

Takin' the Trayn

DESPITE BEING BETTER KNOWN ACROSS THE POND THAN IN THE UK, TRAYNOR AMPS HAVE A SOLID TRACK RECORD. **TIM SLATER** CHECKS OUT THE FUNKY YCV 40 WATTER

GBINFO



TRAYNOR YCV40T

PRICE: £677.14

BUILT IN: Canada

TYPE: 2x10 valve combo

POWER: 40 watts

VALVES: 2 x 5881

(6L6LB also compatible),

3 x 12AX7

FEATURES: 1 lead and

1 clean channel, with

independent volume and

tone controls, bright

switch on clean channel,

boost on lead channel,

Accutronics long-spring

reverb, effects loop

with level control,

(send doubles as line out)

SPEAKER: 2 x 10-inch

Celestion Tube

10 speakers

FOOTSWITCH: Dual

footswitch for

independent channel-

switching and boost

DIMENSIONS: 584(w) x

469 (h) x 228mm (d)

WEIGHT: 22kg

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Traynor is a Canadian name, that has been in business since the early 1960s. In many ways, the brand can be viewed as the transatlantic version of, say, Carlsbro or Laney – not perhaps up there with legends such as Marshall and Fender in terms of reverence, but every bit as well made, not to mention very popular with the majority of those who have owned and used them regularly.

On this side of the pond, however, Traynor has a marginally more exotic vibe, due to their comparative rarity to other imported brands; a situation which makes the reintroduction to British soil of a completely revamped Traynor range all the more interesting, and most definitely welcome.

Traynor amps rarely skimp when it comes to using high-quality components, and the all-valve YCV40T ('Yorkville Custom Valve', Yorkville being Traynor's parent company) combo includes a pair of Celestion speakers and an Accutronics spring reverb, alongside a host of standard modern features, such as switchable independent

channels and an FX loop. On paper, this amp promises much, so let's see what it can do.

PRE & POWER AMP

The YCV's preamp section is based around separate clean and overdriven channels, with conventional tone and volume controls for both, plus a rotary gain pot and a small 'boost' switch on the lead channel for extra control over the overdriven sounds. In practical terms, that means you have instant access to three tones.

The control panel's master section features global 'presence' and 'reverb' controls, and a standby switch that you should of course use while powering the amp up and down. The standby switch itself is located on the control panel next to the combo's jewel light, where the edge of the cabinet meets the corner of the control panel; the switch is partially tucked underneath the edge of the cabinet, and is consequently quite hard to find.

The cabinet design isn't so much at fault as the location of the single jack input, which has too much space around it and squeezes the rest of the controls too far the opposite way. →



LOOP OF THE DAY

IN, OUT, IN, OUT...

■ The Traynor YCV-40 benefits from an effects loop, complete with a level control.

This means you can connect your time-based and modulation effects (delay, chorus, flanging etc.) between the pre- and power amp stages of the amplifier, which helps to avoid all the gain boosting (and therefore extraneous noise-boosting) issues of plugging them straight in the front end. The level control enables you to balance the levels of your effects chain too – let's say you have an old Electro Harmonix pedal in there that sucks a bit

of volume. Well, no problem, because now you can boost it with the loop's level control.

The Traynor's send jack also doubles as a line out, so that the amp can be connected directly to an external PA system should you require it.



As it is, the whole thing looks cramped and somewhat carelessly designed.

Elsewhere, the amp benefits from far better attention to detail; the rear of the cabinet reveals a well ventilated power amp, and all of the speaker and

"THE NATURAL TONE MEANS YOU'LL SOUND LIKE YOURSELF RIGHT FROM THE WORD GO"

reverb leads are neatly cable-tied, and stapled firmly to the chassis and cabinet safely out of harm's way. The amp's modest but effective 40-watt output is driven by a pair of 5881 output tubes, mounted fairly deeply inside the amp in sprung cradles suspended from the amp's chassis.

The combo's semi-open back design protects the vulnerable tubes, with a large baton mounted at the back of the amp directly behind them, leaving little opportunity for unwelcome intrusion from foreign objects.

The Accutronics spring reverb tray is mounted on the floor of the cabinet, and velcro straps secure the amp's remote footswitch safely during transport, preventing it from flying around inside the cab and damaging any components held within.

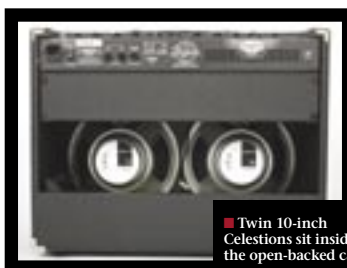


■ Traynor's proud branding, adding a little flair to the amp's classic design



CABINET & SPEAKERS

The Traynor's overall appearance leans heavily towards an engaging retro image, with black and silver livery that tips an obvious nod to Fender's not-too-dissimilar-looking Hot Rod series.



■ Twin 10-inch Celestions sit inside the open-backed cab

However, the vintage styling is deceptive; the Fender-style silver sparkle grille cloth conceals a kick-proof steel mesh, that's fitted very slightly off centre to enable quick removal during servicing, or presumably to change the grill cloth for another finish. Overall, the amp feels very sturdy, thanks to its high-grade ply construction; it's not overly heavy, but it feels convincingly solid and well made, with standard steel corner protectors and a single top-mounted carrying strap. The combo's winged logo deserves a special mention too; it has something of the 1930s sports car badge about it, and it looks very cool.

The combo's twin 10-inch Celestion speakers are a very persuasive way of attracting attention to a relatively unknown amp manufacturer, and the 2x10 format combined with the 40 watts output is already a proven success, in the shape of classic tube amps like the Fender Vibrolux. There are a lot of preconceptions about how 10-inch speakers may or may not sound, but if you consider all the

classic Fender amps that feature them – notably the Bassman, ironically regarded as the best guitar amp of all time by many tube amp fans – there really is nothing to 'worry' about. Tens can sound a touch tighter and more focussed, but they are in no way lacking in any area of tonal response. In fact, they're very effective for country/rock and funk playing, where a marginally faster response and a more focussed tone is often preferable. The 10-inch Celestions' smaller size also plays a subtle but not insignificant role in helping to keep the combo's weight and dimensions within reasonable limits too, which is always welcome. →

LET'S STOMP ALL NIGHT

FOOTSWITCHING MAKES IT EASY

■ The Traynor's dual-function footswitch enables remote channel switching, plus it also activates the lead channel's 'boost' circuit for extra kick when required.

The plastic casing looks a little sub-standard at first glance, but fear ye not, as this is hardy stuff to all but the most direct of 13-stone stomps. The switches themselves look pretty heavy-duty, while non-slip rubber feet will help to prevent the footswitch from skidding across the stage at inappropriate moments.



DETAILS

A LITTLE GEM OF AN AMP, CAPABLE OF A GREAT DEAL OF TONE



■ Spring reverb is a welcome addition



■ Two Celestions sit proud in the sturdy cab



■ The EQ is standard fare, with the addition of a boost switch, adding a pseudo-channel



GBCONCLUSION

A VERY LIKEABLE AMPLIFIER THAT GOES HEAD TO HEAD WITH FENDER'S HOT ROD DELUXE

■ **The Traynor YCV40T is absolutely ideal for guitarists seeking a compact and good-sounding tube amp that's relatively straightforward, and uncomplicated to use and maintain.**

The emphasis is on plugging in and playing, with an overall honest, musical tone and forgiving nature, that means you'll be sounding like yourself from the word go.

The ten-inch speakers sound subtly different from the more usual 12-inch counterparts, but they are no lightweights – at least not in the sonic sense, anyway. A highly credible competitor for Fender's ubiquitous Blues/Hot Rod Deluxe, here the 2x10 format adds enough interest to make it stand out. It has a punchy and very musical sound that'll fit in all manner of blues, country and general rock situations. The standby switch's accessibility is the only niggle in an otherwise definite thumbs-up. **GB**

GBOPINION

TRAYNOR YCV40T

GOLD STARS

- ★ Great sounds
- ★ Easy to use
- ★ Compact

BLACK MARKS

- Standby switch is badly placed

IDEAL FOR...

Rock, blues and country players looking for a relatively traditional yet highly capable amp

SOUNDS

The clean sounds are usually where you can get the true measure of a tube amp, and the Traynor combo proves to be an excellent-sounding amplifier, with a crisp, clear tone that doesn't suffer from any rattles or top-end sibilance that sometimes occurs with reverb-equipped tube amps.

No matter what type of guitar you use, the Traynor combo has a lovely natural transparency, so disarmingly honest that you almost feel as though you need to cover up with a towel. Even fairly modest volume levels have a pleasing bouncy feel, which only improves at gig volume, when the power tubes are pushed hard enough to develop a natural and entirely usable compression, that lends a real 'pop' to solo notes and vigorously strummed chords.

In this digital age, where even the cheapest amps are supplied with FX, there's still a lot to be said for a good old-fashioned spring reverb, and the Accutronics long-spring version on the Traynor sounds pretty damn lush. Even at fairly low settings, there's still plenty of reverb to spare, bucket-loads

in fact, and the genuine enhancement that this archaic effect contributes to the tone is still little short of amazing. It's warm sounding too – not too clanky like a lot of reverbs can be.

You can manipulate the overdriven sounds to deliver a workable and edgy semi-clean break-up, through to a thick modern sounding sustain. It's an instantly likeable overdrive character, with more than a reasonable amount of flexibility, seemingly capable of anything except for the most extreme modern metal styles (simply because it doesn't quite have the necessary extremes of gain and EQ). For all-round classic rock distortion and mildly overdriven tones, however, the little Traynor covers everything more than adequately, and it responds particularly well to dynamics, such as vagaries in picking technique and volume levels. The 5881 tubes don't quite compress in quite the same spongy way as, for example, an EL34-equipped Marshall or EL84-loaded Vox, but the Traynor's tougher American-flavoured tone is no less warm and musical, it's knuckles are just a bit harder.

GBRATINGS

TRAYNOR YCV40T

BUILD QUALITY	●●●●●●●●
FEATURES	●●●●●●●●
SOUNDS	●●●●●●●●
VALUE FOR MONEY	●●●●●●●●
GBVERDICT	●●●●●●●●