

Small Wonders

EBS MicroBass II

Bass Guitar - USA 2004

By Allan Shearer

Several issues ago, we reviewed the Tech 21 Sans Amp Bass Driver and the MXR M-80 Bass D.I. +, two rugged, reliable and great-sounding standalone preamp/D.I. boxes that feature gain and overdrive circuits with onboard tone-shaping controls. Now another respected maker-Sweden's fast-growing EBS-has joined the party, with their updated MicroBass II, a professional two-channel preamp and D.I. that features a mighty Drive circuit along with tube and amp simulation and an FX send/return in a solid, clean-sounding and versatile design.

Using the Link output, you can use the MicroBass II as a simple D.I. with flat frequency response, and you'll find the results clean, detailed and uncolored. But when you're ready to experiment, use the main output, and, beginning with Boost at minimum and Treble and Bass at 12 o'clock, drop in the Enhanced Filter button (which cuts mids when you boost the treble) or the Bright button, (which adds a 12dB boost at 10 kHz and may well add sparkle to your passive pickups) and enjoy Channel A's tight response and up to 30 dB of Boost.

Then engage Channel B, and jog the Drive from its subtle lower positions to its throaty and aggressive extremes. Need to enhance some of those high mids and treble frequencies for more presence? Dial the Edge control to suit your needs, and then control a wider band of midrange with the Middle knob. Better yet, activate the A+B button to engage both the clean and distortion channels, and don't be afraid to add some Boost



for rafter-shaking signal levels, or, at higher levels, drop in the Tube Simulation switch for a tubey soft clip limiting effect.

As an all-around go-to box in the studio, or as a state-of-the art D.I. and preamp for live gigs (with a speaker cab, you can even use the MicroBass's Speaker Sim to send the same sound image from the preamp as what you hear on stage) the MicroBass II is a heavyweight contender in a bantam-sized box. A small wonder, indeed.

