

The HBT-3 Highland Bagpipe Tuner Review

A few years ago Murray Blair brought out the HBT-1 Highland Bagpipe Tuner, and then the HBT-2 Tuner was made available which had several improvements. Now the HBT-3 Pocket sized tuner has hit the market. For those unfamiliar with Murray, he played with the Victoria Police Pipe Band for many years and is a sound and recording engineer. He has been involved in the recording of many notable pipe band and solo piping recordings over the years.

The HBT-3 tuner arrived attractively boxed in quality packaging with a moulded insert ensuring it reaches you in good condition. It includes a clip on microphone which greatly increases the accuracy of the tuner. As an option a semi rigid zipper case can be purchased. This has a belt loop at the back which fits the average kilt belt. A great idea and a huge improvement over the previous case!



The new HBT-3 is a pocket size tuner which is indeed very small. This is great for those of us who tune bands for various jobs and then hunt for somewhere to dump (and usually lose) their tuner. The tuner measures 8 cm X 5 cm X 2cm in size with a large, easy to read display screen which changes from a back lit orange to green when the note is in tune, leaving you

in no doubt when the desired result has been achieved. All control buttons are very easy to follow. It can be changed between drone and chanter mode and of course calibrated to your desired pitch. I was able to immediately use this tuner without referring to any instructions. This is a testimonial to its simplicity and ease of use. Gone are a lot of the features like the metronome which I never used anyway.



Although the tuner has a feature to install an external microphone (and it does come with a clip microphone), I found the internal microphone to be quite accurate and it performed well. The chanter settings are mathematically accurate and resulted in a true result to my ear. As always with high A, I usually set it a little below the mathematical norm which was easy to do with the dial on the display screen.

The tuner has a superfast 20ms response time and an accuracy of ± 0.1 Hz. This is similar to most instrument tuners on the market. The price is higher than the compatible instrument tuners; however this is not a chromatic tuner but one set to the bagpipe scale. This enables the accurate and effective tuning of the chanter without having to calibrate the scale differences in your own mind when using a chromatic tuner.

The tuner does not have a chromatic tuning mode, a tone generator, speaker or earphone jack. These are features I never or rarely used on the previous models.

This tuner is very effective at accurately setting a bagpipe chanter and I have always found this to be of great assistance when recording to greatly reduce tuning times and efficiency. This saves studio time and much frustration. It is also very handy to check the stability of the chanter and certain troublesome notes. I have found a dedicated bagpipe tuner a must when doing reviews of chanters and bagpipes, so that the ear is not the sole point of reference.

I trust that the HBT-3 will be of similar help to anyone else wanting either an accurate solo bagpipe or tuning a band. It certainly is a great wee product.

This is a highly recommended product. The HBT-3 is available from all good stockists, including the School of Piping Shop.

http://www.schoolofpiping.com/shop/bagpipes_and_accessories.html



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