



THR Series part 3

“THR” originated the desktop amp category. In Part 3, we delve into the untold story behind the birth of the THR. This article introduces behind-the-scenes development stories leading up to the creation of the THR, which is a culmination of Yamaha's digital technology.

The Birth of THR: Starting from Zero

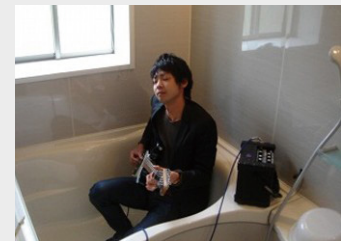
THR is a product that brings together Yamaha's digital technologies. In addition to the expertise gained from previously developed guitar amps, Yamaha also incorporated its diverse technological resources from various fields. To create the unprecedented “third type of amp,” Yamaha assembled a team of developers well-versed in these areas and started from scratch.

The real Needs of the users

In developing an entirely new kind of amplifier, we placed great importance on “envisioning the user's real lifestyle and uncovering their true needs.” To achieve this, we conducted three types of market research to explore guitarists' lifestyles and playing environments from multiple perspectives. The research revealed that many guitarists play guitar at home while listening to music on devices like iPods. This trend wasn't limited to Japan—similar studies conducted in the United States showed that even in environments with spacious standalone houses and ample property, guitarists weren't always able to play at full volume. In other words, for many guitarists, there was a clear need to “play guitar freely at home while enjoying their favorite music.” This insight gave birth to the idea of the “desktop amp.”

Legendary “OTOBA” Experiment

At Yamaha's Toyooka Factory, there once existed an experimental housing facility called “OTOBA.” This space was used to test new technologies in a real-life living environment. The concept of the desktop amp was refined through hands-on trials conducted throughout the home—in the living room, bedroom, and even the bathroom. Through these experiences, we came to truly understand the joy of playing guitar at home and gained a clear sense of what is genuinely needed for playing in a home environment.



The integration of Yamaha's digital technologies

The THR makes extensive use of the technological resources held by various departments within Yamaha. The following is just one example:

Speaker Cabinet: Technology from Yamaha's desktop audio systems in the AV division has been applied. This is a unique capability not found in other amp manufacturers and was essential to making the THR a reality. As a result, users can enjoy high-quality sound from a compact amp body.



Tube Simulation: As early as the release of the DG Series in 1997, Yamaha had already developed simulation technology capable of reproducing the sonic characteristics of tube amplifiers. Later, with the introduction of VCM (Virtual Circuitry Modeling) technology, Yamaha was able to fully replicate the behavior of guitar amp circuits, including tone control and gain operation. This allowed for highly accurate reproduction of not only the sound response typical of tube circuits but also the tactile feel and behavior of the knobs.



The Meaning Behind THR

Through the development journey described so far, the THR was ultimately born under a new concept: “The Third Amp.” The name “THR” is derived from the word “Third”, taking the letters T, H, and R. Unlike traditional large stage amps (the first) and compact practice amps (the second), the THR stands apart as a completely new type of product.

As the third amp, THR not only marked a new approach—it created an entirely new category: the desktop amp, surprising and delighting users around the world.

THR will continue to evolve, delivering the joy and inspiration of playing guitar at home.