

No need to weep about the price of bass gear when you can get a 150W combo with a compressor and a graphic EQ for under £150. Review by Gareth Morgan

White Horse

BP150 Bass Guitar Combo

First Impression
Crammed with far more features than you'd expect for this money
First Impression

White Horse bass amplifiers are a new brand produced by the York-based über-discounters Gear4music. This is one of the first times we've ever encountered a combo where the RRP is less than the wattage on offer. Not only has Gear4music sourced a 'reliable' Chinese manufacturer, but its stuffed an impressive set of features onto the BP150's front panel.

The cabinet is an MDF affair with tilt-back capability: big at 653mm high, 632mm wide and 420mm deep, but a manageable 30.5kg/67lbs with portability helped by both side and top-mounted handles. The black carpet covering and metal corners are neatly fitted and a large black steel grille protects a single 15" driver and hides a pair of front ports.

The front panel is well organised and while the chrome knobs look a little cheap, they work smoothly. The standard input socket comes with a handy passive/active switch, while next to the gain control are Bright and Boost switches for additional hikes to treble and bass. How much you get in dB isn't specified, but the High, Middle and Low controls each offer +/-12dB, again at mystery frequency points. An EQ On/Off gives you the option to bring in the swanky 7-band graphic where +/-15dB is on offer at 50, 120, 400, 500 and 800Hz and 4.5 and 10kHz.

A red LED next to the master volume control blinks when the in-built compressor is active, while Aux In Phono sockets and a headphone socket facilitate accompanied and silent practising. Additional jack sockets numbering Amp In, Preamp Out and an FX loop are all located on the back panel.

The BP150 combo offers really good value, with a versatile EQ and plenty of power



SOUNDS

Despite its lowly £150 price tag, rest assured that the BP150 does not sound cheap and nasty. With the EQ flat, what you put in is what you hear. There's plenty of clarity, and higher notes have bite and body. Depress Boost for a smoother, thicker tone and kick in Bright for snappier definition... or simply boost the High and Low controls by half. Boosting Middle reveals the BP's dark side, replete with snappy punch, although big hikes do dull and cheapen the sound.

The graphic adds more power and versatility: boost 50Hz for clean rumble, 120Hz for serious impact or 400Hz for growling edge. Upping 500 and 800Hz produces a rasping, burpy funk tone and nudging 4.5 and 10kHz nears clean highs without too much fret or finger-noise. The compressor never gets in the way, only kicking in when we gave the amp a serious beating.

VERDICT

The BP150 is really good value, with a versatile EQ and plenty of power. It's not Rolls Royce quality, but it's seriously good for the money - and it reproduces low B's cleanly and effortlessly. The sound quality may diminish slightly at very high volume but, as a first amp or a giggable upgrade from a practice combo, this is a serious contender.

FINAL SCORE

Build quality	18/20
Versatility	15/20
Sound	15/20
Value for money	20/20
Vibe	15/20

TOTAL 83%

Good for... Rehearsals or small gigs, especially if you're on a tight budget

Look elsewhere... For more volume, versatility or the valve experience - but you'll pay a lot more

FACTFILE

BP150

Description: Single channel, 150W transistor combo with Custom 15" speaker. Tilt-back MDF cabinet with front porting. Made in China

Controls: Gain with Bright & Boost switches, High, Middle, Low and Master volume controls, 7-band graphic EQ with On/Off switch, in-built compressor with red 'active' LED. Input with Passive/Active switch, Aux In, Headphone out, Amp In, Pre Out and FX loop jack sockets

Range options: BP80 1x12" 80W combo, £89.95

Contact: Gear4music
0871 309 0800
www.gear4music.com

COMPETITION

FENDER

Rumble 100/210 100W Combo
Another substantial unit with a more contemporary slant offering decent versatility
RRP: £299.99

AMPEG

BA115 100W Combo
A decent introduction to the wonderful world of Ampeg
RRP: £391

WARWICK

Sweet 15.2 150W Combo
A little bulky but delivers good sounds in a wallet-friendly, easy to use package
RRP: £319