

Planet Waves NS Mini-Headstock Tuner

VERSION 9

Created on: Sep 23, 2011 4:45 PM by [Anderton](#) · Last Modified: Sep 27, 2011 3:50 PM by [Anderton](#)

Stay in tune - unobtrusively

\$29.99 MSRP, www.planetwaves.com



power button. When you tune, an out of tune string displays pitch in red and as you get close to being in tune, the display turns green and shows the note pitch. (By "close" to being in tune, I mean good enough to get you through the song.) Additional bars appear to the left or right of the pitch display to indicate flat or sharp, respectively. For fine tuning, you want one bar on each side of the note, as shown in the picture below. If you don't turn off the power manually, it shuts off automatically after ten minutes.

SO DOES IT WORK?

I tried the NS Mini-Headstock Tuner on two different PRS guitars, and it worked on the first try at clamping and plucking. So then I tried it on my custom BecVar bass, which has an extremely rigid neck. It was harder to find a good place to put the tuner, as there was very little vibration I could feel behind the nut. Placing it between the E and A tuners on the headstock, and plucking the strings relatively hard, got it to work.



Sometimes you need to go big or go home. But with the NS Mini-Headstock Tuner (designed in conjunction with Ned Steinberger), the object seems to go small, and go away. This diminutive tuner clamps on to your headstock, and basically disappears—although you can see the readout that indicates tuning, no one in the audience will. The entire tuner is about the size of a large thumb, from tip to first knuckle. Power comes from a CR2032 battery (included).

You attach the tuner on the headstock, behind the nut, by putting pressure on a tab to release a clamp that's part of the tuner. Slide the tuner into place, then push down on the clamp to hold it. The clamp surfaces are slightly rubberized to prevent scratching, and the tuner body rotates so you can optimize the viewing angle.

TUNE TIME

The tuner has two buttons. One lets you set a reference frequency for A other than 440 (from 430 to 450Hz); if you press and hold, it toggles between displaying sharps as flats, or vice-versa.

The other button is the



For a challenge in the other direction, I tried the tuner with a Låg ukulele (which by the way sounds really good, but that's a separate review). Somewhat to my surprise given the nylon strings, it worked perfectly. The tuner is not coming off that uke—ukuleles are hard enough to tune under the best of circumstances anyway.

One of the really useful features is that the NS Mini-Headstock Tuner gets its information via a piezo transducer, not a mic—you can tune up in an environment with extremely high ambient noise. The display is bright and visible on dark stages, but also, it not only doesn't wash out under direct sunlight, it's extremely visible. Yes, you can use it to tune when you're playing outdoor gigs.

GOOD THINGS, SMALL PACKAGES

The NS Mini-Headstock Tuner is small, unobtrusive, gets the job done, and I really can't think of a gigging situation where it would be inappropriate. I was particularly impressed that it worked with a variety of instruments, and the price puts it in the impulse item range. What's not to like?



Craig Anderton is Editor in Chief of Harmony Central and Executive Editor of Electronic Musician magazine. He has played on, mixed, or produced over 20 major label releases (as well as mastered over a hundred tracks for various musicians), and written over a thousand articles for magazines like Guitar Player, Keyboard, Sound on Sound (UK), and Sound + Recording (Germany). He has also lectured on technology and the arts in 38 states, 10 countries, and three languages.