

Review- Bass amplifier:

EBS Drome Classic

Published in: MM Magazine April 2007

By Ulf Widlund (Translation from Swedish by the reviewer)

+ Pricing
Small and light
Good Sound
Easy to use
-
Nothing

The EBS Drome Classic offers a competitive alternative to the original Drome bass combo, regarding price, design and sound. Some features have been omitted, but EBS retain most of the functions.

Almost ten years have passed since the small bass combo EBS Drome first came out. You do not have to agree, but I dare say that the Drome is the worlds best thought out bass combo. Let me explain why: The Drome fill the demands of 80 percent of the bassists of the world regarding rehearsals and gigs. All this without exceeding the same demands. The combo is small, light and has enough power to manage rehearsals and club/pub- gigs. The controls are easy to manage and the amp is very versatile with its practical, useful and innovative functions. The fact that it does not exceed the demands is appealing to me. Why pay more or haul around more than is needed for the gig?

Drome Classic is not merely a budget version of Drome. It is indeed four thousand SEK cheaper and it is aimed at customers with a lower financial limit, but at the same time Drome Classic offers a different alternative, both design- and sound wise. There are two main reasons for the lower pricing.



First and foremost the amp is built in Korea, the other reason is the exclusion of many of the extra functions of the Drome.

One could think that the tolex covering and the grill cloth are details that affect the price, (Drome is felt covered with a chrome steel grille) but this is insignificant in comparison to the benefits of moving the production to Asia. The Classic has in fact a few practical improvements, missing on the original Drome: A sturdy flight-case handle on each side and another one on the underside that can be used to tilt the combo back slightly. The switches on the back are also equipped with LED indicators.

Construction

The cabinet is built out of plywood and has metal



corners and plastic feet. The power amp is a 150-watt MOSFET type with a soft clip function intended to simulate tube amp distortion. This is thought of as better sounding when the power amp approaches clipping. Cooling is assisted by the speaker that acts as an air pump, so there is no need for a noisy fan. This is an advantage if you want to record with a microphone in front of the speaker. The speaker is built to EBS specifications. The construction is traditional opposed to the long excursion cone of the original Drome. An important detail is the speaker impedance that is chosen for full output from the power amplifier without the need of an external speaker cabinet. The control panel is divided into three sections: input, filter and output. The input section has an instrument input and three controls: Gain, Character which is a preset filter/tube simulator and Compressor/Limiter, which adjusts the amount of compression. Filter bypass disconnects the filter section, for example useful if you want to compare with uncolored sound. Bass and Treble are ordinary shelving filters while the midrange is sweep able. The sweep itself is unusually wide, ranging from below the bass control all the way up to higher than the treble control. The midrange control also has a clever notch function that affects a very narrow frequency when the level control is turned all the way down, very useful. The Bright control affect frequencies above the treble control. In contrast to the other filters the bright control boost only, meaning that the bright frequencies are unaffected when the knob is turned all the way down and are boosted as the knob is turned clockwise. The volume knob controls the power amp and the unbalanced line output on the rear panel. The headphone jack

automatically shuts off the aforementioned functions when a plug is inserted. The rear panel has the power switch and a power cable input with integrated fuse holder. Apart from the unbalanced line output that can be used to connect extra amplifiers, there is also a balanced XLR output with switches for pre/post and ground lift. The effects loop is a traditional serial mono loop.

Drome vs. Drome Classic

So what is the difference between Drome and Drome Classic? The circuit board layout is similar, but apart from the aforementioned differences the Classic lacks the following: A monitor input with accompanying level control, a parallel loop function, two different

Bass Erase- functions to filter out the bass of the monitor input (if you want to practice to a CD), power feed to instruments or pedals from the instrument input or the loop, Tuner Out and finally a speaker simulator on the balanced XLR output. This is a lot of goodies, but on the other hand I am convinced that there are many buyers that can live without all these functions if they can save one third of the price. Drome Classic offers the choice.

In use

The low weight and the small format makes Drome Classic very interesting for the bassist that needs to move the rig often between rehearsals and gigs. The side handles make it easier to lift and carry compared to using just the top handle. A small combo can be hard to hear on a small stage, so the possibility to tilt the amp back is welcome. The rear panel can also be hard to see



on a dimly lit stage. The LED indicators by the switches for the XLR output are therefore a pleasant surprise. I would very much like to see the same type of switches for the Character- and Filter Bypass- functions. The basic sound is balanced and neutral. I think pressing the Character button is enough to be satisfied. This button adds a nice amount of organic warmth without losing presence by scooping out the midrange. The sound has indeed a more Classic quality compared to Drome that sounds more modern. The compressor is simple to use, it works as well with pick style playing as slapping or finger style on a fretless. The filter section makes any adjustment possible. My experience is that a lot of times it is just a question of needing a little more bottom end. This is not harder to accomplish than turning the bass control up a bit. If you want a rounder sound you just turn down the treble. The bright control perfect for opening up the sound or for achieving that soft hi-tech sharpness. For a good slap sound I recommend cutting the midrange around 1 kHz and raising the Bright control almost halfway. The notch function of the midrange control is a fantastic tool that lets you cut irritating frequencies. These can be rumbling bass frequencies or feedback in an acoustic or semi-acoustic instrument. When I turn the amp up to push the power amp I think that Drome Classic has more grit and starts to distort a little bit earlier than Drome that holds together a little bit better. I think Drome Classic

is an interesting alternative to Drome, and I am not surprised. EBS has an astonishing ability to put their ears to the ground and listen to what we bassists need and want. Drome Classic is no exception. When setting out to cut one third of the price I think that EBS has chosen the right way of cutting costs. All basic functions remain, as well as the most important extra functions.

Conclusion

Take the worlds best bass combo (in my book) and cut one third of the price on the areas where it is noticed the least, and while you are at it, give it a more classic sound and appearance -there you have the Drome Classic. It is small enough to take your amp and gig bag and go to the gig using public transportation. Plug in the power cable; connect your bass, press the Character button, raise the volume and you are ready to go. If it is a larger gig and you need a little PA support: Just connect using the XLR output, and in case of hum the solution is a switch at the back. If the venue has troublesome rumble you easily filter out the problems using the notch function of the midrange control. The filter section and the compressor makes it easy to turn in most of the classic bass sounds. When the gig is over you just unplug and carry out your rig through the dancing audience while the rest of the band has to wait two hours for the club to close. Now there is a Drome for the bassist that does not want to pay more than necessary.

Facts

EBS Drome Classic

Output power:	150w
Speakers:	12" + hi frequency horn
Connections:	Connections on the front for headphones and instrument Rear connections for external amp, loop in & out, XLR line out with ground lift and pre/post eq switch.
Dimensions:	430 x 500 x 300 mm
Weight:	18 Kg
Price:	7 995 SEK

