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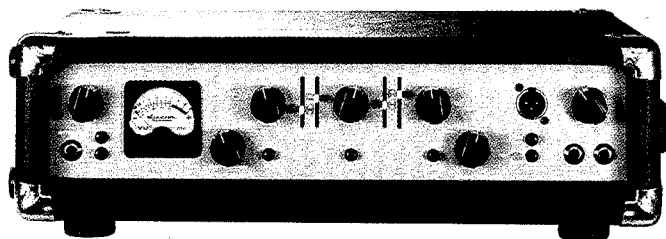
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## Ashdown ABM EVO II 500

by Chuck Dailey

■ This is an awesome amp! Taking it on tour with The Salads, I quickly learned that this amp can rock any size club. It is a beautiful looking, and sounding, amp when indoors. Every single sound guy in clubs from Vancouver to Toronto has been ecstatic about the cleanliness and power they receive from the amp's Direct Out. It made me proud to be using it until I got into outdoor festival and stadium settings. I had to play it on full and was still bending over to hear it. Outdoors is truly a different world when playing through amplifiers. Lots of power is necessary and unfortunately this incredible sounding amp I have been having so much fun with in rock clubs hasn't been cutting it outside. Thankfully, Ashdown makes a head twice as powerful and hopefully I can get my hands on one when I get home from this rock and roll adventure.



My first impression of the head when opening the box was true excitement – the amp is gorgeous! Probably one of the best-designed amps I have ever laid my eyes on. A lot of care has been put into the esthetics of this beauty. It is so retro. It has the look of an American car from the '50s (although built in the UK). It appears to be road ready in its "road case," minus a lid. Travelling across the country can be very tough on gear, especially at outdoor festivals, as we have been doing. When getting ready for this tour I decided I should throw it in a proper case so that the knobs wouldn't get crushed and the amp itself wouldn't get full of dirt, dust, and possibly rain. This was a frustrating, difficult task. I pulled the amp out of its casing (which would have got torn and battered if I took it as is) and noticed that the amp couldn't be racked. I found out online that you can get a chassis for the EVO-500, which I didn't have time to order, but you can't rackmount the EVO-900, which is the actual festival power I need. I was surprised to find that it can't be kept safe on the road without travelling with it in a separate case and pulling it out each day. Kind of disappointing, but after four hours I had the whole thing in a road case surrounded with padding to keep it safe from any unfortunate spills and to help maintain its sexiness!

I have blown up a lot of speakers with various bass amps while playing in The Salads. Taking this Ashdown amp on tour is saving my speakers, but hurting my sound some of the time. It is an incredibly clean sounding amp if you want it to be and can grunge out with the valve drive if need be. It's just amazing in clubs, both big and small. I play my Musicman Stingray5 through it and it sounds full. Equalizing is so precise that you can move just about any knob just a little bit and the sound is totally different. So you have millions of

ways to define your sound. It is a Solid State amp with a tube in the preamp. The tube really gives the vintage sound to the whole amp. I leave the settings at mid-point and it sounds great. I've used SWR, Eden, GK, Hartke and Ampeg, setups and this is the closest to an Ampeg without the weight and it has more clarity. This could be due the double cooling fans in the back, which are incredibly quiet. I believe they operate at a slower speed than traditional amps to help reduce noise. The EVO-500 and 900 come with sub-out (for an external powered low frequency cab), tuner out, pre and post EQ DI out, sub harmonizer, on the front panel and an effects loop on the back. It also has a mute button and footswitch capability for every option of the amp. Pretty freaking cool! For the outdoor festivals it has become obvious that I need a more powerful amp than this 500. The 900 would at least give me some headroom. Throughout The Salads Warped tour dates and at EdFest in Edmonton I had to turn the amp's input and output levels up to full and still needed more sound. I had my sidewash and my monitors cranked to help compensate. When I tried to boost the volume with the EQ and Valve drive, my Ampeg 6 x 10 cabinet, to my surprise, started buzzing. I've never had this problem with the cabinet, and with more powerful heads. The same thing happened at Warped through an 8 x 10 Mark Bass cabinet. The only solution was to turn off all the EQ options of the amp and just run it completely flat leaving zero headroom. I bet this could all be solved pretty quickly with a rack-mountable version of the EVOII-900. I doubt I would ever have to fight with that much power.

I am back to playing clubs starting today and for the remainder of this tour and thankfully get to enjoy this awesome amp properly. At least until the first week of August when we head back out for the final Warped dates. By then I will hopefully be able to switch this 500 up to the 900 and enjoy the incredible sound of this head with some more space to play. The last thing you want to be doing in front of 5,000-10,000 fans is sitting still in front of your cabinet to hear yourself. I love this amp a lot and feel really cool with it glowing behind me on jumbo-trons but could simply use some more volume!

The manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$1,299.99.

For more product information, contact: Power Group Ltd., 7105-A Edwards Blvd., Mississauga, ON L5S 1Z2 (905) 405-1229, FAX (905) 405-1885, sales@power-music.com, www.power-music.com.

*Chuck Dailey is bassist for The Salads.*

### Distributor's Comments

Chuck is 100 per cent correct. The ABM 500 II is made for clubs, both big and small alike. The ABM 900 EVO II is a 575 + 575 watt twin channel amplifier and is built to have enough power for any venue, including clubs, arenas, festivals and stadiums! Under the circumstances, he would have been better suited with the ABM900 for his current tour.

Jeremy Berger  
Power Group