Module 3

Gearing up with Electronics

Unit 8 Amplifiers

Glossary

dawn: the beginning of something new
lap: the flat area between the waist and knees of a seated person
hum: a low, steady continuous sound

The Guitar Amplifier

The one instrument in the world that needed to be amplified at the **dawn** of modern music was certainly the guitar.

It has been almost 100 years since the first electric guitar amplifiers hit the market. We've certainly come a long way since then!

Amplification was first addressed for the electric guitar in the early 1930s for the Hawaiian guitarists who played a frying-pan-looking guitar on their **lap**.

Bandleaders of the twenties and thirties didn't take the guitar seriously in their music, because it could not be heard over the other instruments in the band.

Established instrument companies formed in the nineteenth century started to produce guitar amplifiers in the 1940s.

Guitar amps are not just cold, boring circuit boxes for bringing noise. Amps are the essential core of the electric guitar.

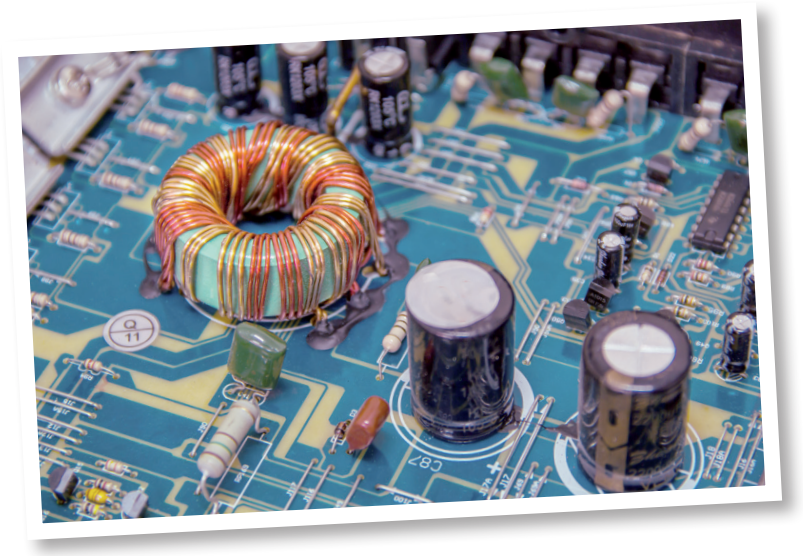
Guitarists became obsessed with different amps for a myriad of reasons. The choice was varied: there are mini amps, solid-state amps, tube amps and so on.

An electric guitar amplifier consists of a source of signal (the microphone or pick-up), the amplifier and the speakers.

The amplifiers used are all conventional, meaning that they are practically identical to those used in all kinds of sound equipment. In other words, these amplifiers are basically the same as those used in other systems such as hi-fi recording systems.

What does the amplifier do? The signal, which is the electrical equivalent of the musical tone from the guitar, is fed to the input of the amplifier through a shielded cable, to keep it from picking up **hum** and noise on the way. There it is amplified (raised to a much higher electrical level) to drive the speakers.

(Adapted from Brian Tarquin, Guitar *Amplifier Encyclopedia*, Allworth Press, 2016)



Understanding the text

1. Find expressions in the text that mean much the same as the following.

1. Agli albori di .....
2. Andò sul mercato .....
3. Abbiamo fatto molta strada .....
4. Per una grande quantità di ragioni .....
5. In altre parole .....

2. Place the prepositions below next to the correct verb. One of them can be used more than once.

to • of • from

1. need .....
2. start .....
3. consist .....
4. feed .....
5. keep .....

3. Tick the topics mentioned in the text.

1. ☐ History
2. ☐ Types
3. ☐ Components
4. ☐ Cabinet design
5. ☐ Working principles
6. ☐ Distortion and volume