



PHOTOGRAPH BY SIMON LEES

EBS Classic Session 120 Tiltback bass combo £399

Compact, versatile and with good performance qualities, EBS is aiming high yet again *by Roger Newell*

Flushed with the success of using the tonal values of its mighty Classic 450 bass head for the compact Session 60, EBS is now expanding the range with the Classic Session 120, with more models to come. With a power rating of 120 watts, this is not designed to be purely backline, although it is fully capable of handling smaller gigs with ease, while linking the balanced XLR output to a PA system also makes bigger gigs a possibility.

Bass amps always sound best when they're sitting on the floor, but when using smaller

rigs and combos, much of the sound produced is unheard by the player. The tilt-back design allows this combo to work on the floor while projecting the sound towards the player. Alternatively, the Session 120 can be used as a powered bass monitor for bigger gigs.

It's a smart-looking combo in black livery, with chromed

metal corners and white piping around the classic EBS grille cloth. The amp is almost a perfect cube, and of reasonable weight, but the top-positioned handle is more than adequate for a single-person lift.

Sounds

As already mentioned, the Classic Session range makes

The combo handles smaller gigs with ease, while linking the XLR output to a PA also makes bigger gigs a possibility

The Rivals

This tiltback, or kickback, presentation has become a firm favourite with bass players because it's versatile and practical, as well as easy to transport. It's unsurprising then, that the format is popular. **Fender's Rumble 75** (£274) is one of the keenest priced, offering 75 watts of output from a 12-inch driver and optional overdrive.

Laney's Richter Bass RB5 combo (£349) offers the same 120-watt power rating as the EBS, a 12-inch driver and a switchable horn, but it does lack the media input.

Hartke has championed this design for many years. Its **Kickback 15 Bass** combo (£502) delivers 120 watts of power, but here it's supported by a 15-inch aluminium coned speaker providing a clean delivery and that distinctive Hartke tone





A headphone output and media input make the Classic Session a useful practice tool



The 12-inch driver pumps out some powerful bass tones

full use of the tonal circuit originally designed for a much more powerful bass head, plus it benefits greatly from an extended EQ section that includes an extra frequency control added to the midrange EQ. It also has the added bonus of valve-like distortion made possible by the soft-clip integrated circuitry – something many bass players like to take advantage of.

Activating the character switch introduces a superb throaty bottom-end boost that will prove to be quite a bonus onstage. But, even without this in action, the controls provide a good range of tones – each of the major controls works from a centre detent with cut/boost options. The extra frequency

control allows a more precise targeting of the important midrange and really helps to obtain the clearest sounds from your bass, regardless of make or quality – it's a huge asset.

The combo certainly packs a powerful punch and you experience the full benefit of its sound. While the bottom end is substantial, the tweeter ensures all notes are clearly defined, even when pushing into that soft-clip area. Although there's no way of adjusting the tweeter, it definitely adds to the overall performance quality of what is a very tidy design.

Verdict

This combo was built in China to help keep things cost-effective, but EBS handled its

design and development in Sweden. With phono inputs for media players (mini jack would be better), plus a headphone socket, the Classic Session 120 proves ideal for practising at home as well as being practical on the road. If you have yet to experience something from EBS's almighty bass range, then this would be a good place to start. **G**

The Bottom Line

We like: Tiltback design, exceptional power and tonal range from small size

We dislike: A degree of control for the tweeter would be welcome

Guitarist says: Whether using it at home, in the studio, on small gigs as backline or larger gigs as foldback, this EBS will do the job professionally and with class. A seriously versatile, user-friendly bass combo

While the bottom end is substantial, the tweeter ensures all notes are clearly defined, even when pushing into that soft-clip area



EBS Classic Session 120 Tiltback combo

PRICE: £399

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Solid-state bass combo

OUTPUT: 120 watts RMS @ 8 ohms

DIMENSIONS: 402 (h) x 435 (w) x 455mm (d)

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 21/47

CHANNELS: Single

CONTROLS: Character switch, gain, bass, middle, mid frequency, treble, auxiliary level and volume

SPEAKER: 1 x 12-inch special design

FOOTSWITCH: N/A

ADDITIONAL FEATURES:

Tilt-back presentation, gain clip indicator, balanced XLR, stereo auxiliary phono inputs, ground lift switch, headphone socket

RANGE OPTIONS: EBS Classic Session 30 (£149, new model due at the end of August); EBS Classic Session 60 (£259); EBS Classic 450 bass head (£959)

Sound Technology

01462 480000

www.bass.se

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★