

Understanding Fender's circuit naming scheme - info and corrections

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Posted by gregh on May 28, 2003 at 01:34:07:

In Reply to: [Understanding Fender's circuit naming scheme](#) posted by Akbar on May 27, 2003 at 15:50:09:

Mike.....For the amps designed before summer of 1963, Fender used a scheme begun with early tweed amps, and the number (in that scheme) referred to the chronological order (of introduction) of the amp.....so the Champ (introduced first, in the post-woody Fenders) was model amp model #1, the Princeton was amp model #2, the Deluxe was #3, Super was #4, Pro was #5, Bassman was #6, Bandmaster was #7, Twin was #8, Tremolux was #9, Harvard was #10, Vibrolux was #11, Concert was #12, Vibrasonic was #13, Showman was #14, the reverb unit was #15, and the 2-10 brown Vibroverb was #16.....all in order of introduction, after 1947 or so. The *third* "digit" in the model-designating scheme used prior to summer of '63 indicated the amp model, according to what's just been shown (order of the amp's introduction).

Regarding the first 'digit', also a number.....

as previously stated, a "5" meant a 50's circuit, with "A" the first circuit version, "B" the second ['major'] revision, "C" the third, "D" the 4th, etc. So the 5F4 would be a 50's Super of the 'sixth' (i.e. "F" is the 6th letter in the alphabet) major ckt revision, and a 6G4 would be the next revision of the Super Amp circuit, appearing in 1960 [indicated by the first "6"].

An early-60's brown Pro shared a virtually-identical (often only differing by one or two resistor or cap values, AND Output transformer) circuit with the brown Super, Concert, and Bandmaster amps....even though their different amp model numbers wouldn't suggest the close association. The Tremolux and Vibrolux are virtually identical, differing in OT, thus speaker complement. The brown Vibroverb was different from other brownface amps.....and whether one or more amps were VERY similar or not simply can't be deduced BY these model/ckt designations, sorry. Anyway....this all changed in mid 1963.....

In summer of 1963, the "general" Fender AA763 circuit was developed (in July '63). This was revised in Mar/April of '64, and became the AB763 circuit - the "B" version of the amp ckt developed in July '63, and used in MOST Fenders for general 'ckt topology' (whether reverb and/or tremolo ckts or not, in most cases.....meaning, eg., the Bandmaster amp, withOUT reverb, is listed as an AB763 ckt, as is the Super Reverb WITH reverb). Though the Showman and Twin Reverb both used 4 6L6's, they still were shown to have the AB763 circuit.....until May of 1968 [more than 6 months into the silverface era]).

There were some exceptions - the Princeton Reverb and 5-knob Princeton, developed in fall of '64, were AA964 ckts. The Champ and VibroChamp, developed in July '64, were AA764 ckts. The 6G6B Bassman of summer '64, changed to the AA864 Bassman [Aug '64 ckt], then the AA165 Bassman [Jan '65 ckt], then the AB165 [may '65 ckt].

Though most AB763 Fenders changed in the late 60's (May '68 ckt, Oct '69 ckt, Feb '70 ckt, Nov '70 ckt.....among various revisions during the early silverface years), they usually just bore AB763 tube charts (rather than AC568, or other 'updated' ckt designations).

The AB763 *IS* a blackface circuit, but not all amps WITH an "AB763" tube chart HAVE the AB763 Blackface circuitry.....and most after ~1969 have 'significant' changes FROM the AB763 circuit.

The very first Pro Reverbs DID have FEI faceplate and backpanel, as did most Fender amps until late-spring or summer of 1965.....but it's true that being a post-'64 amp, there are NO Pre-CBS Pro Reverb amps.

Anyway.....yes, Fender did use the 'general' AB763 ckt designation for circuits that differed very-slightly AND for some that differed more-dramatically. You just have to get to know the schematics or ckts in detail, to know/understand the differences, I guess. Hope this helped !

Regards, - Greg H.



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Posted by J Fletcher on May 28, 2003 at 08:34:03:

In Reply to: [Understanding Fender's circuit naming scheme - info and corrections](#) posted by gregh on May 28, 2003 at 01:34:07:

I've spent too much time looking at old Fender schematics trying to decipher the various alphanumeric codes which appear. Here's my take, for what it's worth.

The mid fifties Bandmaster schematic has these codes. Model # 5E7 and then in small letters E-EE.

I think that the 5E7 is broken down into, 5 the decade, E the year of the decade that version was designed, ie 1955, and 7 the amp model number. This code is consistent up to about 59, when most amp models became G". This code works with most early and mid fifties Fenders, but there are exceptions like the Champs.

The smaller code, E-EE, can be deciphered as E the month May (the 5th month) EE , 1955, so the schematic was drawn in May 1955. This code seems consistent into the 60's with the 6G7 Bandmaster schematic having the code A-FJ indicating January 1960, with F representing 6, and the J representing 10 . The 6G7-A has the code K-FJ, indicating the 11th month of 1960, November.

The amp model codes, 5E7 etc, seem consistent within the 50's, but with the introduction of the letter "G" in 59 or so, the model codes have to be interpreted differently. Seems most amps, except for Champs, became 6G types....Jerry

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Posted by gregh on May 28, 2003 at 13:35:34:

In Reply to: [Understanding Fender's circuit naming scheme - info and corrections](#) posted by J Fletcher on May 28, 2003 at 08:34:03:

Fletch has got it exactly right in noticing that the Fender *schematics* are date-coded.....with "A" = one, "B" = two, "K" = nine, and "J" = zero.

"F-EE" on a [5E3 Deluxe] schematic would be June '55. "A-FJ" on a [6G4 Super] schematic indicates that the *schematic*/ckt-design was done on January, 1960 ["A-FJ" = "1-60"].

When it was assumed the 50's were ending, in late '59, Fender changed from the number "5" (for the 50's) to the number "6" (for the 60's), but continued most of the same model/ckt "indicators" or 'codes' *for those Fender amps that *changed*, as most DID.....so the last 50's Super (latest rev of the circuit being the "F" rev, and since the Super was Fender's 4th amp developed after '47/48.....a very-late 50's Super was model "5F4") amps changed from the "5F4" to the "6G4"....the "6" for 60's, the change to "G" because of a major circuit revision, but the "4" (for the Super amp) remained consistent. After this, Fender tended to add a suffix letter for ckt revisions.....so the 6G4 super of 1960 became the 6G4-A Super (one more 7025 due to diff vibrato ckt, plus other 'modest' changes), just before 1961.

The Champ, remaining in tweed and unchanged from the late '50 thru early '63, continued with the same model designation, as nothing HAD changed on that amp ! For the same reason - i.e. nothing had changed on/in the amps - the Vibrolux and Princeton amps retained their "5XX" labelling until THEY changed from tweed to brownface, in summer of 1961. So, the change in the first digit from "5" to "6" occurred at the beginning of 1960 *IF* the amp had another/significant change at that time. If not (amp continued to be made in tweed style), the first digit did not change until, later in the 60's, there WAS a change to brownface layout/covering. Make sense ?

Some brownface amps underwent a 'second' ckt revision, in the early 60's, noted in model-numbering, such as the Bassman (6G6 became the 6G6-A....then became the 6G6-B) or Tremolux (6G9 became the 6G9-A....then became the 6G9-B).

THEN, as noted in my previous post.....this all changed in the summer of 1963 to a arguably-less-definitive model-designating scheme.

HTH clarify !!

Regards, - Greg H.

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Posted by J Fletcher on May 28, 2003 at 15:10:58:

In Reply to: [Fender's circuit naming scheme - info and corrections, YES....and more....](#) posted by gregh on May 28, 2003 at 13:35:34:

There doesn't seem to be any hard and fast rules regarding amp model codes during the 50's and 60's, but it appears to me that all amps with a 5E designation were designed in 1955, but aren't necessarily the fifth circuit revision of that model, though some may be. That is, the "E" in 5E4-A, 5E7, 5E6-A represents the fifth year of the decade. Consider the case of the 5E9-A Tremolux with a schematic code of D-EE. April 1955. Didn't the Tremolux only appear in 54 or 55? Doesn't seem likely that it would go through the same number of circuit revisions by 55, as the Super, Bassman or Bandmaster which had been around for several more years.

By the way, I'm pretty sure I have seen a Super 5G4, or at least I've seen the cabinet with tube chart. Looked like a 6G4 cabinet. For some reason this stuff interests me....Jerry

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Posted by gregh on May 28, 2003 at 16:39:15:

In Reply to: [Fender's circuit naming scheme - info and corrections, YES....and more....](#) posted by J Fletcher on May 28, 2003 at 15:10:58:

Fletch is again correct (and I'd forgotten) that the second letter changed, yearly (it seemed) - coincident with the auto-makers introducing "the new models" late in the year before the model year. The 'scheme' seemed to have really 'started' in 1951, and those would have been the 5AX models, then the '52 model was designated the 5BX model, the '53 model the 5CX, the '54 5DX, and the '55 5EX. AFAIK, the '51 and '52 amps did NOT have a tube chart with these model-designations on them (or they lacked date-code stamps, or both ?). BUT, in '53, the middle digit WAS "C", and the '53 schematic for, say, a Pro Amp DID differ from the '54 schematic (the 5D5 differed from the 5C5), and the '55 version - the 5E5 - differed again. This seemed to be true for 'all' Fender's early-50's models, as far as *model-designation*.....it's unknown if/how a '51 model's *circuit* might have differed from a '52, as schematics usually don't exist for those years.

And yes, it seems that this 'system' for model designations *with the middle digit incrementing every year* CHANGED or 'broke-down', in late '55 and after (and Fender no-longer tried to have new models introduced every fall). Fletch is RIGHT about this...mentioning the Tremolux is a great example of this "breakdown".....good eye !!

The Tremolux was introduced in '55 ! Maybe Fender could "justify" that the circuits labelled "5EX" were all the 5th of some 'generation', but (clearly) the Tremolux was NEW - had Tremolo - and was not the same as, say, the Pro/Bandmaster/Super circuits. But yeah, Fender *did* introduce the Tremolux as 5E9, not 5A9.....and yes, that middle digit DID increment, from '51 thru '55, every year (regardless of whether the circuit WAS the 5th in some 'line' of development or not).

Lastly, there ARE reports of, say, a 5G13 Vibrasonic....at least a few with that on the tube chart, I guess. I've never seen/heard verification of a tweed-cab Vibrasonic, nor of known examples of this amp being shipped in '59. But apparently Fender DID print a few "5GX" or "5GXX" tube charts, and stuck a few on, a few very-early 1960 amps ?? Anyone HAVE one of these ???????? Let us all KNOW !!! THANKS !

HTH. Regards, - Greg H.

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