

# ASHDOWN ENGINEERING

## Klystron 1000 Head

### Neo 410h 4x10

### Neo 115h 1x15

BY BRIAN FOX



#### KLYSTRON 1000

List \$2,999

Street \$2,400

**Pros** Loud; cool effects

**Cons** Bulky; expensive

**Bottom Line** A powerful head with versatile EQ and groovy onboard effects.

#### NEO 410H & NEO 115H

List Neo 410h, \$2,269; Neo 115h, \$1,899

Street Neo 410h, \$1,900; Neo 115h, \$1,500

**Pros** Supreme low end; high power handling

**Cons** Bulky; expensive

**Bottom line** Neo-equipped bruisers with serious low end.

#### CONTACT

[www.ashdownmusic.com](http://www.ashdownmusic.com)

#### FRONTING ASHDOWN'S NEW BRITISH-BUILT

Classic series, the Klystron 1000 is a powerful head derived from the company's ABM amps, known for their front-panel VU meters, unique graphic EQ, and onboard distortion and sub-octave effects. The Klystron arrived for testing with 4x10 and 1x15 cabinets.

The Klystron 1000's metal grille and hefty plywood case give it serious stage presence, and the matching cabinets combine to create

one badass bass monolith. Inside its sturdy steel chassis, the Klystron is pretty austere—a few slabs of circuitry, a lone tube, and a power supply with a titanic toroidal transformer. I was disappointed the Klystron had no crossover and gave no option to bridge its two power amps. Still, with 575 watts per side, the dual-mono hybrid can get scary-loud, shaking windows and doors with headroom to spare.

Ashdown's Classic and ABM EVO II series amps feature a unique 7-band EQ where four sliders sit among the BASS, MID, and HI knobs, controlling the in-between frequencies. I found it an elegant treatment for EQ, allowing quick down-and-dirty knob settings with the option for slider-tweaking if I wanted further frequency control. Though the amp's versatile EQ could formulate a vicious midrange bark, the head and cabinets seemed to sound best with boosted bass frequencies and a touch of high-end. The preamp's default SHAPE setting made getting a smooth, scooped sound a cinch.

The Klystron houses three onboard effects: distortion, compression, and sub-octave. Engaging the VALVE DRIVE circuit (with its 12AX7 tube) adds a bit of grit, and twisting the VALVE DRIVE knob brings out a range of aggravated tones, from somewhat crabby to downright cantankerous. Even at mild settings, the dual-band compressor—so called

because it acts independently on low and high frequencies—has a fairly pronounced tonal effect. It isn't subtle, but its commanding character made me sound pretty tough, and soon I was playing with an effect I wouldn't normally employ. The Klystron's SUB-HARMONICS octave effect is even cooler; it tracked well across my 4-string's entire range and added serious low end to the mix. All three effects—along with the preamp's pre-shape circuit—could be triggered using the Klystron's 4-button footswitch, included.

#### CAB FARE

The front-ported Neo 410h and Neo 115h are two of seven cabinets in the Classic series, which also includes 2x10, 8x10, and 4x8 models. (Ashdown also offers Klystron 1x15, 2x10, and 4x10 combos.) The cabs house Ashdown's new custom neodymium speakers, which feature small holes on the diaphragm base and voice coil to reduce compression, and have ultra-thin brackets on their cast-aluminum frames to minimize sound-wave reflection inside the cabinet. Predictably, the 1x15

#### TECH SPECS

##### KLYSTRON 1000

**Power rating** 575 watts RMS per side

**Input impedance** 3.9M $\Omega$ /10k $\Omega$

**Tone controls** GRAPHIC EQ:  $\pm$ 20dB @ 60Hz (BASS, shelving),  $\pm$ 15dB @ 180Hz & 340Hz;  $\pm$ 20dB @ 660Hz (MIDDLE),  $\pm$ 15dB @ 1.3kHz & 2.6kHz,  $\pm$ 20dB @ 5kHz (TREBLE, shelving)

**Effects** VALVE DRIVE, COMPRESSION, SUB-HARMONICS; each with on/off switch and level control

**SHAPE setting** +8dB @ 50Hz, -8dB @ 400Hz, +8dB @ 4kHz

**Power amp topology** Class AB

**Weight** 45 lbs

##### NEO 410H

**Type** 4x10 + horn, front-ported

**Power handling** 1,050 watts RMS

**Impedance** 8 $\Omega$

**Sensitivity** 95.5dB @ (1W/1M)

**Speakers** 10" Neodymium custom Jensen

**Weight** 76.5 lbs

##### NEO 115H

**Type** 1x15 + horn, front-ported

**Power handling** 1,050 watts RMS

**Impedance** 8 $\Omega$

**Sensitivity** 99.1dB SLP @ 1W/1M

**Speakers** 15" neodymium custom Jensen

**Weight** 70 lbs

Made in United Kingdom

Warranty One year limited

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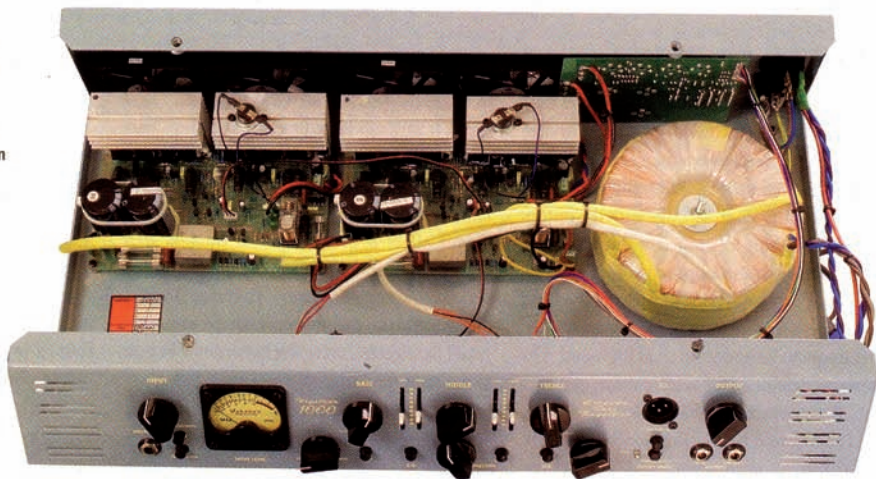
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A peek inside reveals the Klystron's four cooling fans, visible at the top of the chassis. Why such a posse? Turns out the additional fans make for quieter operation, since they can run slower than solo fans.



At press time, Ashdown announced that it is starting U.S. production of its Classic line and Superfly cabinets. Ashdown expects prices to decrease by 25 percent.

sounded looser and tubbier than the 4x10, which had a more focused low end. Neither sounded flabby, and each could handle the Klystron's considerable power, reaching gig-level volume without straining. The horns in both cabinets—controlled by a 3-position crossover switch—effectively emphasized highs without adding excessive noise. While the 1x15 and 4x10 cabinets contain lightweight neodymium drivers, the cabinets are beastly to heave. (For those wary of a 70-pound 1x15,

Ashdown also offers a Neo Mini 1x15 cabinet with smaller dimensions.)

#### BRAND NEW HEAVIES

The Klystron and Classic-series cabs look and sound massive, and the Klystron's copious power and cool effects are spot-on. But the rig's high price (no thanks to the ailing American greenback), limited connectivity, and sheer bulk make it a harder sell.