

Project Dynaco



I apologize for this one taking so long, but it's been a frantic year. I have a loyal reader, Marc, who emails me after every issue and asks, "When are you going to get back to the Mark III project?" So, here we go. For those of you that did not see the beginning, we had an overview article back in issue one on page 42. You can still download issue one if you don't have it.

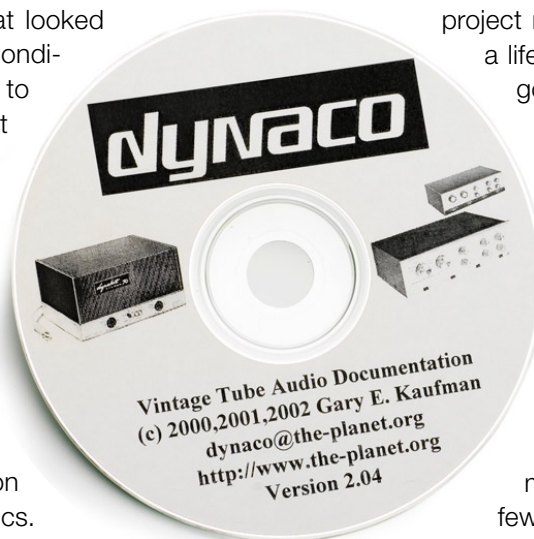
These days, the vintage Dynaco gear is starting to fetch almost ridiculous prices. I saw a couple of pairs of Mark III's for sale that looked like they were in questionable condition for \$6-700 a pair. I'm going to stick my neck out and guess that these amps will probably still need a major overhaul anyway, so my suggestion is that if you are good with a soldering iron, rebuild em'.

Keep in mind that by the time we get done here, the target project cost (including buying a pair of amplifiers) will be about \$1000-1500 depending on how much you spend on cosmetics.

If you don't care at all about how they look, get the cheapest amps you can find, some fresh caps and call it a day, but I think these classic amplifiers deserve a bit more.

BIG HINT: Regardless of whether you are an experienced rebuilder or a novice to this part of the audio hobby, I would highly suggest that you get your digital camera ready and take a ton of pictures of everything as we go along. In case you have to stop your project midstream, these photos will be a lifesaver when you return. We are going to work on one amplifier at a time, so you still have an intact model to work from.

Last but not least, get your hands on an original Dynaco manual to follow along with, so that if all else is lost, you have the manual. They can be found on Ebay for about 10 bucks. I got mine on CD in PDF format, which has made it really handy to print out a few pages as I go. *(continued)*



COSMETIC QUESTION ONE: HISTORICALLY CORRECT OR UPDATE?

The original Mark III had pretty dreadful connectors all the way around, so I would plan on scrapping all of this stuff. The burning question is how do you want your final amps to look when done? Just like the originals, with a barrier strip for speaker connections and that goofy octal tube socket to connect power to another Dynaco product, or would you like it to be more modern?

One thing you will notice while shopping around for these amplifiers is that the price goes up exponentially on the clean ones, while the ones with fair to marginal chassis can still be had pretty reasonably. Here is an example of some great reproduction chassis from Soundtastick that look just like the originals and really spiff up the amps. They also make fresh cages if yours are really bent, as well as chassis for the Stereo 70 amplifiers.

In the event that your cages are just faded and not bent (or otherwise damaged), you can clean them up with 409, scuff them a little bit with a Scotchbrite pad and apply a fresh coat of paint. For those of you that are really obsessed, consider powder coating them, but this will probably set you back about \$75, where paint will only cost about \$10. The final touch to really make the paint spray on extra smooth is to use a tack cloth and some compressed air before painting.

I suggest Rust-Oleum High Temperature black, or if you are feeling frisky you can go for the wrinkle finish to have that extra-retro look. Keep in mind they did not come this way from the factory though...

For our project, we are going to use the more modern chassis with decent binding posts, a proper power switch and upgraded input jacks. I want these to be daily drivers, not concours winners. *(continued)*



NEXT, GET NEW PARTS

The next thing to decide is how far you are going to take the circuitry. Again, will this be a hotrod or stay true to the original? There are a number of different driver boards for this amplifier, and my favorite is from Joe Curcio, but this board does somewhat change the circuit to a more modern design and hence the flavor of this amplifier. If you want to go down this path, this mod is highly recommended. They also make a great quad-cap replacement for the original electrolytic capacitor in the power supply that is long gone by now and we will be using that module in our rebuild. Because these amplifiers are so old, you can figure that just about everything inside is junk.

I am using a set of new boards that are reproductions of the originals from Vintage Electron. A pair of these blank boards will set you back about \$40, and are a very nice place to start your rebuild. If you don't feel like sourcing all of the components, you can get stuffed boards from them for \$100 a pair and will offer good value.

Our little project Mark IIIs are going to use the VE boards, but we are going to source the parts from a few different places. The main upgrade to these boards will be with a full compliment of Auricap's from Audience. These caps are used in a lot of gear these days, with excellent results.

In our next installment, we will go into better detail on parts selection! Stay tuned.

