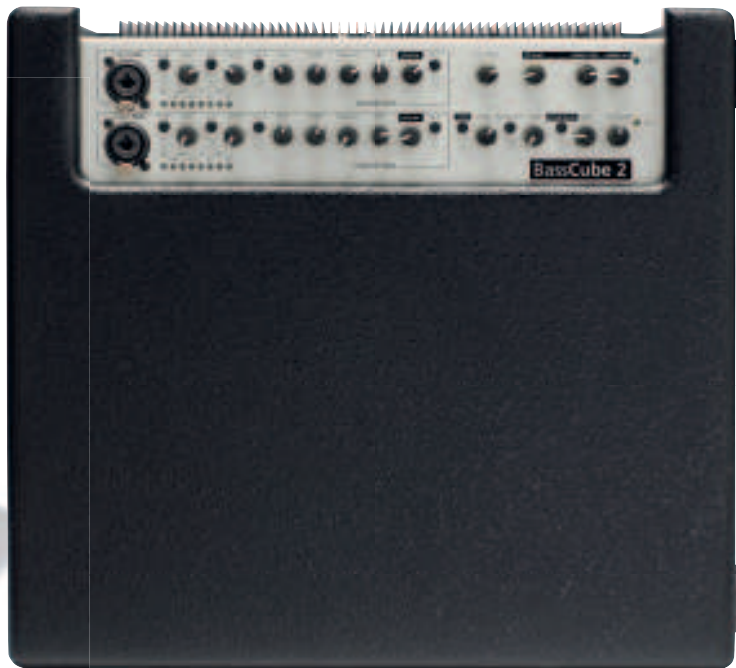


AER BASSCUBE 2 COMBO £2,199

BASS



# AER BassCube 2 combo £2,199

**AER BASSCUBE 2 COMBO**

**PRICE:** £2,199  
**ORIGIN:** Germany  
**TYPE:** Solid-state bass combo  
**OUTPUT:** 500 watts RMS @ 8 ohms  
**DIMENSIONS:** 400 (w) x 364 (d) x 400mm (h)  
**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 20/44  
**CHANNELS:** Two identical channels  
**CONTROLS:** Input, mode switch, gain, pad switch, contour, colour switch, bass, middle, frequency, treble, volume, mute switch for each channel plus aux return, HF level, master solo, master ens, power LED, notch switch, frequency, bandwidth switch, level, compressor switch, ratio control, threshold rotary  
**ADDITIONAL FEATURES:** Independent and shared DI outputs, line out, tuner out, 'phone out, nine-volt phantom power for basses, 48-volt phantom source for microphone, active subwoofer out and footswitch connection  
**SPEAKERS:** 12-inch Ciare Coaxial with one-inch compression driver  
**Westside Distribution**  
**0141 248 4812**  
**www.westside-distribution.com**

**The rivals**

|                               |        |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Euphonic Audio iAmp 800 combo | £1,795 |
| Acoustic Image Contra combo   | £979   |
| Gallien Krueger MB150E        | £790   |

The iAmp is a very comprehensive combo with similar spec into a 1 x 12 co-axial cab. The Contra offers 300 watts through a 10-inch woofer. The MB150E delivers just 150 watts but has stereo chorus.

AER has come up with a new BassCube that's everything a sequel should be by Roger Newell

With the current upsurge in interest for the acoustic-styled bass guitars, and electric uprights showing no signs of slowing down, it's only natural to find more purposefully designed amplification coming on to the market. While there are a number of quality units available, the BassCube 2 offers a higher spec – and a proportionally higher price – aimed at professional players.

Finished in black spatter, the tough birch plywood cabinet is nice and compact with inset side handles and an agreeable weight. The front grille is covered with a plastic foam insert, which carries the AER logo: it looks more PA speaker than conventional bass amp. Behind the foam sits a 12-inch Ciare Coaxial speaker that features a one-inch compression driver, ideally suited to handle the extremes exerted by bass frequencies.

With two well-equipped and identical channels the control panel seems busy, albeit laid out logically with clear labelling to make navigation straightforward. You start by choosing from a range of input options using the mode switch. Each has an assigned LED so you can see immediately which is selected. The range of choices also reveals just how adaptable this unit is, and these run clip, mute, piezo, line, 9V, mic, 48V, E/P (which stands for electret-microphone/piezo pickup). Alongside these controls are a number of extra rotary controls and switches (see spec check) shared by both channels including a notch filter and comprehensive compressor controls.

The rear panel hosts a plethora of phono connectors for aux in and out, headphones and tuner, plus independent channel DI outputs with pre/post-EQ options and level controls.

| AER BASSCUBE 2 COMBO TEST RESULTS  |       |
|--|-------|
| Build quality  | ★★★★★ |
| Features   | ★★★★★ |
| Sound  | ★★★★★ |
| Value for money  | ★★★★★ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WE LIKED</b> Easy to handle; big sound from a compact design</li> <li><b>WE DISLIKED</b> Push on/push off switches can become noisy; a pro's only price</li> </ul> |       |

There's a third DI that handles both channels at once with its own level control. Speakon-style connectors are provided for the mains lead as well as for the two input sockets that include jack plug locks for the ultimate in security. This baby is definitely built to handle all eventualities.

**SOUNDS:** There's something about this that immediately fills you with confidence – but then at this price we'd expect nothing less. Using a standard jack lead is fine but you need a stereo cable if you wish to take advantage of the phantom power facility. To prevent accidental activation of this feature you have to set the mode switch to line then press down for three seconds. Use the same method if using the mic facility. So, the BassCube could be used with a couple of basses, or a bass and a mic, or a guitar, depending on your personal needs. This will also handle a regular bass guitar with a magnetic pickup with ease but where it really excels is with acoustic-styled bass guitar or electric upright. Here the piezo setting enhances the natural sounds from the instrument and fills it with life and vitality and a tonal range that will delight the ears of any player: think ultra clean with solid depth of performance.

Armed with so much variation it is essential to familiarise yourself with

this input mode facility as incorrect setting will not produce the sound qualities for which AER is so well renowned. The pad switch helps stop active basses from overloading the preamp, then with contour and colour options, plus a healthy EQ complement (that includes a sweepable mid frequency range) there are sounds here for everyone. Further enhancements come with the non-channel specific controls that adjust the tweeter level, the frequency for the mid controls, effects saturation and the highly effective compressor. There's a lot to consider here, so knowing the amp inside out, and of course having a good idea of the sound you want, is essential.

**Verdict**

To say that the BassCube 2 is versatile is vastly underselling the potential of this creatively designed combo. Small yet purposeful, it's part of the new generation of bass amplification designed primarily with acoustic upright basses and bass guitars in mind, although it can handle pretty much whatever you throw at it. And once again the compact nature of this unit belies the power and performance qualities that it can deliver with ease.

The price is obviously significant but for gigging, recording and rehearsal use this is a very professional package that offers reliability with a huge range of options. For the acoustic player who needs quality reproduction of both an upright bass and a bass guitar this has to be one of the best options around. AER knows what is required so if it's expertise you want, then it's worth digging very deeply into your pocket. **G**

**AER BassCube 2 combo**

**Guitarist RATING** ★★★★★