



Australian Musician

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ROAD TEST

AGUILAR DB750 BASS AMP AND GS410 CAB

I must admit to being a tad curious about this rig as this is one of those setups that you see a lot in mags from overseas but never get to sit down with. The first things that strike you about the amp is its size ... three rack spaces high gives it a formidable physical presence and the matt silver face panel and simple layout and lettering give it a unique and eye catching appeal. It reminds me very much of the simple bass amp layouts of the late '60s. The weight at 43 lbs is not light, but two seconds after you turn it up you will understand the need for the Custom Aguilar Torroidal Transformer that it packs that contributes so much of this. The front panel of this amp is simplicity itself...the input jack on the left with its active/passive select switch followed by the Gain control, the Treble control with a select switch that brings in a passive RC pre-emphasis circuit at 5-7 khz that really glasses up the top end and makes it sing. The Treble is sweet and clear and has an airy edge without being brittle and painful. The mid control gives a good depth of control over the punch in the signal without becoming nasal or barking in its upper end and gives a great smooth scoop and warmth to the sound when pulled out hard. I personally have always liked amps in which the mids are present and punchy without really being immediately obvious and clanky, and this amp has that character in spades. The Bass control which comes next has a select switch for a 3db broadband boost at 30 hz, which is seriously low end reinforcement. Try switching this in and out with a 5 or 6 string bass with the bottom end boosted a little to see just what this does ... it provides a solid strength to notes on the low strings without adding any muddiness to the overall sound. The whole of the E.Q. is tube driven shelving type for greatest clarity and creamy tone as is the Gain section of

the amp, again for the greatest warmth. The Master is next and does the obvious, but the next two controls are dual function. The Send control sends you signal to your effects loop for processing but also is a push / pull pot for Line or Instrument level settings, and the Return brings the effects signal back into the amp and also acts as a Push / Pull pot for Parallel or Series operation to suit Stompbox or Rackmount effects. The control over the level of each is smooth and useable. The tube-buffered Jensen D.I. output and its Ground Lift and Pre and Post E.Q. setting switches are readily accessible on the top of the right front panel, and the Self Diagnostics lamp and the Operate / Mute lamp and its switch finish the front.

This amp will run happily at 2, 4 or 8 ohm loads, giving it great flexibility in cab selection. It runs Thermal protection and Short Circuit Protection as well as a Self Diagnosis Protection Circuit and the selection of 3 x 12AX7 and 1 x 12AU7 input valves and the 12 Complementary Lateral MOSFET Power section give a perfect blend of warmth and percussive clarity with low background noise and massive grunt, which can be safely delivered by the dual Speakon Connectors on the rear panel. Cooling (a very important factor in a powerful amp) is provided by two high quality whisper fans that are not obtrusive in operation yet provide a steady flow of cooling air.

The cab that I tested it on was an Aguilar GS 410 ... the 700 watt 4 x 10" with horn is a typical setup that most players reach for these days, and the results were excellent. Unlike many manufacturers who can get one or the other right, the guys at Aguilar have designed a cab that complements their amp precisely and does not change or cloud up the quality and clarity of the amp no matter which frequency range is

pushed. It delivers all the frequencies smoothly from 40hz to 16khz through its dynamic range and can take quite a bit of pushing (sorry to my neighbours!) It has a solid 7 ply void-free mahogany construction with interlocking corners and solid recessed handles for lots of years of rugged use and detachable casters give it an assist with portability. In all, quite a handsome and professional looking and sounding companion to the amp. While this setup provides a huge range of easily accessed tones, the best setting I could find with every bass that I pointed at it (and I tested it at work with some 20+ basses at all levels of cost and build) was to set it flat and work with the gain control to suit the different instruments outputs ... the rig produced uniformly even focussed solid clear tone with whatever it saw and some of the simple passive basses were given a sparkle and depth that was quite delightful. Using my main gigging bass, the 5 str. Spector, the range of tone the bass generated was absolutely faithfully represented and every nuance of dynamics was present. My main studio bass, the Ken Smith 6 string, was just heaven on a stick in this rig. The width of tones makes shaping a sound to suit a style a breeze, anything from a swampy growl to hi-fi pristine. Like everything in life, you get what you pay for, and with a price tag in the upper pro range for the head and a competitive mid price point for a very good pro level cab, the Aguilar is not going to suit the average player, but if we judge it by the value of what we receive in return for our dollar, we can see the true worth. Simply put, the Aguilar is a true Rolls-Royce of tone and possibly the single best bass amp I've ever plugged into.

By Rob Little