

Recognizing Jewels along the Path

If I had all the money back I've spent on music equipment in my life I'd probably be able to retire to my own island in the South of France! I spent the better part of my youth saving up to buy whatever guitar or amp that promised to help me achieve this ever allusive sound my soul longed for. I don't know, maybe I should've just spent more time practicing.

The very first guitar amplifier I ever bought was this little brown job called a Princeton, made by a company called Fender. I was a little less than excited about it. In fact, I probably wouldn't even have taken it if the guy wouldn't have insisted on throwing it in on the deal. I was just after his \$30 genuine imitation off brand remake guitar. I didn't give the old amp a second thought until I began toting it the three blocks back home. Then I came real close to tossing it off into someone's hedges.

The little Princeton just wasn't loud enough. It was old, and sorely lacking the screaming distortion so essential to a fumble fingered fifteen year old Ted Nugent want-to-be. With only four knobs it was simply behind the times. It didn't even have reverb!

Yet my bass player Ray and I both played out of it for years. It was all we had. We couldn't find anybody to trade us something for it. All the other bands were playing those new ultra manly 500 watt solid state jobs; we had the sissy Princeton. Those guys were getting the cops called! Cranked all the way up we couldn't even get the neighbors to complain. Man was I jealous.

After a few Christmases, and the discovery of something called a job, both Ray and I were both able to move into something more substantial. In fact, before long we'd each acquired walls of wattage capable of attaining volumes known to trigger seismic readings in Thailand. The little Princeton was retired to a hall closet.

With the passages of time, and the passing of my highly unsuccessful ventures into the rock-n-roll, blues, and country music genres, I began to realize I was spiraling dangerously close to that day all garage musicians dread- the day we come to grips with our day jobs. I was about to haul all my gear down to the pawn shop when God mercifully stepped in and rescued me from such a horrid fate. He wooed me until I gave my heart to Jesus, and then He gave me a spot on a Church praise team.

My late Pastor Buddy Adams took me under his wing and helped me to see that my passion for music was not by accident. Soon I was finding myself in Jesus' plan.

One of the first things the Lord had me do was to dust off that little Princeton! What a jewel it turned out to be, especially now that my playing had matured. I reckon God had seen the end from the beginning. The sound I had always longed for was finally being unleashed from the depths of my heart... and it was coming through the speakers of that little brown amp! Oh how my soul spilled forth glorious praises to my wonderful Savior. I realized... to this end was I born!

But anyway- I reckon often times our greatest gifts lay right before our eyes, but we just crank our lives up so loud we stop hearing the drum beat of our own heart.

Many of you probably have God given talents you've grown weary toting and have tossed off into the hedges somewhere along the way. I've noticed many people's closets are full of undiscovered treasure hidden away because the enemy lied and said, "That'll never register on God's Richter scale."

Never forget what God did with simple shepherd boys, fisherman, prostitutes, and tax collectors! Maybe it's time we dust off our dream off again, and get plugged back in. If Pastor Buddy were here he'd encourage you to recognize all the precious jewels God has placed along the path to your destiny. (*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Matthew 13:45-46 KJV*) Jesus Himself is the greatest of these jewels. He is that Pearl of a great price.

Oh, by the way... that little 1962 'thrown in on the deal' Princeton is now one of the most sought after guitar amps in history.

-Guy Sheffield 2-15-07