



HIWATT MAXWATT G50CM R

Hiwatt is best known for high-end valve amps, but Daniel Hodgson finds that the other end of the company's range also has much to offer

For players graduating from that first small practice combo to something capable of keeping up with a drummer, the sheer amount of choice on the market can be enough to seriously bewilder. A good place to start, however, is with the budget ranges from respected brands, such as the UK's very own Hiwatt.

Pre & Power amp

With two channels on offer, there should be plenty of variety in the G50. The normal channel offers treble, middle, bass and volume controls, while the overdrive channel adds a gain control to the mix, as well as a small switch to alternate between a classic distortion tone and a more modern, scooped sound.

The on-board spring reverb affects both channels and is controlled by a single knob on the amp's front, just beside the headphone output, which allows silent practising. At the rear of the amp we have an extension speaker output allowing for cabs of between 4 and 8 ohms, as well as a recording line out socket, plus an input for a two-button footswitch – not included – for channel and reverb switching.

Cabinet & Speaker

The G50 is bedecked in the traditional Hiwatt combination of

black textured vinyl and white piping, with the company's familiar logo on a plastic plaque in between the control panel and the salt-and-pepper grille cloth.

The cabinet is sturdily constructed and feels reassuringly weighty when lifted – it feels much more solid than the majority of other affordable solid-state combos on the market. A light amp might be easier to carry, but a thinner, lighter cabinet can have a detrimental effect on tone, particularly in the bass end. The speaker is a Hiwatt-branded 'heavy-duty' 12-inch driver with a ceramic magnet. All in all, the standard of construction is very respectable considering the price.

Sounds

Starting with the 'normal' channel, we find that Hiwatt haven't neglected their heritage when voicing the G50 – a big, full clean sound is on offer, with plenty of volume on tap for most gigging applications. The tone controls don't do all that much to affect the sound, but they do soften or exaggerate the right frequencies when needed. A little background noise is to be expected, but it's not overly intrusive, and there's a decent amount of clean headroom. This channel will distort at higher volumes, however, especially if you're using high-output pickups, and the

distortion is not particularly pleasant. The reverb works reasonably well to supply some ambience to the tone, with subtle settings providing the best results

Overdrive is not generally considered as one of solid-state amps' strong points, and the majority struggle to deliver the valve-style break-up that many players favour. Brash, edgy rock and metal distortion is a much more viable proposition, and so it proves here. With the overdrive channel in 'classic' mode, there are some meaty rock tones to be had, while the 'modern' setting approaches scooped metal territory. There's little in the way of lower gain sounds, but for full-on overdrive, the G50 serves up some solid, meaty grit with plenty of low end thump.

Conclusion

Considering the price, the G50 doesn't do a lot wrong – it's easy to use and has a range of clean and dirty tones that would suite developing players after an affordable solid-state combo that can offer plenty of volume for band practices and small gigs. The standard of build is certainly above average for an amp in this class and the Hiwatt badge lends it a certain kudos. As a step up from a small practice amp you could do much, much worse. **GB**

HIWATT MAXWATT G50CM R

Price: £199.95

Built in: China

Type: Solid-state combo

Power: 50 watts

Features: 2 footswitchable channels: clean channel with volume, treble, middle & bass controls; overdrive channel with classic/modern switch, gain, treble, middle, bass & master volume controls; master reverb control, footswitch input, headphone output, line out, speaker out (4-8 ohms)

Dimensions: 580(w) x 495(h) x 240(d) mm

Weight: 18kg (39.7lb)

CONTACT DETAILS

Freestyle Music Ltd

Tel: 01924 455414

www.hiwatt.co.uk

GB VERDICT

GOLD STARS

- ★ Good range of clean and distorted tones
- ★ Decent build
- ★ Great value

BLACK MARKS

- No footswitch included
- Lacks low-gain drive tones

IDEAL FOR...

Anyone after their first giggable guitar amp

GB RATING

