

Bass Review

Eden Electronics MicroTour Bass Combo

By Lee Louie

The Company Line

Since 1976, Eden has been satisfying musicians with premium, high-quality amplification products that include combos, heads, cabs, and pedals. They are known for their “world tour” performance and “built-to-last” high quality amplification. Eden would not introduce a product unless it was worthy of performing to customer expectations, and this holds true for the MicroTour – the smallest and most portable battery-powered combo amp in their lineup.

First Impression

At first glance, the MicroTour has that traditional Eden styling of the WT-series, with its gold face and colored knobs. The cab enclosure also has classic styling, with the black case, mesh grille, and same Eden logo in the upper left corner. Traditionally placed, the 1/4” instrument jack is situated on the left corner of the amp head. As far as controls are concerned, you only have two: Volume and Tone. The power button is on the right side of the amp head, right below a red LED light that illuminates when powered on. On the back of the amp head, there is an input for the optional 15V AC adapter, which is not included. The cab enclosure is similarly styled to a full-sized 8x10 cabinet, but micro scale. The right side of the cab has a 1/8” output jack for practicing in silent mode with your favorite earbuds or headphones. Inside the cab enclosure, there is a 4-1/2” speaker with a small port above it. The entire MicroTour enclosure is molded plastic and has realistic styling to its full-size siblings. The battery compartment is on the lower back-side of the cab, and with

the eight AA batteries installed, the cover does not sit flush (but does stay sealed and locked in place). Testing the stability of the MicroTour, I plugged in an instrument cable and determined that the MicroTour is sure-footed, with its wide base (when positioned on a flat, hard surface).

A Closer Look

The MicroTour is a battery-powered, portable combo amp that fits (standing upright) in the palm of your hand. No really, it does. You cannot help but smile and think, “How cool is that?” Then that touch of doubt clouds your initial thought. It’s only natural, right? How can the MicroTour possibly perform up to Eden’s high standards in a package so small with limited capability? Let’s find out!

Output via headphones is excellent, and this is where the MicroTour performs its best. I won’t go into silent performance detail, because most headphones have designed-in “coloring” to enhance listening pleasure for the end user. Moving on, speaker output is limited, so you cannot push it very far without hearing undesirable results. It does have adequate tonal character by adjusting a combination of the tone knob and the controls on your bass. Take note that your optimal settings will vary depending upon your playing style and type of bass.

I first tested the MicroTour with my Don Grosh P/J4 and my Sadowsky NYC P/J5 to get a sense of the output quality from the little speaker. I did not expect much of a difference between the two basses, and my suspicions were correct. Because I wanted to use a 5-string bass for this review, I chose my Sadowsky NYC P/J5. That said, the Sadowsky electronics have a Vintage Tone Control (VTC) knob and a treble/bass boost, all of which provide more tone shaping selections to test with the MicroTour. I tested both active and passive modes and was not expecting stellar sound/tonal output, but was pleasantly surprised with either mode. I found that active mode really brought out the best performance of the MicroTour’s capabilities. Passive playing delivered a



subdued, very warm, fully rounded tone. Active mode delivered a bit more of a defined, still warm, slightly punchy tone. Either passive or active, the MicroTour can easily handle a 5-string bass, once optimal settings are achieved. Beyond my optimal settings, the MicroTour instantly hit its limitations on output quality delivering an over-driven, distorted tone, which was completely undesirable and disappointing.

I found it best to leave the MicroTour at 80%-100% Volume, and Tone at "noon." Further tonal character adjustment is possible with the MicroTour via the instrument's controls. The output quality is very good, if you stay within your optimal settings, and fair if pushed too far. I measured the output decibel level at 3' and discovered the MicroTour delivered 65dB to

80dB, depending upon the active/passive mode and tone settings.

Sadowsky NYC P/J5 settings:

VTC knob all the way up (no cut) and bass boost at zero. I found that the treble boost works well with the MicroTour from zero up to approximately 20%.

Passive mode and soloing the P-pickup, the bass volume could not be more than 45-50% and when soloing the J-pickup, the bass volume could not be more than 55-60%.

Active mode and soloing the P-pickup, the bass volume could not be more than 25%, and when soloing the J-pickup, the bass volume could not be more than 35%.

Manufacturer: Eden Amplification

Web: <http://www.edenamps.com/microtour.html>

Model: MicroTour

Country of Origin: China

Enclosure: Molded plastic

Inputs: One ¼"

Output: 3.5mm headphone out

Controls: Volume and Tone

Power Rating: 2 watts

Speaker Size: 4.5"

Power Source: 8 AA batteries

Optional Power Source: Eden 15V AC Adapter

Dimensions: 12"H x 5.3"W x 3.7"D

Weight: 2.5 lbs

Warranty: 1 year

Price: \$60.00



Bottom Line

The ability to be fully portable with an active or passive bass, without AC power, through a 4-1/2" speaker with acceptable tonal quality, delivers instant customer satisfaction and confidence that Eden has done their homework. Output via the speaker is obviously limited, but much better than expected, considering the intended use, size, and power rating of the MicroTour. Once you find the sweet spot with the MicroTour and your bass, there is no need to further adjust the MicroTour controls. I would not see the exclusion of the AC adapter as a negative aspect of the MicroTour, because it's meant to be played anywhere via battery power, and that is why the MicroTour requires 8 AA's. Speaking of battery life, just for kicks, I decided to do a little experiment to find out how long the MicroTour could go, and still sound good, using those AA's (Duracell Duralocks, for the record). Long story short, I logged

84 total hours (not continuous, mind you) of playing music (at maximum volume, without distortion) with the overall volume output remaining very close to what the amp put out when the batteries were fresh. At this point, seven of the batteries measured at 10% life, and one of them was at 0%. Beyond this point, volume did begin decreasing quite a bit.

Lastly, the styling and build quality is excellent. I highly recommend the Eden MicroTour for its portability/intended use, and oh yeah, the cool factor is completely off the chart! **BGM**



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