

KAM Kompact 10



Kam offer a very portable yet surprisingly pokey PA system for solo performers & bands who like to travel light...

Words: Tim Slater

Time was when any PA worth its salt had to be both physically impressive whilst also boasting a wattage that edged well into six figures.

While there are still plenty of working semi-professional bands that can justify rocking up to gigs in a van groaning under the weight of big subs and hefty mid-top enclosures, recent technological developments have seen the PA systems gradually shrinking in size. Increasingly efficient electronics that reduce power-sapping heat build up, plus smaller & lighter speakers mean that even relatively low-powered systems like the Kam Kompact 10 can still deliver good quality audio that belies its relatively diminutive size.

Sub & Speakers

The Kompact 10 system comprises an active 400 watt subwoofer whose built-in power amplifiers are divided between a dedicated 250 watt subwoofer amp, plus two separate stereo 75 watt amplifiers that drive the pair of passive 1 x 6.5-inch HF satellite drivers.

This system feels very self-contained and comes complete with Speakon cables for hooking up the sub to the satellites and a pair of lightweight but nonetheless sturdy telescopic tripod speaker stands, which reflects the Kompact 10's general air of easy portability combined with a build quality that feels reassuringly robust.

Besides the obligatory perforated steel speaker grills, the sub and

satellites are also finished in a tough textured black paint that contains an element derived from rubber to make the enclosures more scratch-resistant. The compact satellites only weigh-in at 6.4Kgs each and look more like studio reference monitors than PA enclosures but both still include integrated carrying handles, plus

system or in situations where more power is required and two subs are used with a pair of satellites to form part of a larger PA.

The squat and sturdy-looking powered sub weighs 25.6Kgs (around 55lbs) and features a choice of male & female XLR inputs and standard 1/4-inch jack inputs for the left & right channels,

The Kompact 10 delivers a big sound for its size...

standard 35mm pole-mounting sockets, as does the lone sub. The sub's 35mm speaker socket mounts a satellite directly above the sub on a pole, either as a stand-alone

plus basic mixing controls: individual level controls for each channel and a global master output control for the sub.

Speakon outputs on

either channel connect the sub directly to the passive satellites, and good quality Speakon cables are provided with the rig, which is nice!

In Use

Compact though this system is, it nevertheless feels very sturdy; the enclosures have a nice meaty feel to them and although you are thankful that they will easily fit into the back of your Hot Hatch, you still wouldn't want to have to carry the sub the length of the high street! At first we harnessed the Kam speakers to a separate mixer and used the system to amplify a vocal and acoustic guitar, bearing in mind that the enclosure's built-in crossover is set at 3kHz and with a claimed frequency response between 90hz-20kHz, the Kam Kompact 10 should be able to handle way beyond the fairly modest demands of a typical guitarist/singer.

In this situation the Kompact 10 sounds very convincing; it is definitely powerful enough to cope with a typical small pub-sized venue and seems capable of translating the steel string acoustic guitar's complex tones without rendering the guitar sound boxy or thin.

The question 'so, how loud does it go?' is a common mistake that people sometimes make when

confusing wattage with the PA's overall efficiency. Heaps of wattage does not automatically guarantee that a PA system – or guitar amplifier, for that matter – will sound louder than another one half as powerful. What we're saying is; don't be fooled into thinking that a compact system like this won't be up to the task. So long as you work within reasonable limits we can see little reason why the Kompact 10 shouldn't cope well with a rock band, amplifying a couple of vocals whilst helping to give a lead guitar or keyboard a little bit of extra spread. If you are more used to working in very large venues or playing open air gigs then you will definitely need more power to give you extra headroom but for pub or fairly standard-sized club work then the Kompact 10 is more than up to the task. The little powered sub will handle a considerable amount of low end before any noticeable peaking starts to creep in, a smidgeon of bass drum doesn't seem to bother it unduly and so long as the low-end isn't constantly driven hard to the point where it begins to eat into the system's headroom the Kompact 10 sounds very gutsy. The low end has a nice solid thump that sounds incredibly powerful for such a small unit whereas the treble and midrange frequencies are tight and punchy. **PM**

SOUND ADVICE

Headroom: What does it mean?

'Headroom' is the term used to describe the available spare capacity an amplifier has once it is operating at gig volume. Imagine a 100 watt amplifier and a 20 watt amplifier that are both operating at the same volume; when you begin to turn them both up the bigger amplifier will sound cleaner and louder because it isn't being forced to operate so close to its maximum capacity. When an amplifier is working hard it generates more heat, which has the effect of placing more demands on the amp's circuitry and is noticeable by a gradual loss of low-end.

In terms of volume, there isn't that much difference between 300 watts and 150 watts but the extra power plays an important role by offering more available headroom to work with, guaranteeing that your PA will sound as good at the end of the gig as it did at the beginning.



The active sub contains I/O and basic mixing controls

SHOULD I BUY ONE?

This Kam Kompact 10 has a street price of around £399, which makes it feel very competitive considering that it offers so much for such a comparatively modest sum. OK, if you are planning to embark on a tour of 400-plus capacity biker festivals this summer we would respectfully suggest that a bigger PA system with a little more in the tank would probably be more sensible. However, general pub and club should still be well within its capacity. This humble little setup is capable of delivering some excellent results. For the typical working semi-pro band whose members travel to gigs independently rather than altogether in a trusty Ford Transit, small-sized PA systems definitely feel like the way to go; transportation issues are solved, besides which it is very easy to set up and tear-down.

The Kam Kompact 10 is well made and delivers a great sound that overshadows its small size, used sensibly we can't see how anyone would be disappointed.

THE GOOD BITS:

Compact, affordable, very powerful for its size.

THE NOT SO GOOD BITS:

Nothing to find fault with at this price!

SRP: £486.95

Contact: www.kam.co.uk