

## PRODUCT: FLOYD ROSE REDMOND SERIES MODEL 1 GUITAR

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Since the early 80s the name Floyd Rose has been inextricably linked to contemporary rock guitar. With the sweeping influence of Eddie Van Halen, the Floyd Rose tremolo system became an essential item for a generation of shredders. Despite the continued success of the bender system, Floyd Rose has been somewhat absent from the guitar scene until this year's NAMM show, where he unveiled a striking new range of guitars known as the Redmond Series. Not named after the ubiquitous Redmond Symons but after Redmond, Washington, where the guitars are built. With the Redmond Series, Floyd Rose has come up with a number of interesting features that offer a unique spin on the single coil style guitar we are all familiar with.

### OVERVIEW

The Redmond model 1 is the first in the series of six different models and is the most classic due to its three single coil pickups. The Redmond Model 1 combines many elements of both classic US styled guitars, along with Floyd Rose's innovative concepts. Fundamental to the Redmond range is the Speed loader vibrato system, which is a timely update on the original Floyd Rose locking system. With the Speed loader bridge, the necessity for machine heads to tune the guitar is done away with. In fact, Floyd Rose's concept with these guitars has been to streamline operation without sacrificing traditional values of the classic US styled single coil guitars.

### AESTHETICS AND CONSTRUCTION

The model 1 has an intriguing appearance with its traditional US shaped body and futuristic tunerless headstock that is hollowed out. In theory, the guitar probably doesn't require a headstock, but I'm sure it adds balance and resonance as well as offering aesthetic appeal to those who find the 'headstockless' design a bit radical.

Craftsmanship and construction are both first rate here with the Model 1. The three piece swamp ash body is perfectly chosen with its tight grain and lightweight. This combines well with the transparent red finish which is light and impeccably applied. The finish used reminded me of that on some of the G&L guitars. Full marks here indeed!

Similarly the neck has had ample thought gone into it too. Made of rock maple and sporting a shallow profile (but still deeper than some of its rival guitars) the Model 1 feels particularly comfortable in all regions and again, the light satin finish contributes well in the tone department. The fingerboard for this particular guitar was a choice piece of rosewood with 12" radius and 22 jumbo frets. In keeping with the high level of craftsmanship, the frets were well dressed balancing out an overall finely put together axe that combines great timber selection and construction.

### FLOYD ROSE REFINEMENTS

It has to be said that the Speed loader bridge is these centre piece for the Redmond Series of guitars and that it is quite ingenious. For those readers out there who have an original Floyd



Rose locking Tremolo system (I'm one too!) you'll be aware that you have to physically cut the ball end off the string, however this is no longer the case with the Speed loader system, as it relies on fixed length strings (manufactured by Floyd himself and also Dean Markley). These fixed length strings have a brass ball at each end that slots into a specially designed nut at the headstock and at the bridge itself, a breach like mount. It takes literally seconds to change a string and, because they are fixed length strings, minimal fine tuning is required in order to bring them to pitch. It couldn't be easier! Also, for altered tuning, different string lengths are available -and speaking of availability, the distributors assure me that supplies are in abundance without being excessively costly.

The other refinement Floyd Rose has made with the Redmond Series is the pickups he has designed (It should be noted that Floyd Rose pickups along with the Speed loader bridge are available as separate accessories). Specifically wound using wire that Floyd favours has resulted in pickups that are both distinctive and highly musical. Both the middle and bridge pickups have been wired progressively hotter, yielding greater balance between the three vintage single coils.

In conjunction with pickup design refinements, the actual spacing of the pickups has been altered with the intent of improving balance and calibration. Notably, the bridge pickup is straight as opposed to the traditionally angled classic US type bridge pickup. As part of the streamlining

agenda, Floyd Rose has included a single master volume control (which is a linear pot) and no tone controls. This has proved to be a bit of a prickly aspect with some overseas reviewers but Floyd Rose feels that the calibration of the pickups covers this area. I would encourage readers to see for themselves.

... a bold new player on the 'US single coil type' guitar market.

### IN OPERATION

Personally I was very impressed with the Redmond Model 1, both for its functionality and depth. The Speed loader bridge works exceptionally well in allowing for an extremely broad range of expression. Both radial and subtle arm action are admirably catered for. Encompassing everything from subtle Allan Holdsworth chordal approaches to extreme 80s dive bombing! Playability was also very strong with the model 1: the neck feeling fast and responsive across all areas of the fingerboard. The Model 1 Redmond definitely has a distinctive sound that I find appealing. Tested through a Vox AC30 and a 50 watt Marshall, the model 1 Redmond displayed a particularly rich and bouncy sound, erring on the brilliant side. The test model was strung with 9-42 gauge strings and whilst it would have been preferable tonally with 10-46 gauge, the inherent tone still shone through. The overall sound was particularly even between all three pickups with a noticeable

Quality. Both overdriven and clean sounds responded really well with the Redmond nodding slightly towards an aggressive upper mids bite, but always musical and airy. The guitar responded well to the different amps which made me conclude that the Redmond Model 1 was extremely versatile and robust.

Overall, Floyd Rose has definitely come up with some subtle yet distinct refinements with the Redmond Model 1 that leave a lasting impression. But does it justify the \$3,995 price tag? Well I believe given the Speed loader bridge, great playability and exceptional components and construction, that this is a bold new player on the US single coil type guitar market. Well done Floyd!

## FEATURES

- Maple neck
- Rosewood fingerboard
- 3 vintage style single coil pickups
- Speed loader tremolo system
- RRP \$3995.00