



Phil Jones Cub

TESTED BY ART THOMPSON



ALTHOUGH PHIL JONES IS BEST KNOWN TO musicians for bass gear, the British-born acoustic designer also makes an extensive line of hi-fi speakers under the AAD brand (aadsound.com), and has recently moved into the guitar arena with the Cub—a bookshelf-sized acoustic amp that looks like an outgrowth of PJB's Briefcase bass amp. Despite its small size (6.5" x 11.8" x 12.5"), the Cub is a sophisticated solid-state rig that features Jones' proprietary "soft clipping" pre-amp, a 100-watt output stage that automatically

reduces power in the event of a thermal overload, and the ability to adapt automatically to worldwide AC voltage (100-240 volts). The computer designed cabinet houses two 5" neodymium magnet speakers and all controls and I/O connections reside on the back. You could hardly imagine a more compact acoustic guitar amp, and the included padded carrying bag makes it super easy to tote the Cub, cables, and a stompbox or two on your shoulder. After spending a few minutes getting acquainted with the Cub, I took it straight to a gig along with a Larrivéé flat-top and an Ibanez GB-10 electric archtop.

Getting a happening acoustic sound from the Larrivéé proved extremely easy. And even without assistance from the guitar's onboard Fishman Aura system, the sound was warm, crisp, and natural. In fact, a bit of attenuation of the Cub's Mid control was the only tweak necessary with the guitar's 3-band EQ set flat and the Blend set to full piezo. At the low volumes played during the first set, the Cub had more than enough volume and delivered a big, full-range sound that was more akin to playing through a small hi-fi system than an acoustic amp. A pair of Cubs fed by a stereo chorus or reverb would be the bomb in this setting. On subsequent sets the same night using the Ibanez GB-10—and with a bass player added—the Cub sounded excellent for the mix of jazz and world music, though it quickly ran out of steam in the volume department. Even with the amp's Level knob pegged, however, the sound stayed round, sweet, and punchy, with absolutely no hint of the raggedness and loss of focus that often occurs when a solid-state amp is pushed to the rails. Here too is where a second Cub would have really made the difference, and it's good to know that Jones will soon introduce a Super Cub model designed especially for electric players that will feature four 5" speakers, top-mounted controls, and 250 watts of power (price TBA). If you're seeking the smallest possible amplifier that can cut it for acoustic gigs, the Cub is well worth an audition. By dispensing with effects and focusing purely on sound, Phil Jones has created a unique amplifier that absolutely supports the notion that size *doesn't* matter when it comes to great sound. **E**

SPECS | Phil Jones Bass, (314) 814-3383; philjonesbass.com

MODEL	Cub
PRICE	\$535 street (includes padded bag)
CHANNELS	One
CONTROLS	Level, Bass, Mid, Treble
EXTRAS	Effects loop, line out, tuner out, XLR balanced out, smart power sensing (automatically adapts to worldwide AC voltages), input-level switch, ground-lift switch
SPEAKERS	Two 5" Neo-Power extended range drivers
POWER	100 watts
WEIGHT	11.5 lbs
KUDOS	Very hi-fi sounding. Smooth clipping characteristics. Super portable.
CONCERNS	Rear mounted controls are inconvenient. Tone control settings affect volume.