

Peavey Electronics Corporation

THE LEGENDARY PEAVEY SESSION STEEL GUITAR AMPLIFIER

By Mike Brown



In the late 1960's Nashville steel guitarist/road musician Julian Tharpe traveled through Mississippi to visit with Hartley Peavey in hopes of persuading him to design a guitar amplifier that could handle the vast range of frequencies that his 20 string/11 pedal steel guitar was capable of producing. This was a challenge that Hartley did not take lightly, and he immediately began working on this new amplifier design. After several trips back to Meridian with the failed prototypes, Hartley would go "back to the drawing board" to revise / modify the design once more. After several trips, Julian returned to Hartley with the news that the latest version survived his last road trip. Although the amplifier survived, unfortunately the JBL speaker could not handle the power and grueling wide-range of frequencies. As HP would say, "With the push of a foot pedal, a player could lay the strings on the fret board like a wet noodle!" And for that reason, the Black Widow speaker was born.



Pictured: Julian Tharpe

This new challenge led to the innovative design of the Peavey Black Widow speaker which featured field replaceable speaker baskets that can be swapped out "on the job" in a matter of minutes. With the BW's ability to faithfully reproduce the wide frequency ranges of a multi-string steel guitar, the Black Widow quickly became the steel guitar 'standard' of the industry. The rest is history. The legendary Black Widow 1501 speaker has been used in every Peavey steel guitar amplifier since its inception in the late 1970's. The list of steel amplifiers includes the original Session 400 (1974), LTD400 (1974), Session 500 (1980), Vegas 400 (1983), Nashville 400 (1983), Session 400 Limited (1990), Session 400 Limited Wedge (1990), Nashville 1000 (2000), Session 2000 (2000) amplifiers and also in several Peavey Opry Boxes variants created specifically for the Grand Ole Opry stage performers. 'Nuff said.



(L-R) Peavey Session 115, Peavey Robert Randolph Signature Amplifier and RR 212™ Enclosure, and Peavey 115 N Extension Cab

New for 2016, Peavey Electronics proudly announces the new Session 115 amplifier, the 115N extension cab and the Robert Randolph signature amplifier with the RR 212™ enclosure. The 500 watts of class D stereo power allows traditional steel guitarists to cleanly reproduce extreme low and high frequencies of all tuning styles while maintaining enough clean headroom for those who prefer the rocking playing styles of Mr. Randolph. The Session 115 and 115N extension cab also come equipped with the 1501-4 ohm neodymium Black Widow® speaker. The onboard digital reverb, chorus and delay effects can be remotely controlled with the included hand controller. The EFX parameter section allows the player to choose the type of effect and fine tune the parameters of that effect type. We did include a post EQ send and return effects loop for those who prefer to connect their own processor. Both models have the familiar mid/shift equalizer controls. The Session 115 is voiced to achieve a smooth midrange response, but with the active low, high and presence controls, one can zero in on their particular taste in tone. The Robert Randolph amplifier uses a special equalization circuit that was voiced by Robert himself using his choice of frequencies.

The pre-EQ effects loop allows for the patching of your volume pedal "pre equalization" to avoid tone change that usually occurs during the forward and backward movement of the volume pedal. This patch point also eliminates the use of impedance matching devices. The front panel selectable boost function creates a smooth thickening of the tone which is excellent for lap style playing. The included hand controller provides the ability to activate or defeat the boost, spring reverb, onboard effects, post EQ effects loop and activate and defeat the rear effects loop as well as setting the tap tempo.

On the rear panel, a stereo version of Peavey's patented MSDI (microphone simulated direct interface) allows signal to be routed to a console or recording device. Two 1/4" speaker outputs for connecting the new 115N extension speaker are included. Also, the hand controller/MIDI footswitch din plug is provided to connect the supplied hand controller.

Peavey Electronics has been the leader in steel guitar amplifier design since the early 1970's and continues to offer the most innovative products for today's steel guitarists. The new Session 115 amplifier, Robert Randolph signature model amplifier, RR212 cabinet and the 115N extension speaker ensure that your performance will be accurately heard loud and clear!