
Subject: Re: Amp for bass guitars

Posted by [Thermionic](#) on Sat, 23 Apr 2016 14:44:14 GMT

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Sorry I'm a little late posting to this thread.....I don't get to surf the forums much these days (too busy!)

Tube bass amps are among the most impractical of all musical instrument amplifiers. They're insanely expensive, both in initial purchase price and when it comes time to replace the power tubes. They're very, very heavy to lug around. They put out a LOT of heat.....and they sound glorious! Amps like the Mesa/Boogie Bass 400 and Ampeg SVT are spoken of in reverent whispers by serious bass players. But again, they're quite impractical.

We now have Class D PWM (Pulse Width Modulation) switching power stages. What that fancy terminology means is that the output transistors operate as electrical switches, somewhat as they do in computer logic circuits. This is in contrast to the more conventional and traditional musical instrument amplifier's output stage, which operates its tubes or transistors as "linear gain" amplifying devices.

Class D bass amps are much lighter in weight, run cooler, and (tada!) to my ears sound much better than conventional solid state bass amp fare. The Class D Eden WT800 head with Eden cabinets is IMO the absolute best bass tone I've ever heard. The tube preamp lets you dial in some realistic, very Mesa/Boogie Bass 400-like growl, if that's your bag. The Eden WTX500 has fewer bells and whistles (and no tube preamp) but still sounds AMAZING, and weighs only 5 pounds!

A friend of mine just bought a new Peavey Tour TNT 115 (600 watts Class D) 1-15" combo bass amp. First, lemme say I have over 30 years of experience playing live music, both as a guitarist and a live sound tech, and for most of the last 20 or so years I've done one or the other at least once a week. So, I've used and heard a huge amount of different gear over that time frame, and am NOT a fan of Peavey whatsoever. I consider their very best stuff to barely be mid-grade gear. But, I was blown away by the tone coming from that \$600 Peavey bass amp. It's light years ahead of their older stuff, and while it's not quite on par with the Eden WT800 or Aguilar ToneHammer bass heads, it's nevertheless an incredible bang for the buck.

IMHO, Class D gives you so much tonal goodness with so little weight and heat that it has obsoleted the tube bass amp altogether. This is coming from a die-hard tube aficionado who designs and builds tube guitar and hi-fi amps, and makes and plays back his music exclusively through tubes. I don't even consider solid state guitar amps to be real amplifiers, but chintzy tinkertoys that I just wish would go away. I do not even recognize or acknowledge their existence, except when forced to because one playing nearby has launched its irritating, obnoxious, all-out sonic assault against my ears. But, Class D bass amps are da bomb; definitely not your ordinary solid state.

Just my two cents.

Thermionic
