





AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Valve preamp, valve power amp
OUTPUT: 20W, switchable to 5W
SPEAKERS: Matching 1x12 and 2x12 Celestion V-Type-loaded cabinets available

VALVES: 3x 12AX7, 2x EL34
CONTROLS: Preamp volume, master volume, bass, mid, treble, presence, effects loop on/off
SOCKETS: High/low sensitivity input, speaker

outx5, effects send/return, DI out (unbalanced)
WEIGHT: 9.3kg
DIMENSIONS: [HxWxD] 240x510x235mm
CONTACT: Marshall Amp; marshall.com

1 POWER SWITCHING
 The Studio Classic's standby switch provides 20-watt and five-watt output power options. It's loud by any comparison, with plenty of volume to handle most gigs

2 INPUTS
 The high-sensitivity input jack is the gateway to classic JCM800 tone; the low gain option provides all the headroom you need for effects pedals

3 EFFECTS LOOP
 The simple series effects loop is great for hooking up chorus or delay pedals and can be switched out of circuit if it isn't needed

MARSHALL STUDIO CLASSIC HEAD

£849

A new compact version of one of the biggest-sounding amps in history

If you always wanted to own a classic Marshall stack, but were put off by the sheer power and weight, your prayers have been answered by the folk at Marshall, who just unveiled the new Studio range, featuring three scaled-down 20-watt versions of some of Marshall's most famous designs: the 1959 Super Lead is recreated as the Studio Vintage, the Silver Jubilee becomes the Studio Jubilee and the mighty JCM800 is the inspiration behind the amp we're looking at this month – the Studio Classic.

Each design is available as a head with matching 2x12 or 1x12 cabs, or as a combo. Visually, the Studio Classic head is roughly three-quarters the size of the original 2203, with a full-width gold control panel, black cloth grill, white piping and a re-sized

Marshall logo. Inside the tough ply cabinet, there's a steel tray chassis, which supports two relatively small transformers and a large high-quality PCB that holds most of the electronics, including the valve sockets. Smaller boards support the knobs, input jacks and rear panel connectors, with wiring

volume, bass, mid, treble and presence. The standby switch has two output options: full power is around 20 watts while the low setting tames the Studio down to around 5 watts. On the rear panel, five speaker outlets handle any cabinet connection with a simple series effects loop that can be

beefy humbuckers in a mahogany-bodied guitar, like a Les Paul. Use single coils and you'll find yourself turning off most of the treble and presence to get a balanced tone, losing precious gain in the process. At higher volume settings, the Studio Classic's two EL34s begin to stamp their authority on the sound, thickening things up to produce the JCM800 midrange grunt for which these amps are world-famous. Even using the lower power setting, the Studio Classic is seriously loud – after all, it is a Marshall. Plugged into the matching 2x12 vertical cabinet, the 20-watt full power rating is more than enough for most small to medium gigs, while the 5-watt option is ideal for studio and home use – providing you have understanding neighbours.

Using an SG loaded with a Seymour Duncan Jeff Beck

EVEN ON A LOW POWER SETTING, THIS IS SERIOUSLY LOUD...

bundles terminated by Molex connectors. It's typically Marshall: neat, businesslike and built to handle the rough and tumble of rock'n'roll.

The controls are self-explanatory: a pair of high and low sensitivity inputs feed a simple but effective preamp design with knobs for preamp and master

switched in or out of the circuit. An unbalanced DI output can be used to feed a desk for live or studio use.

As you'd hope, the Studio Classic sounds just like a proper JCM800, with (slightly) more polite volume levels. Like the original, the treble response is on the bright side and the preamp's medium gain is best suited to

Back to the future

How the JCM800 came to be a modern classic amp

While the 2203 and 2204 models had been around since 1975 as master-volume versions of the original four-input 1959 and 1987 Super Lead heads, 1981 marked the end of Marshall's 15-year distribution partnership with Rose-Morris. The amp range got a bold redesign to mark the occasion with full-width gold control panels, black elephant vinyl and white piping – the now iconic style. The JCM800 designation came simply from Jim Marshall's initials and his personal number plate. Bigger filter capacitors gave the JCM800 a harder edge that was a perfect match for heavy metal and hard rock, which exploded in the 1980s. This was the era of hair metal in the States and the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal when bands like Mötley Crüe and Saxon ruled the airwaves, and the JCM800 was their go-to amp.

humbucker, we were absolutely delighted to find all of our favourites from the JCM800's golden era of the early 1980s sounded totally authentic, making the Studio Classic a real blast to play. Effects pedallers aren't forgotten – as well as the impressively transparent series effects loop there is the often-overlooked low sensitivity input jack, which offers a ton of headroom and a spanky, fast response that's an ideal platform for all kinds of pedals, with no appreciable loss of volume. And unlike many originals, this version



The trade-off for dialling down the treble with single-coil guitars is the loss of gain



There are five speaker outlets on the rear panel and a series effects loop can be switched in or out of the circuit

of the JCM800 has practically zero hum and hiss levels, making it very usable in the studio.

We think Marshall's new Studio range could be a runaway success – thanks mostly to the smaller transformers, the Studio Classic head is very portable at just under 10kg, while the sound is definitely up where it belongs in the heavyweight league.

The original 2203 may not have been Marshall's most versatile amp, but the simple no-frills design and aggressive bellow inspired a generation of world-class players and some of the

greatest rock tracks of all time were played through it. If you want to rekindle the 1980s magic without the weight and power of the full fat 100-watt reissue, the Studio Classic captures all of the magic of the original. While it isn't cheap, it's made in the UK and it's certainly been built to last.

Nick Guppy

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★

ALSO TRY...

PRS SONZERA 20 COMBO

£699

Designed in the USA and made in China, the Sonzera gets you the coveted PRS badge and tremendous tone at a bargain price that can't be ignored.



ORANGE OR15H

Another Brit classic, the OR15 has great tone to match those cool looks. Shop around and you can find it bundled with a matching cab.



£539

BLACKSTAR STUDIO 10 EL34

£575

Also available in 6L6 and KT88 flavours, the Studio 10 combos offer top-quality tone, digital reverb and a 12" loudspeaker at a very tempting price.

