

# EBS Drome Classic

## Versatility and character

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Classic, the new series from EBS is somewhat cheaper than their usual range of products. Both sound and looks are meant to be more traditional. The cabinets use tolex covered with traditional grille cloth instead of the standard EBS felt covered cabs with steel grilles.

The Drome Classic is a lot more affordable than the original Drome Model. Electronics manufactured in Korea and a few less features have made this possible. Pricing in Sweden is 8000 SEK instead of 12000.

Omitted features are the possibility to connect an audio source like a CD player and a bass filter to practise without hearing much of the original bass track. Personally I am just as happy without these features and would not spend four thousand SEK to get them. Since I also like the tolex covered cabinet better, the Drome Classic is very welcome indeed.

Full of curiosity I plug into the amp and adjust the controls for a neutral sound. With gain and volume at nine o'clock the amp is quite loud and has a full and balanced sound. The harder, drier sound of traditional transistor amps is not to be heard. The basic sound is rather soft but still focused and punchy.

The first button on the panel is character. This is no mere preshape mid cut filter. Instead, you can choose between two distinct sound characters. The outer position is a transistor sound with a little treble boost. Pressing the button kicks in the tube emulation circuit, resulting in a livelier sound



with more overtones. The transistor sound is more direct, great for punchy Pastorius-like sounds when you hit the strings hard. The milder tube sound is more versatile. Pick sounds are more pleasant but still able to cut through in a mix.

The gain knob has an assisting LED for setting the level. The gain control is probably not meant to function as a distortion effect, but higher settings distort quite nicely with a growling character. Maybe not like a distorted tube amp, but still useful.

We move on to the compressor/limiter knob that starts from zero for unaffected signal. Compression increase as the knob is turned and a LED helps out by lighting up when the compressor kicks in. If you need to control the dynamics in your sound the EBS compressor is of the highest

quality. The effect is almost inaudible but is very effective in lowering peaks and boosting weak signals making the sound more even. Personally I do not like compressors as they take away a lot of the dynamics of your playing, but many bassists like to even out powerful parts like slapping.

The tone control section starts with the filter bypass pushbutton. As the name suggests this knob disconnects the tone controls. It is very useful to compare the neutral sound to your own eq settings. The neutral sound is very useful as it is, so some owners might not need the tone controls at all. The equalizer section has four bands and is of the same type as most other EBS amps with bass, midrange and treble. All with center detent knobs. The Bright knob on the other hand is boost only.

The bass control is very dramatic, and increasing to three o'clock gives a great deal of deep bass. A five string bass is easily handled if only care is taken not to boost the lows too much. The midrange is sweepable with a separate frequency knob ranging from low bass to high treble. The wide range adds flexibility since the midrange level control can become an extra bass control a little higher up. This proved very useful using a five string bass. The lows could be boosted until you heard the B-string properly, and turning down slightly higher frequencies prevented unwanted boominess. Turned all the way down, the mid level control works as a notch filter. This means that a very narrow frequency band is cut, perfect for finding and eliminating unwanted feedback or troublesome frequencies. Since the frequency band is so narrow the overall sound is hardly affected. The treble knob controls frequencies low enough to be effective and audible when playing with a band, but still high enough not to sound ugly and disturbing. Pick sounds can be boosted very effectively. The bright control is what I like most on EBS amps. It is perfect for controlling bril-

liance and string sound. In practise it is almost like a level control for the high frequency horn. Without a bright boost the horn is almost inaudible. With tone controls as effective as this, one gets the feeling that anything is possible. The truth is actually not far from that.

A nice addition would be LED indicators for the small character and filter bypass pushbuttons. It is hard to see whether they are in or out. I had problems during a gig when I made bass level adjustments between songs. The filter bypass knob was pressed in so my adjustments had no effect. Not too clever perhaps, but this situation could easily be avoided with LEDs.

The line of controls end with volume, headphone jack and a stylish control lamp similar to the old Fender jewel. Like always, I would prefer placing the volume knob a bit to the side to ease quick adjustments, but it is not too hard to find on the right hand side. The headphone jack is really useful at home, the plug disconnects the speaker for silent practising.

Drome is surprisingly loud. Naturally you can not keep up with two guitarists using 4x12" speakers, but the amp is loud enough for smaller venues or with the bass in a PA system. Approaching maximum volume the little combo starts to distort, but surprisingly that does not matter too much. The distortion might not be the most pleasant, but still useful. Few transistor amps sound pleasant when pushed to the limit, so EBS has really succeeded in this respect.

Drome could easily serve as your only amp by using an extra power amp and speaker when needed. EBS has a line of powered speakers for this purpose. The rear panel has a jack for this and also connections for effects loop and XLR line out

The combo is relatively deep but is still easy to carry using the top carrying handle. When lifting the amp higher up or when carried by two people there are rugged handles on the sides.

The review was done using a Fender Jazz Bass and a Music Man Stingray5

## Conclusion

EBS have found a very sensible way of hooking on to the retro fashion. The Drome Classic looks great and is a very useful combo indeed. It is portable and loud enough for smaller gigs. Many different sounds can be dialled in thanks to the great tone controls. It really does not matter if you are a slap bass monster or a hard hitting metal bassist. Drome is capable of most sound characters. If you add a good distortion pedal, the Drome can manage anything. If I needed an amp for my living room/rehearsal/smaller gig I would choose the Drome Classic. Compared to the more full featured original Drome combo that is still available, I really do not miss any functions. This is a top notch amp.

### Facts

#### EBS Drome Classic

**Output power:** 150w

**Speakers:** 12" + hi frequency horn

**Connections:** Connections on the front for headphones and instrument  
Rear connections for external amp, loop in & out, XLR line out with ground lift and pre/post eq switch.

**Dimensions:** 430 x 500 x 300 mm

**Weight:** 18 Kg

**Price:** 7 995 SEK

