

# PRO AUDIO REVIEW

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equipment  
review

## Aguilar Amplification DB 900 Tube Direct Box

by Jeff Severson

Aguilar makes bass preamps that are a favorite among players and producers because of their warmth and full sound. Now, some of the same sound is available in the company's new tube DI box, the DB 900.

### Features/In use

Driven by one 12AX7 tube, the DB 900 (\$529), has a Jensen DBE output transformer and two outputs: XLR and 1/4-inch jack. There is a 1/4-inch jack input, ground lift switch and a power on/off switch. The DB 900 is about the size of two stomp boxes and comes with a 10-year limited warranty. It is a very simple design — not much here to mess up.

I plugged an acoustic-electronic guitar into the Aguilar, ran it through the board



and played a few notes through Genelec monitors. The warm, even sound was far superior to any DI box — tube or solid state — that I had tried before. When I whooped the strings even harder, the tube sucked it all in and spit it out in glorious fashion.

I had similarly excellent results while cutting a variety of bass tracks. The liveliness and presence the DB 900 added to a bass guitar makes the \$529 price tag even more appealing. The punch, clarity, and overall smooth sound I got when I was “popping” strings sold me on this tube DI. It does add brightness on the top end and more definition on the low bass, but this added equalization would serve to enhance most instruments' presence in a mix.

With an electric guitar, the sound was more predictable. I need to warn you: I

have not yet heard a direct guitar sound that I have liked. Skunk Baxter told me once that he recorded all the Steely Dan solos direct into the board. I guess if you are a monster player, you can make a kazoo sit up and bark. The Aguilar did not make me sound like Skunk Baxter reelin' in the years, but it was more forgiving than most.

### Summary

Aguilar has a winner. The DB 900 is a tube direct box that can add life and the right amount of color to any direct sound for a reasonable price.

*Jeff Severson, a regular contributor to Pro Audio Review, is a recording engineer, producer and songwriter.*

### At a Glance

**Applications:**

Studio, live sound

**Key Features:**

Tube direct box; 12AX7 tube; Jensen transformer; 10-year limited warranty

**Price:**

\$529.

**Contact:**

Aguilar Amplification at 800-304-1875; [www.aguilaramp.com](http://www.aguilaramp.com).

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