

EBS MicroBass II

Published in Bass Player, Oct 2004

It's a preamp! It's an A/B box! It's a DI! It's an overdrive! It's a headphone amp! It's two pounds! It's Superswede! EBS's latest pedal offering, the MicroBass II is one of the most feature-packed stomp-boxes around.

Designed to be an essential asset to any gigger's bag, it packs a host of useful features in a diminutive box that feels rugged enough for yet another use—as a defensive weapon. Don't be confused by the two-channel appearance: The MicroBass is essentially a single-channel preamp with two inputs that allow for either dual-instrument (or dual-pickup) operation or single-instrument operation with overdrive. A is the primary input, while B adds a solid-state overdrive effect with a tube-emulation circuit. The two preamp sections are wired in series, so the A+B button sends each input through both sections. The MicroBass also includes an effect loop with FX MIX CONTROL, a BALANCED OUTPUT with ground lift and speaker simulation, a versatile EQ, a 1/8" headphone jack, and both direct and affected 1/4" outputs. The MicroBass can be powered several ways: 9-volt battery, an optional AC adapter, or with phantom power from certain EBS amps or from a mixing board.

I plugged both a keyboard and a Fender Precision into the MicroBass on a funk gig. The handy-dandy box allowed me to mix the output levels of each instrument efficiently and send both to my bass rig simultaneously. Since the B section is designed for overdrive, it's grittier than A, even with the drive knob turned down. Nevertheless, it's possible to coax similar tones out of each input



section. I liked the bright, different-colored LEDs indicating which input was in use, but I wish they both stayed in A+B mode, rather than both going dark. The MUTE switch (with accompanying signal LED) is an excellent feature. I was pleased with the MicroBass's tone throughout the gig; the EQ allowed me to dial in a good tone with each input.

The MicroBass II is an incredibly capable little box that would be an undoubtedly groovy addition to any outboard setup. Its price seems high, but then again, there aren't many products like the MicroBass. Every bassist, including doublers of any type, upright and Stick players with two pickups, and teachers and their students could all benefit from the its multi-faceted personality.