

A man with dark hair, wearing a black jacket with red shoulder accents and a dark t-shirt, is sitting and holding a white Wizard Hook amplifier. The amplifier has a brown grille with the word "HOOK" in black letters. The control panel features several knobs labeled MASTER, TONE, TREBLE, MID, BASS, GAIN, and INPUT. The Wizard logo is visible on the left side of the control panel. A horizontal bar with the name "DANIEL FRANK" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

DANIEL FRANK

NEW PRODUCT REVIEW

HOOK Amps

Wizard

Will you be hooked?

What can the Wizard do for you?

As I was at the tail end of finishing my first solo album an interesting thing happened - the Zombie Apocalypse. Well not quite, but the COVID-9 situation is a pretty close simulation. For artists around the world this is probably the worst thing that can happen especially when you are going to release a new album, booking shows, having an album release party, and shaking hands with distributors. It's hard to get the word out in these conditions but with every new adversity comes new possibilities.

Enter the new Wizard guitar amp from HOOK amps. I have always been weary of new developments in guitar fades. I am a crotchety traditionalist. I don't like tuners on my guitars (aka Gibson), unnecessary guitar switches, a crayon box of stomp boxes in front of me to tap dance upon, or a guitar amp that doesn't speak through time-tested and warm-sounding tubes. I rarely see new developments that I want to embrace, especially with guitar amps. I particularly can't stand modeling amps that state they will "sound like a real amp." Just get a real amp! As a guitarist and vocalist, sound and tone are the most important tools I can use to express myself. I was born with the tone in my vocal cords and can somewhat work on them but I have very little control over dramatically changing my sound. Guitar sound, on the other hand, is an evolution of my soul. As such, I want my sound to be unique. It takes a labor of love, sweat, tears, and a lot of money to find the perfect sound, and when someone asks me, "how did you get such a great guitar tone?" the hairs on the back of my neck tingle.

Every once in a while, a new product comes along and makes me look at life differently. Hook was one of those products. This is a pint size tube amp, 45 watts of EL34 sizzling in a plywood box. So what's all the fuss about? I have had great amps in my collection and as a DIY enthusiast have build clones of some of my iconic favorites. I have messed with tubes, capacitors, and

transformers in an attempt to find my sound. My favorite amps include Cornford, Soldano, Bogner (Metropolis) Marshall Plexis and modded Fender Bassman. What have I learned during this quest for sound is that I love so many, but on stage or even in the studio I am limited to the number of sounds that can travel with me. I've only got so many hands. Now comes this new HOOK amp, the "Wizard!" Will it cast a spell on me and be the Holy

"To have all my guitar sounds one box, is a musicians dream come true and Hook really delivers"



Grail of guitar tones in one box? Like every guitarist I watched Youtube videos and listened to the clips of this new amp. I watched Paul Davids video about how wonderful this little amp could be. But did it have what it would take to meet my expectations? I bit the bullet and waited patiently for its arrival.

The Wizard is HOOK amp's new creation based on a four valve preamp section with a buffered effects loop. The power section is the tried and true EL34's that have powered all the great guitar amps in history. But wait? MIDI controlled amp settings? And not just some computer stored settings but *knobs* that actually *turn*? We have seen this attempt before in Soldano's X99 preamp - out

of reach for us mortals. I have never seen an amp integrate this so smoothly – not only are the adjustments made with the knobs, but you can visually confirm your settings without having to scroll through some tiny LED display on the face. You input the settings and adjust the sound with the knobs! True interface with my amp has never been possible before. It also includes a digital reverb that can be saved with channel settings, as well as an Impulse Response output.

The way speakers sculpt a guitar sound should never be understated. I have Celestions, Jensens, Scumbacks, and EV speakers, flavors for every mood. Now I can have them all in one amp? No lugging guitar speakers on tour or worried the sound man won't understand my quest for perfect guitar sound in any venue no matter how acoustically unstable? Yes, the Wizard replies, you can have it all in one tiny little box.

So after opening the box and getting my new toy (also wrapped in red velvet in the box, a nice touch), I examined the build design and the quality of the workmanship. All good here. Amps usually will not ship with good tubes. I have had boutique amps with cheap nameless guitar tubes only to have to have their tone awakened by the injection of new tube glass. This amp took a different approach – JJ in the 1st stage, TAD tubes in the rest, and a pair of matched TAD EL34 tubes in the power section. Who would put such care into an amp? Then I remembered that the Wizard was conjured up by a guitarist! Yes, someone who can understand the insanity of the constant search for the perfect guitar tone. The sounds out of the box were magnificent! Running through my trusted rig, the sound was right at home and could easily dial in my favorite amp sounds. The amp is made with circuit boards lovingly wired neatly in the plywood container. Yes, circuit boards! What, no point-to-point wiring? Aren't all great amps wired by the gods with point-to-point wiring? Well, the answer is some are and some are not. Taking into account all the variables, including wire length, solder amount, and soldering technique, there can be wide variation in the end product with point-to-point wiring. If you have a great amp with this design, sadly consistency doesn't always prevail.

*“This amp has
all of the
tweaks right
out of the box
- It’s as if a
guitarist
designed it
and his name
is Leendert”*

Mike Soldano said it best – a well-designed circuit board will make the variations of the amps small. With the durability of modern electronics, his amps had a lifetime guarantee. The Wizard by Hook Amps was thought out from the ground up by a guitarist. All aspects of the amp are clearly thought out and carefully planned, tested, and then tested again. Some guitarists are short-sighted on guitar tone and balk at the prices of boutique amps. I know, as a DIY amp enthusiast, how much it takes to get the sound right. Designers of this caliber most likely lose years of their lifespan

during this quest. You are paying for the quest that forges an amp. HOOK Amps have taken that persistence to another level! I am sure that during the process there were ups and downs. I have to thank Leendert for going through that journey to give us the complete guitar package tone. I am excited to take all of my tones on tour with me and never have a bad sound day.

Thank you Leendert!



About DANIEL FRANK

Daniel Frank is a vocalist and guitarist about to release his first solo album METEMPSYCHOSIS. Daniel Frank has taken his vast palette of musical influences from rock, pop, and punk, to the more modern era music trends. In his debut album, Daniel Frank has taken all these genres to blend and forge a sound that is distinctively his own. With no band or previous work to be bounded by, his solo album allowed him to explore all facets of music styles and bring them together.

Together with a new producer and new energy, METEMPSYCHOSIS has become reality. We invite you to experience this album and hope you enjoy it as much as he enjoyed recording it.

www.daniefrankmusic.com

RELEASE DATE - AFTER THE APOCALYPSE ENDS