

TECH 21

SansAmp GED-2112

By Jon Button

There's no shortage of companies out there making amp simulators, but Tech 21—with their proprietary SansAmp technology—is one of the originals, and their wares remain a must-have for many bassists. Part of the reason is SansAmp forgoes digital modeling, unlike many other products on the market, to achieve emulation with a completely analog signal chain. Bassist Geddy Lee happens to be a fan of SansAmp technology, and through a collaboration with Tech 21, the GED-2112 Geddy Lee Signature SansAmp was born. Yes, it's a signature model, but don't *rush* (sorry) to judgment. Turns out this new model could be useful for a wide range of players in a variety of applications—especially rock situations where amp-like color is desired.

Hemispheres

The GED-2112 is a single-rack-space unit with a minty green front panel sporting a little drawing of Geddy raising his eyebrow at you. (When I was trying to learn his bass parts, I got the feeling he was raising his eyebrow in judgment of my ability to replicate his bass lines, but you can decide what he's saying to you.) The device is basically separated into two sections—a “drive” preamp section and a “deep” preamp section—that run parallel.

The drive section is based on the SansAmp RPM preamp and has dials for overdrive, bass, and treble, parametric midrange, and output level. There's also a blend control, which allows you to blend-in the desired amount of unprocessed, clean tone. The deep section has an EQ curve preset to Geddy's personal specs and only has two controls: saturation and output. In my

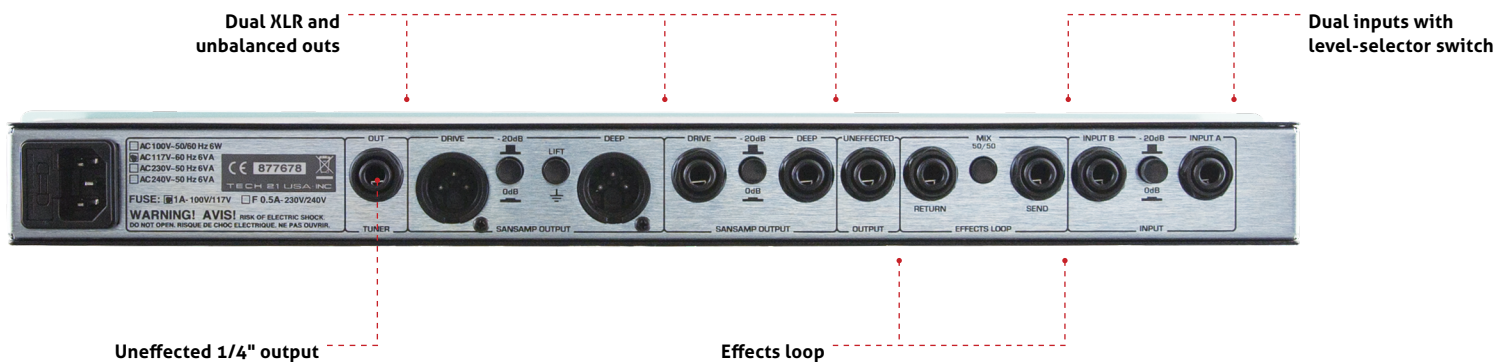
opinion, the “deep” name might be a little misleading. While it sounds great, I didn't find it all that deep *sounding*. To my ears, it had more of a midrange growl, which really complemented the drive section nicely.

There are two options for plugging in: either a single input on the front panel or the two on the back. You can switch between the two back-panel inputs with a button that's located on the face of the box. It seems like it would be a nice option to be able to do this with a footswitch, but no such luck. The back-panel inputs have a -20 dB pad for receiving line-level signals.

For outputs, there are a few options that give a player a lot of flexibility. Each section (deep and drive) has individual XLR and 1/4" outputs, and each output section has a switchable -20 dB pad. Additionally, there is an unaffected 1/4" out, which is essentially a buffered version of what goes into the input. Lastly, there's a tuner out, which is the same signal as the unaffected output, but is not silenced by the front-panel mute switch. I would have liked to have seen a dedicated output that provides a blend of the two preamps—especially if one wants to use the GED-2112 in a live rig for clubs. With that said, Tech 21 states that there are a couple of workarounds for this, including a permanent modification that would need to be performed by a qualified technician.

On the big-plus side, the GED-2112 delivers an all-analog signal path, and there are myriad reasons to prefer an all-analog signal over digital. A major one is that if you're using a digital modeler and splitting your signal pre-processing (say, to send the sound mixer an un-modeled option), the latency in digital processing will





mean that the processed and unprocessed signals will be out of phase. That's not a concern with the GED-2112.

Test for Echo

For testing, I plugged in my beloved 1965 P bass and ran each preamp's XLR out into an Apogee Duet. I often find option-packed gizmos that are *intended* to be versatile instead tend to have just one trick that works well. Not so here: I was able to get a very wide variety of usable tones out of the GED-2112.

The deep section sounds fantastic, with its built-in EQ curve, and its saturation sweep provides tones from fairly clean to a nice bit of overdrive. So, used individually, the deep section can serve as your basic plug-in-and-play tone, with a touch of amp-like air residing somewhere between clean and an amp turned up *just* before break-up.


Meanwhile, the drive section delivers everything from a nice, clean tone to

full on, raise-your-sign-of-the-horns distortion. I also found the drive section's EQ points very usable: Even with the treble cranked all the way up, you do get a satisfyingly bright tone, but it still retains a pleasant warmth. Given its control set and ability to head deep into overdrive and distortion world, the drive section is more versatile used on its own.

While both drive and deep were quite nice sounding as stand-alone preamps, the *real* magic comes when blending the two together, which is how the GED-2112 is intended to be used, after all. Taking advantage of the drive section's deep, scooped sound and blending in a bit of the slightly midrange-y deep section provided me with a huge, thick, balanced rock-bass tone.

The Verdict

The GED-2112 is an excellent-sounding, versatile bass preamp. That said, I encourage players to not just look at it as





a box to get Geddy Lee's sound, but rather as a flexible tone machine that he helped create. I think the GED-2112 would be very handy to leave patched in at a studio where you don't want to muck around with a bunch of amps or plug-ins. I would have liked it if the two preamps had a single output that blended them (especially for live use), as well as an option to switch between the inputs with a footswitch. But those observations aside, I found the SansAmp GED-2112 to be a great piece of equipment to have at the ready—at least whenever you need to get a killer bass sound quickly. Which is always, right? 

 [CLICK HERE TO WATCH A REVIEW DEMO](#) of this amp.

RATINGS

Tech 21 SansAmp GED-2112

\$369 street
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Tones	
Ease of Use	
Build/Design	
Value	

PROS Great amp-like tone. All-analog signal. Lots of versatility. Reasonable price.

CONS No dedicated blended output of the two preamps. Input selector not footswitchable.

