

PJB Bass Cub BG-100 combo £425

A worldwide exclusive review of this amazing new PJB micro combo... *by Roger Newell*

Bass players have always had the rough end of the deal when it comes to practising. There's nothing worse than dragging out a heavy combo then shaking the house when you simply want to rehearse on your own or with a couple of friends. Until fairly recently there were few alternatives, but fortunately today's manufacturers have fully grasped the advances in bass frequency technology so that they can produce some significantly smaller amplification equipment. In this respect, Phil Jones Bass has got to be one of the most inventive and exciting.

The Briefcase portable bass combo was nothing short of remarkable, but anyone thinking that a viable alternative really can't get any smaller is in for a shock. The Bass Cub is the latest in the line and is both smaller and lighter than a box of spanners, but it still comes fully equipped to produce some serious sounds and delivery.

Its tough construction includes black vinyl finish, chromed metal corners, sturdy feet and handle, and the control panel is well protected and positioned so the controls won't be touched when the unit is packed into its padded gig bag. Designed with a front port and a removable cloth covered speaker grille, it's great for active or passive basses and can even handle uprights. With two independent channels, this will happily support two instruments, or your bass and a microphone if you prefer.

Each channel has its own input level control with a low/high switch and a clip indicator to prevent serious front-end overload. There's also plenty of tonal shaping from the three-band EQ. Bearing in mind the power available here and the

compact nature of the beast, having an adjustable compressor/limiter is more than handy, as you can rest in the security it provides by enhancing your sound and adding speaker protection as you play. Having an adjustable auxiliary input makes this ideal for working with a drum machine or an mp3 player and, with rear connections for DI, tuner and line out, the Bass Cub really does have the ability to do all your musical heart desires.

Sounds

This is all about producing good quality sound despite the reduction in size. Even so, being equipped with such tiny speakers, one would be forgiven for expecting it to lack in fundamental bass tones and delivery, but that's simply not the case here. The Bass Cub actually excels in rich bass sounds and is provided with enough power to project with confidence. So, it comfortably caters for all basses (including the five-string variety), and allows for all techniques and styles of playing too – each with a good level of volume.

Any bass is going to experience a sound quality boost from the Bass Cub as there is a true richness present in the sounds that it produces. Undoubtedly the key factor here has to be that adjustable compressor/limiter, allowing maximum delivery without any unwanted speaker distortion. With this in place you can comfortably work the whole of the tonal range with confidence to secure any of the huge variety of bass sounds that takes your fancy.



Verdict

Don't expect miracles, the laws of physics still apply, but PJB has a habit of bending the rules and has somehow opened up a new universe for bass amplification. The Bass Cub is portable enough to allow you to practise just about anywhere and with a host of good quality sounds. And if you use headphones you can blast away for hours to your favourite tracks with a great sound and you won't disturb the neighbours or family. Bass bliss? We think so. ☺

The Bottom Line

We like: Portability; sounds; bass response; ease of use

We dislike: No battery-power option

Guitarist says: This is a dream. It's compact, comes with a padded gig bag and has good quality sounds. And if you use it regularly, the price isn't half bad either

The Rivals

Entry level for micro bass amps comes in the shape of **Roland's Micro Cube Bass RX combo** (£199). Loaded with a quartet of four-inch drivers, it features amp models, digital effects and an aux input. What's more it can run on batteries, but is strictly for personal practice.

MarkBass's Minimark (£885) is another highly compact and well-built unit, with two six-inch custom neodymium woofers and a piezo tweeter, it will deliver 150 watts, or 250 watts with an extension cabinet. If money is no object then the **Mesa/Boogie Walkabout Scout** (£1,600) is a mighty little combo indeed.

PJB Bass Cub BG-100 Combo

PRICE: £425 (inc gigbag)
ORIGIN: USA
TYPE: Solid-state bass combo
OUTPUT: 100 watts RMS @ 4 ohms
DIMENSIONS: 306mm (w) x 275mm (d) x 197mm (h)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 6/13.2
SPEAKERS: 2 x PJB NeoPower
CHANNELS: Two
CONTROLS: High/low input with level control, three-band EQ, adjustable compressor/limiter
ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Aux input mini-jack with level control, outputs for line out, tuner and headphones, XLR balanced line out
OPTIONS: Black or red covering (red may incur a surcharge)
RANGE OPTIONS: Briefcase (£579), Flightcase (£689), Super Flightcase (£949). A powered cabinet (suitable for all) will cost around £599
Synergy Distribution
01212 706485
www.synergystdistribution.co.uk



Test results

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

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★