

EBS TD650

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EBS continues to put their money on building new bass amplifier heads. Last year's model HD350 now have a big brother. The new TD650 is a transistor amplifier spiced up with a tube in the driver stage of the preamp. As the name implies, it is rated at 650 W @ 2 Ohms.

The first impression is that of an open-sounding, clear, transparent sound quality. The basic sound is functional as is, but can also be a starting point for more experimentation. There is plenty of power. Full power is at 2 ohm, but you get plenty of punch with a four ohms speaker cab.

Next to the input jack is the character switch that gives TD650 a bigger sound by increasing the bass and treble, and a slight reduction of mids. The result is a more polished sound that retains focus, great for slap. I think that the character sound works best with a slight increase between mids and treble. This is in order to get a more cutting sound.

I like the fact that the small pushbutton switches have LED indicators; tiny switches can be frustrating on a dimly lit stage. The gain control knob adjusts the input level for any type of bass. The LED indicator next to it should light up with strong attack. My active Music Man bass needed the gain set at nine o'clock. Passive basses with low output may need a gain setting above half the way.

Excellent filters

In my review of the EBS Fafner three years ago, I praised the excellent treble filters. TD650 has the same control layout. Using the treble knob to adjust presence and the bright control for sparkle, you are in almost total control. Most amps can



only adjust the amount of treble, but here both controls can interact to really change the character of the treble sound. With a pick, you can get anything from aggressive bone-crushing sounds to polished high-tech.

Boosting the bass filter provides a focused low end that never becomes muddy, despite the thick sound. The sweepable mid filter can increase or decrease every register from low bass to treble. This means that it can be used as third treble control or a second bass control. With the level control set at the lowest point, it acts as a notch filter removing a very narrow frequency. This is particularly good for feedback problems or unwanted resonance. In other words, almost anything is possible with the mid frequency control. The whole filter section can be disengaged with a bypass function although the character filter is not affected.

The compressor is standard equipment on EBS amps. In my opinion, compression should be used with care, not to lose the dynamics of your playing, but this one is so good that I used a small amount of compression almost all the time. Even with lots of compression, it works smoothly. A blue

LED shows when the compressor is active. Tubearmed drive control Finally the coolest feature, the tube drive control. It works wonders with sounds that need a little something. For example, slap sounds get meatier and less sterile with a tiny amount of almost inaudible distortion. Distorted rock sounds are no problem either; you can get all variations, like high gain distortion when the reaches five o'clock. The tube simulation circuitry handles the distortion in normal mode, but the Tube switch kicks in the tube for a warmer, more realistic tube sound. Frequencies below 350 Hz remains clean to maintain low-end punch. The distortion characteristics can be expanded with the Boost drive function that sends the full signal to the distortion circuitry. If you want to sound like Geezer Butler or Jack Bruce, just press both buttons to get a growling sound like an old tube amplifier. I am something of a distortion fanatic myself, and have never tried an amp with so many variations. Some real tube amps might sound better for one particular sound, but with this amp, you get additional variations.

The front panel offers one XLR line out together with buttons for ground lift and pre/post equali-

zation, which takes the signal directly after the gain control or after the tone controls and the effects loop. Another switch enables the speaker simulation for cabinet sounds without any "miking hassles".

On the rear panel, there are Speakon outputs for the speakers. The jacks are tuner out, a line out as well as an input if you want to use EBS TD650 as a power amp. The effects loop has two returns, one for a serial loop - which lets all signal pass through the effect, and one for parallel loop. The latter splits the signal and part of the effect remains unaffected - very useful if the effect makes the sound thin. The loop returns can also power a 9V effects pedal with a stereo cable, a button activates the function. This way you do not have to bother with external power or a battery for your pedal. Another button activates the same kind of power supply for your bass via through the input jack.

The chassis is made of sturdy metal with front panel vents where the cooling fan disposes of hot air. You can reach the tube under the top plate. The owner's manual is educational and informative. It gives some sound examples, that

SPECIFICATIONS - EBS TD650

TYPE:	Tube equipped transistor amp
OUTPUT POWER:	650 W@ 2 ohm, 460 W @ 4 ohm
TUBE:	ECC83 (12 AX7)
EFFECTS LOOP:	Serial or parallel
EFFECTS:	Compressor and distortion
IN/OUTPUTS:	Instrument in, effect pedal send, serial & parallel return (with phantom power), power amp in, balanced XLR, effects pedal send, tuner, preamp out, 2 speaker outs (Speakon).
DIMENSIONS:	480 x 360 x 130 mm - 3 rack units
WEIGHT:	12 Kg
Price:	

work well, but more diverse sounds could have been included. A footswitch for the effects loop and the filter bypass would have been nice, but apart from that, I do not miss a single function.

EBS large 4x12"-speaker cab

I evaluated the amp with EBS' large 4x12 speaker cabinet. It is as big as the refrigerator-size 8x10 speakers are. Despite the size and weight, it is quite easy to move thanks to wheels at the back and large handles at the sides. The sound is also big; I like the 4x12" configuration, which is a good compromise between the sometimes hard midrange and lacking low-end of 10" drivers, and the muddier response of 15"-speakers. Here the sound is powerful, well balanced with plenty of low-end punch - adding extra sub bass is no problem. The output is more than enough and yet the power amp does not reach full power with a 4-ohm speaker. The low frequency 12" drivers have extended stroke length and rubber cone edges. This type of woofer lacks treble so help is needed in the higher registers. The treble unit is heavy duty with a 2-inch coil. It sounds very natural, not at all harsh but at the same time not too clean. In combination with the bright control, it is easy to dial in a cutting treble sound. The 4x12" configuration have a punchy rock sound

but can be used for any playing style. The review was done with a custom built Jazz-bass and a 5-string Music Man. Speakers were, Apart from the EBS-4x12", an old 4x12" cab and an EV 15"-cab.

Conclusion

Yet again, EBS has managed to create a professional amplifier with an amazing sound and well-planned functions - it is great that we have a first-class manufacturer here in Sweden. So far, this model is the most powerful and complete amplifier in their range - which also makes it the most expensive. Nevertheless, you get a lot of sound, power, and functions for the money. EBS TD 650 is a great amp for anyone who needs a clear and transparent sound. You can also get many kinds of dirty cutting sounds with the drive control, which provides many kinds of distortion. The efficient tone controls are hard to beat; the slightest turn of a knob gives you a different characteristic. Especially The treble controls are extraordinary. The 4x12" speaker cab has loads of punch and it would be fun to try the amp with two of them to really feel the pants flapping.

SPECIFICATIONS - EBS 412 EVOLUTION PROLINE 2000 SPEAKER CAB

TYPE:	Bass reflex
SPEAKERS:	4x 12" + 1x 2" titanium treble horn with gain control
SPEAKER IMPEDANCE:	4 ohm
MAX POWER:	800 W RMS
DIMENSIONS:	580 x 1240 x 440 mm (W x H x D)
Weight:	61 Kg
Price:	

