

NATIONAL TREASURE

THOUGHT YOU COULDN'T AFFORD A BRITISH-MADE, HAND-WIRED VALVE COMBO? THINK AGAIN, SAYS DAVID GREEVES...

... **These days, a piece of gear's country of origin is much less of an issue than it once was. Still, there's much to be said for buying British when you have the chance. At a time when the falling pound has led to price rises on almost all imports, shopping closer to home is likely to offer much better value.**

We've looked at a couple of English Valve Amps heads in recent issues of *Guitar Buyer* and have been very impressed with this British company's approach, building hand-wired, traditionally-inspired amps with outrageously reasonable price tags. This is the first combo from EVA we've inspected, an 18-watt 1x12 powered by a pair of 6V6 valves and billed as the company's most versatile model.

PRE & POWER AMP

Like the previous EVA amps we've looked at, the 18W Super TMB combo is a fairly simple and straightforward single-channel affair, while the 'TMB' acronym (referring to its treble, middle and bass EQ controls) hints at a healthy dose of Marshall-derived inspiration in its design.

Add a single input, power and standby switches, and that's the full extent of the control panel. On the underside of the chassis, which is mounted Vox-style, at the rear of the amp with the valves pointing towards the grille, there are two speaker outputs, switchable to 8 or 16 ohms.

The 18W Super TMB uses two 12AX7 valves in the preamp and a pair of 6V6s in the power amp. Though the 6V6 is closely associated with smaller Fender amps like the Champ and Deluxe Reverb, this valve's sweet top end and full mid-range can

be exploited for rich overdrive much more in the Marshall vein.

The amp is built to a very high standard, with the transformers and valves securely mounted on the sturdy steel chassis. Inside, the 18W Super TMB uses a traditional turret board with all the components neatly soldered by hand. That this level of workmanship is on offer at such a reasonable price is truly impressive.

CABINETS & SPEAKERS

The same could be said of the cabinet, which is neatly and solidly built from thick birch ply. It's covered in a dark red Tolex with a straw-coloured grille and gold piping, though a wide range of finishes are available at no extra cost – another advantage of dealing direct with a company like EVA.

The cabinet is open at the rear, with a large mesh-covered vent on the top allowing air to circulate freely and cool the valves. The open back allows a clear view of the combo's single 12-inch Celestion Vintage 30, a great all-round speaker with an excellent top-end response. Again, you can opt for a different driver should you wish.

SOUNDS

Plugging in a vintage-style Strat with fairly low-output pickups, with all the controls set to 12 o'clock we're greeted



by a wonderfully juicy clean tone. There's an impressive balance across the frequency range, with clear highs that never become harsh and a full, warm mid-range that gives this Strat plenty to chew on. There isn't a huge low-end kick on offer, but the bass remains focused and supportive.

Nudge the gain control up a little so the sound starts to edge into break-up and the 18W Super TMB displays some great dynamics, responding well to your pick attack. There's plenty of clean headroom if you want, with lots of scope for warm jazzy tones, though higher-output pickups will naturally cause the amp to overdrive sooner. However, it responds well to the guitar's volume control, cleaning up nicely without losing clarity.

The amp is also capable of some fine overdriven tones in a classic rock vein, though when really pushed hard, definition does suffer slightly. This isn't an amp you'd choose for all-out metal (nor is it designed to be) where a tight, powerful bass response is required. However, in less overwrought territory, the amp has more room to breathe and provides a really enjoyable and responsive drive.

CONCLUSION

The 18W Super TMB lives up to its promise of versatility, comfortably covering jazz, blues and classic rock territory with excellent results. There's plenty of volume for small to medium-sized gigs, and the amp's build quality fills us with confidence. This is not an amp that tries to offer lots of features, but if you're looking for a straightforward valve combo to provide a platform for you to fully express yourself, we have no hesitation in recommending this amp. **GB**



GBVERDICT

EVA 18W SUPER TMB COMBO

GOLD STARS

- ★ Excellent build quality
- ★ Great range of responsive sounds
- ★ Attractive price for a hand-made amp

BLACK MARKS

- None

IDEAL FOR...

Anything from jazz to blues to classic rock

GBRATING



GBINFO

EVA 18W SUPER TMB COMBO

PRICE: £794.70

BUILT IN: UK

TYPE: Valve combo

POWER: 18 watts

VALVES: 2 x 6V6, 2 x 12AX7

FEATURES: Gain, treble, middle, bass & master volume controls, 2 x speaker outputs switchable to 8 or 16 ohms

SPEAKERS: 1 x 12-inch Celestion Vintage 30

DIMENSIONS: 560(h) x 590(w) x 289(d) mm

WEIGHT: 12kg (26.5lb)

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