage we're not building tube bass amps but never say never, I'm sure we'll do something with tube amps in the future. Our current bass amp uses a high-power digital output stage and a unique solid-state front end. Reports from some die-hard tube players are all very positive; the sheer power of the amp seems to make everybody forget about their need for valves!

Thanks for your email.

Regards, Gra.

Hi,

I have just become a proud owner of a circa 70's VASE Bass Amp.

Unfortunately, the only noise it makes is a slow hum and 'pop' when unplugging the input jack or turning off.

Also the volume control keeps on turning and needs replacing.

Can you call me to discuss repairs on 0431 *** ** and likely cost range.

Thanks

Simon

Hi Simon,

It was a pleasure discussing your recently acquired VASE bass head with you.

It is interesting that it is a solid state unit and as I mentioned we would welcome some photos for our archives and newsletter.

Since the amplifier requires repair and you are located at Manly then I would suggest that you contact Audio Visual Devices at Capalaba to get it repaired or an estimate for repairs. They charge \$45 for an estimate and their labour charge is \$90 per hour.

By all means let Audio Visual Devices know that the people at VASE have recommended them to you.

Here are their contact details:

Audio Visual Devices Pty Ltd
Unit 8, 10-12 Hook Street, Capalaba Qld 4157
(ABN 23 083 250 800) Store Hours: 8:00am - 5:00pm Monday to Friday Phone Stewart, Ryan or Dan on: 07 3823 5717

I would think this your amplifier would be a worthy candidate for repairs to get it functioning again and we would be keen to hear back from you after having it repaired with your impressions of it.

Cheers, Noel

That's all for now. Let us hear from you, we thrive on feedback and like getting to know all of you. Pictures (old and new) are always appreciated (of you, your gear, your pets...) Videos would be even better! Show off a little!

Bye for now, Carol