

EBS TD650

- Moving Some Serious Air...

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Swedish bass specialists have gained serious clout with their á la carte bass tone products - ranging from bass amps, cabinets and specialized effect pedals. Now they have added some serious bone shaking, belly-rumbling gear to their line-up.

EBS TD650

The EBS TD650 offers a whopping 530 Watts (650 W peak) of output muscle delivered in the company's already famous concise yet understated manner. The serious amount of wattage is mirrored in the unit's size. The very sturdy folded steel chassis is rack-mountable and takes up three 19" rack units. A large ventilator works hard to push all heat out through the ventilation slits at the front and back.

The TD650's front panel has a clean, clear and business-like look, yet offers a wide scope for adjustment. Next to the input jack the Character switch lets you decide whether you want to use the linear bass signal or apply a "V"-type EQ pre-shape from the word go. The preamp section is designed to handle anything from low output passive instruments all the way to high-powered active basses, with an LED giving you a good idea of where to set the Gain pot. Next up is an automatic compressor/limiter section, sporting a single amount control and an LED.

The 3-band EQ section, which can also be bypassed, offers a parametric mid band (ranging from 50 Hz to 3 kHz) with a notch filter function (to eliminate howling). An additional Bright filter allows you to add sparkle and presence that will make even the deadest of cabinets sizzle.



For friends of the dirtier and greasier bass tones EBS has been so kind as to include an additional Drive stage. Two switches allow for the selection of Tube Mode and additional Boost, respectively. Bemusingly the control pot of the drive section goes from 0 to 11 (as does the Master Volume).

A balanced DI output, sporting switches for Post EQ, Speaker Simulation and Ground Lift, as well as the Standby and Power switches round out the picture on the front panel.

On the back the EBS TD650 offers an equally professional picture. Two rows of jacks allow for the connection of outboard effects, a tuner, a line output signal or the hook-up of other signals directly to the amp. You can switch between the parallel and serial effects return jacks. A second switch enables the user to supply EBS effect pedals with EBS' own phantom power.

Two Speakon connectors help you be absolutely sure that it really was a speaker cable (and not an instrument lead) you connected to the output a while ago.

EBS 212 Evolution Pro Line 2000

To go along with an amp of this class you naturally need a cabinet that can withstand such punishment. EBS has supplied us with a cabinet from their Evolution Pro Line 2000 series - the 212.

The Evolution Pro Line 2000 212 is meant to stomach up to 400 W without damage and actually features a 2" titanium tweeter in addition to the pair of 12" speakers. A level control on the cabinet's back lets you set the tweeter's level to your requirements - from "off" to + 3dB boost. The front-ported cabinet is put together from 13-ply Finnish birch and coated in a carpet-like felt material that EBS claim is resistant to most gigging musician's environmental hazards - cigarettes, wine and beer - as well as the usual tear and wear of schlepping stuff around. Two sturdy metal side handles give you a good grip on the 212, even though it really is a serious piece of furniture. A hand-woven (!) metal grille protects the speakers adequately and rounds out the classy picture.

How it Sounds

The EBS TD650 head offers a wide scope of all-out pro tones and sensible, no-nonsense features. Take the Character switch, for example, that gives you the instant "loudness"-type tone that many slappers crave - pushing both the bass and the treble. The compressor works very discretely and doesn't audibly color your tone; its role is more a protective one, to smooth over peaks and transients that might overload other pre-amp stages later down the signal chain, rather than audibly squash and thicken the tone.

The EQ works terrific; the option to use the mid filter in notch filter mode is so brilliant, you wonder why it isn't featured regularly on other amplifiers, and will come in dead handy if you're using semi-acoustic bass guitars on-stage in a large set-up. The Bright filter has enough presence boost to make your glasses shatter. Really dull cabinets will no doubt benefit from the Bright function, but used in conjunction with tweeter-equipped modern cabinets such as the Pro Line 2000 series it only adds oozes of unwanted hiss.

EBS TD650 Tube Definition Bass Head

- 530 W (650 W peak) output
- Built-in compressor
- 3-band EQ with parametric mids (50 Hz - 3 kHz)
- Active Bright control
- Built-in overdrive section - switchable Transistor/Tube modes, additional Boost switch
- Pre-shape Character switch
- Balanced XLR DI output - switches for Ground Lift, Speaker Simulation, Post EQ Output
- 3 RU height
- EBS Phantom Power (9V) for direct supply to EBS floor effects
- Effect loop with separate parallel and serial return jacks
- Connectors for Instrument (1/4" jack, front), DI Output (XLR), Effects Loop Send (1/4" jack) and Returns (2 x 1/4" jack), Tuner Out,
- Line Out, Amp Input (all 1/4" jack), Speaker Out (2 x Speakon), Mains (IEC with fuse holder)

The Drive section is the place where the real fun can be had. The settings of the Drive control greatly affect the color of the tone. At "0" in Transistor mode the tones are the cleanest and clearest. Turning the control up towards "12 o'clock" adds more volume, a slight bit of compression and a distinctive amount of saturated coloration - you add juice and beef to your bass tone. From about "11 o'clock" onwards (depending on the instrument you use) Drive starts to add clearly audible grainy-ness to proceedings, until it really overdrives and distorts. Tube mode isn't drastically different in its delivery; it simply has a slightly looser basic tone (especially in the lower mid register). Boost Drive does what it says on the tin - it applies a level booster before the drive section upping the gain/overdrive structure.

The balanced DI output works fine, even if I couldn't make out much of an effect in using the Speaker Simulation.

One thing I would like to see added to the already tasteful menu, that is the TD650, would be foot-switch-controllability for some of the functions, namely Character, Filter Bypass, Tube Mode and

Drive Boost. If one were able to use a footswitch to toggle these functions on and off, it would enhance the on-stage usefulness of this great amp head even further.

The EBS Pro Line 2000 212 cabinet fits the TD650 head like a glove. It is beautiful to look at, build for the road and has a modern and open tonal characteristic. I found that in conjunction with the TD650 I could easily get great, dynamic bass tones. In this set-up I found I could get enough top end even with the tweeter turned off. For more refined, Hi-Fi tones the tweeter still comes in handy and offers more than enough scope for tonal adjustment. Build-wise the 212 is solid like a rock - the cabinet was about the only thing not rattling when I test drove this combination.

Summary

What can I say? Again the Swedish bass buffs from EBS have fulfilled their aim to produce top-class bass amplification. The TD650 is a very serious tool for the bassist who demands serious volume and tonal flexibility. The Pro Line 2000 212 cabinet is a cabinet for all playing styles with excellent power handling, an open and dynamic sound and a classy styling built to last the whole distance.

EBS Evolution Pro Line 2000 212 cabinet

- Takes up to 400 W (800 W peak) at 4 Ohms
- Two 12" speakers plus one 2" tweeter (with separate Level control)
- Felt-/Carpet-type covered 13-ply Finnish birch cabinet
- Plastic corner protectors
- Metal front grille (hand woven)
- Speakon connectors for Link and Input

