

# ROAD TESTED

## RANDALL RG-8040 E

Randall amps have been around for 40 years now and they've shared the stage with such legendary bands as Def Leppard, Metallica, Extreme, White Zombie, Lynch Mob, Anthrax, Arch Enemy, U2 and Pantera. Dimebag Darrell was instrumental in keeping the brand visible during the '90s when solid state amps were out of favour. Dime understood there was a certain kind of attack and feel that he could only get from solid state. As part of the company's 40th anniversary celebrations, Randall has released the solid state RG-8040 E, which pays tribute to the original RG-80.

### GOT THE BRAINS

The RG8040 E is old-school analogue solid state: it's FET-based, rather than using a clipped IC or a digital brain to achieve its tone. It's a 75 watt, two channel amp (Channel 1 is classic clean with a bright switch, while Channel 2 is your overdrive). The EQ features Bass, Middle, Treble and Presence controls with bass boost and a midrange cut, each accessible by pulling on the knobs. There's a true spring reverb and a 100 watt Randall-designed 12" RD121008 Diavlo speaker. Around the back there's an XLR line out with ground lift and a series effects loop. On the front you'll find a headphone jack and an MP3/media player input. There are two available footswitch options: the RF2T2C for channel switching and boost, or the RGRG80 for channel switching, boost and reverb.

### KICK IT

The RG-8040 Channel 1 offers spanky, tight cleans but with a boost you can kick in for dirty rock tones. It rings nice and clearly with single coils, and has a tight low end which works great for metal-style clean humbucker tones - y'know, where you're playing an atmospheric intro before kicking over to the doom channel. The reverb is a nice addition and it helps to add some depth and atmosphere.

### GETTING RANDY

The lead channel is based on the original RG-80 (which was Dimebag and Def Leppard's amp of choice, and which George Lynch originally helped to voice back in the day). Depending on where you set the tone controls, you can get fat shred lead tones with plenty of sustain and compression, or chunky hard rock rhythm



tones with a very musical percussiveness. Or pull out those Midrange and Bass knobs, boost the Presence and set the Treble at about 4 or 5 and you have an intense metal grind that will prompt you to blast 'Cowboys From Hell' for a solid hour. Up until it hits that classic solid state compression with a heavy pick attack, the amp is particularly responsive to playing dynamics, which is relatively rare for a solid state amp.

The RG-8040 E is a very cool amp which pays tribute to the classic Randall sounds of the past, at a very reasonable price and with plenty of volume and punch. It's hard to play this amp and not be aware of the artists who have used its' forerunner and the sounds that it made in the past, but that's part of what's so cool about it.

By Peter Hodgson

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| <b>Price:</b> RRP \$569  |
| <b>Distributor:</b> CMI Music & Audio                              |
| <b>Phone:</b> (03) 9315 2244                                       |
| <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.cmi.com.au">www.cmi.com.au</a> |

## VOX VT80+



Vox's Valvetronix series has been around for a while now in both floor effect and amp form, but a company with as rich a history as Vox is never shy to keep innovating. The Valvetronix+ range features various improvements, most notably a Power Level control designed to maximise the valve goodness of your tone. The heart of the beast includes the Vox Valve Reactor circuit, which uses a 12AX7 tube - normally a preamp tube - in the power section. Here it can impart all sorts of tube mojo on the tone while a digital preamp takes care of the more general sound production. This allows the power amp to basically emulate the power amp sections of various classic and modern valve amps, which you can't really do with a fully solid state power amp.

### 99 PRESETS, NO PROBLEMS

There are various models available in the Valvetronix+ range, with different power outputs, speaker types and sizes, but a certain feature set is consistent. There are 33 amp modules: that's three each (Standard, Special, and Custom) from eleven types (Clean, Cali Clean, US Blues, US 2x12, VOX Ac15, VOX Ac30, UK Rock, UK Metal, US High Gain, US Metal and Boutique Metal). There are 25 effect models including 11 pedal effect types, 11 modulation/delay types, three reverb types and noise reduction. There are 99 preset locations and eight user programs stored in two banks of four channels. The VT80+ offers a maximum power amp output of 120 watts RMS at 4 ohms and it cranks all of this tonal goodness through a Vox original 12 inch speaker at 4 ohms.

### NO MESSIN' ABOUT

But wait! There's more! There are also 33 song presets whose tones recall those used on various classic tracks. Unlike some modellers which give these types of presets coy names which

only hint at their inspiration, Vox comes right out and says it! Examples include 'Brown Sugar,' 'Creep', 'Foxy Lady', 'Enter Sandman', 'Song 2,' 'Know Your Enemy', 'Under the Bridge', 'You Enjoy Myself', 'For the Love of God,' 'Satch Boogie', 'Smells Like Teen Spirit', 'Wonderwall', 'Pride and Joy', 'Paranoid', 'Five Minutes Alone', 'Hot For Teacher' and 'Raining Blood'.

### GOT THE POWER

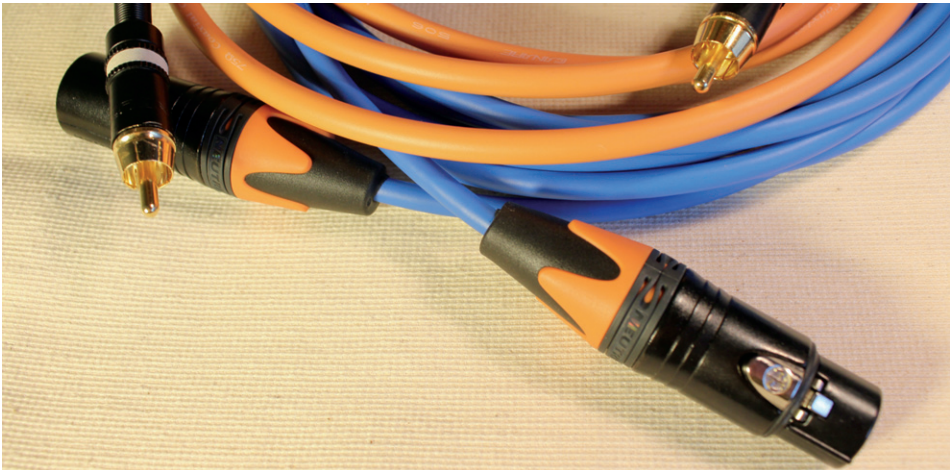
There are too many tones to detail here but the most important thing to note is that they sound and response is incredibly tube-like, especially when you really open up the Power Level control and crank this baby. Purists may still have issues with a digital preamp but 99 per cent of players (including some really picky ones) won't be able to tell the difference, because the power amp just feels so 'right.' It sings, it punches, it kicks, and it does so with the kind of depth and harmonic range that people love tube amps for.

The Valvetronix+ line is very full on the features, with all those effects and amp models, but what really sells it for me is the quality of that power amp. Although the preamp models sound good at low volumes, cranking the amp and making that speaker move really makes them sound great.

By Peter Hodgson

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| <b>Price:</b> RRP \$349.99                                       |
| <b>Distributor:</b> Yamaha Australia                             |
| <b>Phone:</b> (03) 9693 5111                                     |
| <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://au.yamaha.com">au.yamaha.com</a> |

## SYDNEY SOUND CABLES



Sydney Sound Cables is an Australian company that prides itself on making the best quality custom made cables for musicians and audio engineers at the best possible price. Not only that but they generally manage to get you cables made and sent to you within a day or so. It usually takes me three days just to find my soldering iron, so these guys are definitely doing something right. For guitarists, they offer a wide range of options that can be viewed on their website at [www.sydney\\_soundcables.com.au](http://www.sydney_soundcables.com.au). Here is a look at just a few. All pricing as seen online includes postage Australia-wide.

### SILVER RABBIT

Constructed with Japanese Canare 005 cable and nickel Neutrik jacks, the Silver Rabbit is a guitar lead that is going to go the distance, gig after gig and it won't let you down. Not only does it sound great, not taking anything from the instrument's tone, but it is built to last.

### GOLDEN AXE

The Golden Axe uses gold Neutrik jacks and a Canare 605 cable for the guitarist who wants something a little bit more special than the Silver Rabbit. If you can tell the difference in audio quality, you should be buying these, they are worth it.

### SILVER RABBIT PATCH

Like the longer version, the Silver Rabbit Patch gives you exceptional quality between your pedals, something that is often overlooked by many guitarists. There is enough cable for it to easily flex between two pedals whilst not being so long that it gets in the way.

### WIRELESS BELT PACK CABLE

This is one cable that is going to be a real hit with anyone using wireless systems and is sick of the cheap leads they come with breaking after a few uses. For not much more than the "others" cable, you can have one with gold connectors, a Canare cable and a silent Neutrik right angled jack, making changing between guitars quick and easy without unwanted pops through your amp. The guys at Sydney Sound Cables also make a range of pro audio and custom audio cables to suit pretty much any audio application you can think of. And, if they don't have it listed, just ask and I am pretty sure it won't be a problem to make up. The beauty of a product like this is that you are not buying something that is made in bulk in a factory to the most popular lengths and most popular configurations. If you need something a little bit different, Sydney Sound Cables are the guys to go to. And every cable is made to last. The first thing I do when I get a new lead in my hand is open it up and check out the craftsmanship. I can't help it. It's a boy thing. I am usually convinced that the best cables going around are

the ones I make myself, but having looked at the work from these guys, I may just have been trumped. The tinning was very neat and all the solder connections were perfect. Find me a better cable and I will buy it. But for now, I am going to have a look at the range of audio cables these guys do.

### MICROPHONE LEADS

These are made in any length you require with Neutrik XLR connectors and Canare 905 cable. Very well constructed and rugged enough to be thrown around stages by any roadie or front man with an ego.

### INSERT LEADS

The insert leads I had to try were made with KLOTS cable, and Neutrik TRS and XLR connections. Again, very neatly made and heat shrunk off at the split point to reduce strain. It's the little touches like this that are the sign of a good lead and the sign of people who care about their work.

### IPOD LEADS

This is possibly the most over-engineered extension lead for an iPod I have ever seen. I love it. Canare cable with right angle 3.5mm Neutrik TRS connections. You are not going to find a lead of this quality in any (fruit) shop. That much I know.

### POWERED MONITOR LEADS

These are made with Mogami cable and have Neutrik TRS connectors on one end and male Neutrik XLR connectors on the other. Again, this is the sort of lead that is regularly needed in home studios and is hard to find in a decent quality. This however is not decent, but far better.

### AES/EBU LEADS

Speciality leads for digital interfacing of audio equipment are often hard to find, so it is refreshing to see AES/EBU leads with Neutrik and Canare components easily available in this sort of quality.

### SP/DIF LEADS

I get asked for SP/DIF cables all the time and generally have a hard time turning up good quality ones for a realistic price. Well folks, look no further, it appears that Sydney Sound Cables has everything we need and they deliver right to your door.

By Rob Gee

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| <b>Distributor:</b> Sydney Sound Cables   |
| <b>Phone:</b> 0404 222 160  |
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