

GROUP TEST 6 bass practice amps

■ Ashdown ■ Fender ■ Laney ■ TGI ■ Vox ■ Watson



OF ALL THE COMBOS TO be seen here, the After Eight is the only one that actually looks like a bass unit and on this aspect alone, you'd expect it to outperform the rest. It's all in the cabinet depth, and the corresponding proportions give it a cube-like presentation. The extra cubic capacity of the speaker enclosure is an important feature that adds loads of substance to the bass sound, in spite of the 8-inch speaker from which it derives its name.

Covered in black carpet fabric with an expanded metal front grille and no porting, the After Eight is man enough to handle this tough job. Input and output volume controls help

■ **FOR** Rough and tough enough to handle practice excesses

■ **AGAINST** Auxiliary input would be a nice addition

■ **Performance:** 9

■ **Value:** 9

bass combos, you would think that the additional deep switch would be better off labelled as 'auto destruct', but you'd be very wrong. The After Eight accepts this command too, and delivers the goods while maintaining more than a decent level of clean volume.

Overall performance is certainly impressive, but in a way, no more than you'd expect from a

maximise the clean sound potential and the standard three tone controls provide plenty of sound shaping, but there's more... Knowing that low frequencies are the Achilles heel of all mini

company that began life making only bass amplification. It's also the only one here without any auxiliary input, and this point indicates that the manufacturers are confident that this unit is actually more than just a personal practice combo. **WG**

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AT A GLANCE

Ashdown After Eight

- **Origin:** China
- **Price:** £99
- **Type:** Bass practice combo
- **Power:** 15 watts
- **Controls:** Gain, bass, middle, treble, output level and deep switch
- **Speakers:** 1x8" driver
- **Sockets:** Input, headphones, extension speaker out
- **Contact:** Ashdown Engineering 01376 572872
- **Web:** www.ashdownmusic.co.uk



WhatGuitar? SAYS...

"Mini bass amplification without compromise"

WhatGuitar? Verdict

■ **SPEAKER SIZE** is always important for bass amplification, with a bigger diameter providing better bass response, yet these units prove that a mere 8-inch diameter is sufficient for this particular job. An extra pat on the back then for the **TGI** that does the same job with just a 6-inch driver. A portable size combined with a valid sound potential is a balancing act that rarely has a perfect answer, but with such a great variety to choose from, there's bound to be something that suits your personal taste somewhat better than others.

The **FENDER** and **VOX** stay well true to their respective designs and sounds and, as such, have a certain appeal that the others lack. For portability alone, the **TGI** and **WATSON** combos both offer a good deal and are very competitively priced. At the other extreme, the **ASHDOWN** is the heaviest combo here, closely followed by the Laney, and that obviously plays a part in their abilities. These are also the loudest combos here and with a slightly higher clean-sound potential than the rest. The **ASHDOWN** is also the dearest (along with the **VOX**), so in



a way you get what you pay for, but then the **LANEY** stands out as excellent value for money. It is a bit raw in sound quality compared to the **ASHDOWN**, but at nearly £20 cheaper, looks like a bargain.

Unlike your main backline, which tends to change with the type of band you play in and/or the size of venues you frequent, a practice bass combo can be a friend for life. So it makes sense to buy the best that you can afford. It doesn't need to have any wow factor, but it does need to be practical and well built. Headphone sockets are always a plus factor and the advantage of having

both gain and master volume controls is well demonstrated here. **WG**

