

Phil Jones Bass D-200 And 6B Bass Stack

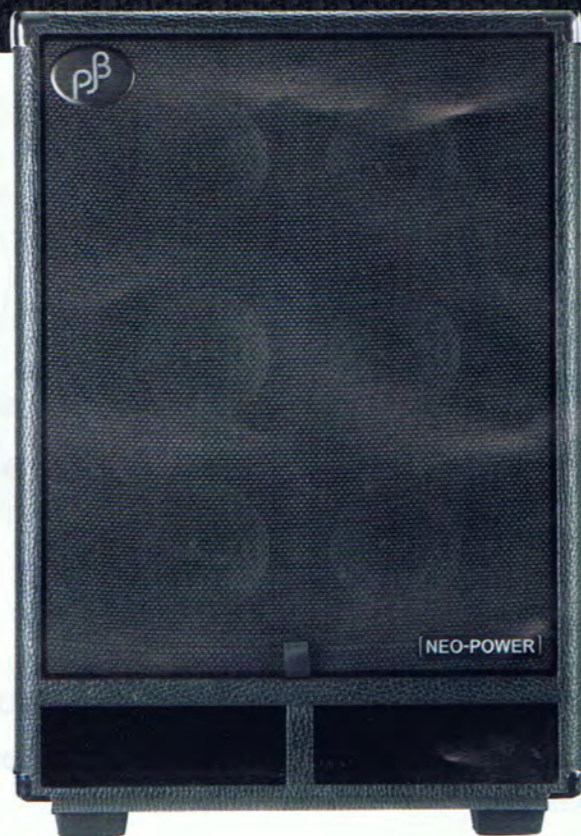


If minimal weight, portability and hi-fi sounds are your requirements, this new stack from Phil Jones Bass may well tick all the right boxes.

The Phil Jones Bass (PJB) range of amps, speakers and combos has attracted quite a few high-profile players over the past few years, and with such luminaries as Nathan East and Pino Palladino now endorsing the brand, it's no surprise that the range continues to develop to fulfil the needs of live and studio players alike. Alongside the D-200, which offers a host of versatile and practical features, the current PJB catalogue now encompasses the new neodymium Neo-Power cabinets that have been developed in-house to PJB's exact specifications. But has PJB managed to combine innovative design with big bass sounds?

Features

The PJB D-200 is strikingly small and compact, and at 1.1 kg it's exceptionally light, placing it in the same bracket weight-wise as the Genz Benz Shuttle 3.0. Its dimensions and weight mean that you could easily transport this amp in the pocket of your instrument gig bag, or in a bag/case along with gigging/recording essentials, although a padded gig bag is included. The D-200 is very similar, in terms of features and layout, to the amp used in the PJB Super Flightcase combo, but surprisingly it has a lower power rating, coming in at 150 watts, although the D-200 will work with any load between





The front panel has inputs for both active and passive basses and a flexible 5-band EQ



The rear panel is home to the usual line up of FX, line and DI outputs



4 and 16 ohms. The 1/4-inch jack socket outputs have been wired in parallel, so connecting two 8-ohm speakers to the unit will result in a 4-ohm total load.

The front panel has a simplistic, minimal look that belies the fact that this is a serious, high-end piece of kit that has been engineered to produce hi-fi-quality reproduction of your bass sound. There may not be a vast selection of controls and features to hand, but what there is works perfectly.

Separate inputs for both active and passive basses have been provided, along with controls for input level (with clip LED), 5-band EQ (lo-bass, hi-bass, lo-mid, hi-mid and treble), limiter/compressor level/switch (with level LED) and master volume. The EQ offers 18dB cut/boost across 50Hz, 160Hz, 630Hz, 2.5kHz and 12kHz frequencies, and with the low-noise electronic components used, this all-digital amp remains completely hiss-free when the high-end frequencies are boosted. We're pleased to see the inclusion of a headphone socket, along with the usual line-up of useful

FX, line and DI outputs, making private practice as easy as possible. In fact, considering the overall dimensions of the 6B cabinet, this could possibly be one of the most practice-friendly set-ups on the market, as it takes up very

little floor space and can be neatly tucked away when not in use.

Cabinet & Speakers

The 6B cabinet follows the same minimal design principal as the D-200. The cab is covered in black

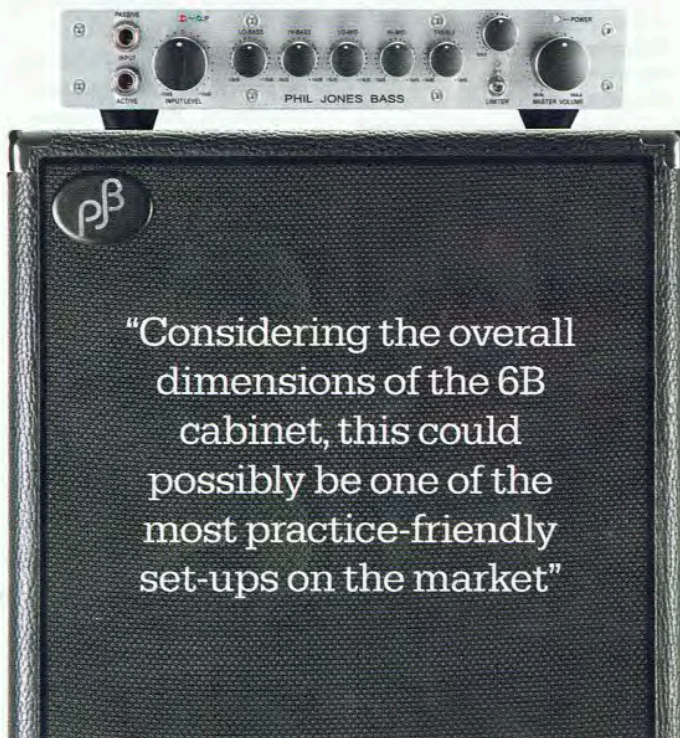


Tolex, and metal corners provide added protection along with the included cabinet cover. The six 5-inch neodymium speakers are hidden from view behind a removable front panel and are positioned above the vents that give the cabinet its bass reflex design, which in theory should improve the projection of bass frequencies.

The compact dimensions and light weight make the 6B cab easy to transport, but for those occasions where you may have to carry the rig a fair distance, instead of using the recessed carry handle on the top of the unit, casters and an extendable suitcase handle have been provided. Effectively, you could load your bass and rig into any venue in one journey without breaking into a sweat. We were surprised to see that speaker connections had been used on the cabinet, whereas 1/4-inch jack outputs had been used on the amp, therefore requiring a jack/speaker speaker cable, so be prepared!

Sounds

Plugged in and with the EQ set flat, the initial sound is exceptionally clear and forthright, with very little colouration to the tone of your instrument but with plenty of punch. As a solid-state digital amp, the D-200 is designed to accurately amplify the natural character of your bass and is therefore almost a polar opposite to a valve-equipped amp. However, making adjustments to the EQ highlights the attention to detail spent on this design as minor adjustments can make a significant difference to the overall sound. Boosting the lo-bass EQ gives the E and A strings more impact, while increasing the hi-bass EQ adds weight to the sound of the D and G strings without



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negating their top-end properties.

The mid-EQ controls help project the overall sound, though this control works best when used in conjunction with the treble control when looking to provide added clarity or the subtle attack you might require if slapping or playing with a pick. Having worked through the EQ options for some time, it's clear that this is a very 'functional' set-up where minor changes can make a big

"This is a very 'functional' EQ set-up where minor changes can make a big difference to the sound."



Technical Specification

PJB D-200

Price: £329
Made in: Hong Kong
Power output: 150 watts
Features: 2 x 1/4-inch instrument inputs (passive/active) Input level, lo-bass, hi-bass, lo-mid, hi-mid, treble, limiter/compressor with on/off switch, master volume, ground/lift switch, 2 x 1/4-inch preamp outputs (4-16 ohms), 1/4-inch headphone output, 1/4-inch FX send and return sockets, 1/4-inch line output, XLR DI output
Dimensions: 50(h) x 242.5(w) x 215(d)mm
Weight: 1.1kg (2.4lb)

Contact Details

Synergy Distribution
 PO Box 10422, Tamworth, B77 1WE
 Tel: 0121 270 6485
 www.synergymusic.co.uk

What we think

Plus: A lightweight, portable amp that's solidly built and simple to use.
Minus: Needs to be more powerful to compete with similar amps already on the market.
Overall: A quality unit, well designed, with plenty of tonal character.

BGM Rating out of five

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
SOUNDS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★

difference to the sound, but when pushed to maximum none of the EQ parameters sound harsh or extreme. Similarly, the limiter/compressor, with its 3:1 ratio, sounds quite natural without being excessive.

Considering its dimensions, the 6B cab is both powerful and articulate. Clearly, with this type of speaker cone the bass end will suffer a little due to the natural laws of physics relating to cabinet and speaker size, but the overall design means that this loss of bottom end is minimised as far as possible. When the amp was pushed with passive bass lines, the



Technical Specification

PJB 6B

Price: £569
Made in: Hong Kong
Speakers: 6 x 5-inch neodymium Neo-Power type A
Power Handling: 300 watts
Ohms: 6-ohm impedance
Connections: 2 x speakon (1 x input, 1 x link)
Dimensions: 585(h) x 398(w) x 440(d)mm
Weight: 20.8kg (45.8lb)

Contact Details

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What we think

Plus: A great, full-sounding cab that couldn't be any easier to transport.
Minus: Its dimensions partially limit its ability to pump out serious low frequencies.
Overall: A well-engineered cabinet that performs well, isn't overly expensive and is bassist-friendly in terms of portability.

BGM Rating out of five

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
SOUNDS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★



"Effectively, you could load your bass and rig into any venue in one journey without breaking into a sweat."

cab did not fail to convey what was being played: the throaty grittiness of a Fender Jazz Bass came across loud and clear, as did the thump of a Fender Precision. Yet it was the acoustic and fretless instruments that seemed to reap the biggest rewards from this amp/cab pairing as their core sound was brought to the fore.

Conclusion

There can be no denying that this is a well-designed high-quality set-up. The standard of sound reproduction is very high, and for a snip under £900 this rig could be yours. Yet for £51 more, the PJB BA300 combo is 7kg lighter and has an extra 100 watts to spare. Nevertheless, the portability of this set-up, with the separate components and the casters/

luggage handle, undoubtedly make a difference. There is also the fact that an extra cab can be run from the amp or linked to the cab, whereas the combo only has a line out option to a powered cabinet.

Whether the D-200 has enough power to fill big stages is open to debate, but then it isn't aimed at bassists in rock or metal bands. We could see many a bassist, especially upright/acoustic/fretless players, enjoying the sheer quality of tonal reproduction on offer here. Similarly priced lightweight offerings are already out there, so the D-200's appeal will depend greatly on what you play and where you play it. If you are in need of a lightweight, easily transportable rig, the PJB D-200 is definitely one to consider.

Mike Brooks