

The HBT2 Highland Bagpipe Tuner Review

A few years ago the HBT1 Highland Bagpipe Tuner appeared on the market. Now the HBT2 Tuner available which has several improvements.

Looking at the tuner, it is quite small, in fact a similar size to the Korg tuners on the market. The tuner is almost 7 cm X 10 cm in size with a large, easy to read display screen and easy to follow control buttons. The tuner comes beautifully presented and packaged, and the exterior design and manufacturing quality is as good as any tuner that I have seen available for any other instrument. I was able to immediately use this tuner without referring to the instruction book. This is maybe not the recommended method for any piece of electronic equipment, but a testimonial to its ease of use.



The tuner also features a metronome function, something I am sure many would use and find handy, but not a feature I would personally look for in a tuner. It has a feature to install an external microphone which is always good when tuning a band. The HBT1 seemed to always have difficulty picking up some bass drones, but this seems to have been remedied with the HBT2 as I had no problems at all and found the supplied contact microphone to be very good indeed.

A soft case is available for AUD\$15, as is a clamp for attaching the tuner to your blow stick for \$14.50. These are both very handy accessories indeed. The case does not have a belt loop to fit onto a Pipe Major's belt, but the tuner is small and sporran sized and accurate without an external microphone so it can be slotted onto a pocket or sporran easily.



The tuner has a superfast 20ms response time and an accuracy of +/- 1 cent. This is similar to most Korg tuners on the market. The price is higher than the compatible Korg 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 scale as set is very true and correct and obviously any preferred acceptable variance, such as a lower pitched high A can be easily set as the actual reading of the note is set on the digital screen on the dial and a number system.

Murray Blair, the designer of the tuner has kindly prepared a video to display the differences in the scale. It is interesting to note the movement of the alternative tuner's dial even when a perfectly steady tone generator is used.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrikWmyOuOI>

The tuner does have a chromatic tuning mode, a tone generator and is easily calibrated to any pitch you desire to set your instrument to.

This tuner is very effective at accurately setting a bagpipe chanter and I have found it 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 HBT2 will be of similar help to anyone else wanting an either an accurate solo bagpipe or tuning of a band.

This is certainly a highly recommended product. The HBT2 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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