

**ZOOM** The amp's clean layout and sturdy construction promise years of trouble-free operation.

# PEAVEY JSX JOE SATRIANI SIGNATURE AMP

TESTED BY  
TERRY BUDDINGH



Last year, when Joe Satriani approached Peavey's Instrument Amp Product Manager Bill Xavier with some ideas for a new amp, he was immediately put in touch with James Brown. Not the "Godfather of Soul," but, rather, Peavey's Instrument Amplifier Engineering Manager, who developed the JSX while Satriani was on the G3 tour with Steve Vai and Yngwie Malmsteen. Satriani tested the prototypes onstage and reported his findings back to Brown, who continued to refine the amp's tone with various circuit tweaks and mods.

The JSX is solidly built, with a tough road-warrior look. The durable front-panel toggle switches are extra husky, and the chrome-plated solid-brass knobs give the amp a heavy duty look and feel. With its ruggedly cool vibe, the JSX looks hip on any stage, and its tough exterior should help it survive the rowdiest roadhouse rumbles. Satriani digs chrome, so Peavey created a contoured, two-piece, chrome-plated zinc casting to surround the oval JSX logo. Together, these two pieces form an S-shaped opening that provides extra venti-

lation for the tubes through a perforated grille. Inside, three printed circuit boards hold the majority of the components. Every control pot is firmly secured to the chassis, and the output tube sockets are bolted to the chassis as well. The circuit boards are connected via four short ribbon cables and a few neatly tied shielded cables and wires. Techs will appreciate the spacious, service-friendly layout. For a more aggressive sound, the JSX comes equipped with EL34s, but it also readily accepts 6L6s. A small slide switch adjacent to the output tubes changes the bias to accommodate either tube type.

## CHANNEL SURFING

Even when pummeled with high-output humbuckers, the JSX's Clean channel is absolutely uncrushable. Distortion pedals sound dynamic, detailed, and focused, and clean tones ripple with sinewy midrange definition and complexity. Possessing virtually unlimited headroom, the Clean channel can absorb the most brutal pounding, yet it still sounds lively and colorful for sweet fingerpicking or frantic tapping.

The Crunch channel provides a smooth transition from the Clean channel, offering articulate higher-gain tones that are dynamically responsive. When playing fast runs, each note punches through with its own crisply defined identity. The Fat switch works especially well with single-coil pickups, as it enhances low-end body and girth without sounding mushy or boomy. It's also surprising how well the JSX works with both lean sounding single-coils and high-output humbuckers. Every guitar I tried sounded firm, focused, and precise.

### INSTANT GRATIFICATION PEAVEY JSX

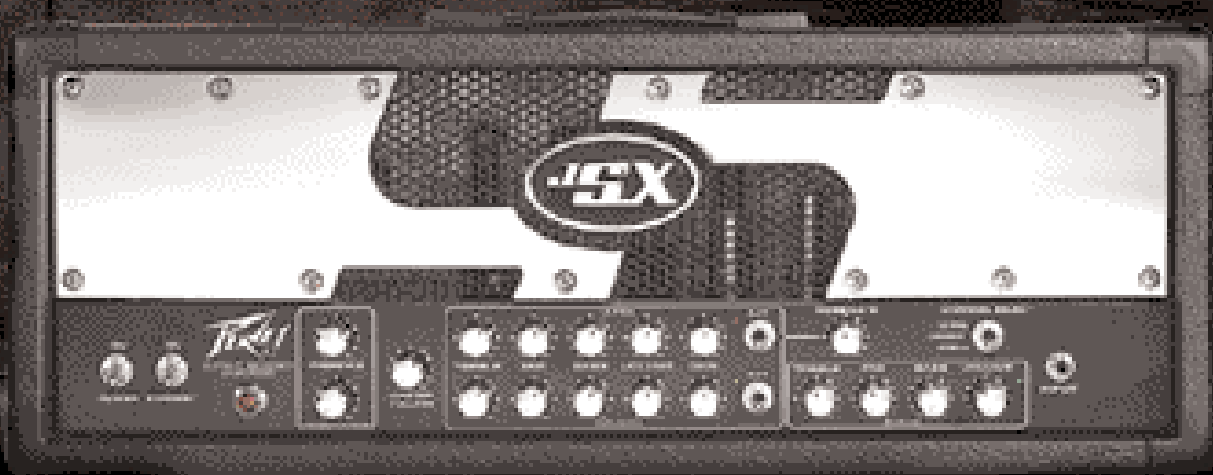
**WHO'S IT FOR?**  
Players seeking an articulate and punchy three-channel amp.

**KUDOS**  
Three dynamic and versatile channels. Massive clean headroom on Clean channel.

**CONCERNS**  
None.

**PRICE**  
\$1,499 retail  
\$1,124 street

**CONTACT**  
Peavey,  
(601) 483-5365;  
peavey.com.



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A small slide switch allows the JSX to run either EL34s or 6L6GCs. The adjacent pot lets you adjust the bias without removing the chassis.

The footswitchable effects loop sports controls for both send and return levels.

There's also an attenuated line-output jack with a level control that taps off the speaker output.



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# Guitar Player

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The Ultra channel covers the high-gain solo tones especially well, offering plenty of burning sustain while remaining defined, percussive, and dynamic. There's a punchy forward thrust that propels each note straight into the audience, and that's the big difference between amps that sound like compressed mush and those that can effectively communicate in a concert environment. To truly be heard, every note and detail of your sound has to get off the stage and reach the audience. And that's the essence of the JSX, which is designed to communi-

cate with the audience, not simply flatter the player with smoothed-over schmutz.

## JSX APPEAL

With its cool looks, wide range of articulate tones, and affordable price, the Peavey JSX is a hard act to follow. While there's certainly no shortage of high-gain, three-channel amps these days, the JSX separates itself from the pack by delivering the goods with an uncommonly refined sense of articulation and authority. Satriani and Brown teamed-up to produce a *winner*, and the JSX receives an Editors' Pick Award. ▶

### SPECS

- Three channels
- Presence and Resonance controls
- Fat switches on Ultra and Crunch channels
- Active EQ on Ultra and Crunch channels
- Variable noise gate on Ultra and Crunch channels
- Footswitchable effects loop with send and return level controls
- Line out jack with level control
- One Sovtek 12AX7LPS and three Electro-Harmonix 12AX7EH preamp tubes
- Four Electro-Harmonix EL34EH output tubes (also accepts 6L6GCs)
- 100 watts

## JAMES BROWN ON THE PEAVEY JSX

*As Peavey's Instrument Amplifier Engineering Manager, James Brown has a tube-amp design résumé that includes the Classic 50, Rockmaster preamp, Triumph, VTM and Ultra series amps, the 5150 (co-designed with Eddie Van Halen), and the Triple XXX. Brown worked closely with Joe Satriani during the JSX's development, and here he explains how the amp came together. —TB*

"Working with Joe was really easy because he was very clear about what he wanted," says Brown. "He liked the Triple XXX's Clean and Crunch channels, so we decided to use that amp as the basic platform for the JSX. We spent a lot of time tweaking the Clean channel. I slid the midrange center frequency down a little bit, modified the channel's brightness, and for the Treble control, I used an audio-taper pot—which turns up more gradually than linear-taper pots—to obtain a more vintage amp response. And because the JSX has three channels, I could fully optimize its Clean channel for a clear, open sound. You can beat on the JSX's Clean channel pretty hard without it distorting, and that helps it work well with pedals.

"Joe thought the Triple XXX's Crunch channel had a really good lead tone, so that became the basis for the JSX's Ultra channel. To improve articulation, I reduced low end in the preamp—which can be restored with the Fat switch, although it's done in a slightly different fashion for a tighter attack—and I also reduced the gain because Joe thought the channel sounded a little too compressed. We experimented with different amounts of gain and midrange to get a screaming lead sound that was also articulate and punchy.

"Joe really dug the lead channel of our Classic 50 for in-between sounds, so I modified the JSX's Crunch channel to sound more like the Classic 50. This involved reducing the gain significantly, and I also had to tweak the Crunch channel's active EQ to more closely match the limited range of the Classic 50's passive EQ. A cool thing about the JSX is that if you set every knob to 5 on all three channels—meaning you have every knob pointing straight-up—and crank the bass on the two distortion channels, you'll get a tone that's very similar to Joe's."