

ASHDOWN FIVE15 BASS AMPLIFIER

BY BENN GRIMM



Founded in 1997 Ashdown Engineering is a British manufacturer who are recognised as offering solid, good-sounding, and affordable bass amplifiers. Named in memory of the late, great John Entwistle, the Ashdown Five Fifteen bass practice amp combines a 100 watt power head with a single 15" Ashdown BlueLine bass speaker. It is a no frills bass amp that could easily accommodate small gigs, rehearsals and those moments during practice when the neighbours are away and you want to 'feel' the bass.

IT'S SIMPLE

The key to this amp is its simplicity. It has enough features to make it viable, and is of good enough quality to interest those looking for a versatile practice amp that can accommodate some gigs.

It has simple top mounted bass, mid and treble controls with input gain and output level, a pre-shaped 'deep' switch for extending the bass, a headphone output for private practice, an extension speaker output with a minimum impedance of 8ohms and a CD line-in which makes it easy to practice jamming along with your favorite songs. Construction wise it has a carpet covering and metal speaker grille with a handle at the top for transportation.

It is a relatively heavy and solid little monster (which is typical of most bass amplifiers) but is easily portable and could fit into even the most cluttered of musicians rooms. The one little design flaw that I found somewhat annoying was the on/off switch is positioned halfway down the back of the amp next to where the power lead goes in. This would make things a little frustrating if it was against a wall or under a table to turn it on or off.

IT'S BASICALLY ALL THERE

As a basic amp it is obviously not designed to take out any awards for amplification features but it does perform admirably. The 15" speaker provides a clean round tone and responds better than I thought to treble voicing. It has a nice warm tone and offers sufficient response and tonal variety to make it diverse enough for different playing styles, although depending on the bass guitar you have, I would say it is primarily best suited to produce a rock or blues tone. The 'bass boost' switch doesn't rearrange your sound too much and provides just a touch of extra low end.

Always a good sign, I really didn't need to move the E.Q levels too much past their halfway setting

to get some nice tones. Although because of the nature of the 15" speaker I did have to boost the treble to bring in some highs but I didn't feel the need to crank it up to all the way. Because the speaker accentuates the lower tones I found it better to back the bass off a little when looking for a more cutting or attacking tone.

THE LOW DOWN.

At \$500 RRP, I would say if you are looking for a simple no fuss amp that looks good, is constructed well, has a nice deep clean sound with a long warm sustain, a nice punch and some volume then you don't need to shop around a great deal because this is the amp for you.

SPECS

- 100 Watts of power
- High-performance 15 inch speaker
- Treble, middle and bass tone controls
- Deep switch for extended bass
- Headphone socket for silent practice
- CD Input for playing with backing tracks
- Line output for recording
- Extension speaker output for performing in larger venues
- Carpet covering and kick-proof grilles

RRP \$499.99

Distribution: Music Link

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