

Benchtest: HK Lucas Nano 300

Small, light, loud – these are the conflicting demands that compact PAs normally have to fulfill. HK Audio has demonstrated rather impressively how to bring it all together under the gratest common denominator.

by Maya Consuelo Sternel

A sophisticated design object ‘floats’ up at us fresh out of the box. It ‘floats’ because the entire PA weighs just 8.3 kilos. It is sophisticated because it actually manages to compress everything into a portable format measuring 30 by 39 by 42 centimeters. And it is a design object because it is all black, stylish, and incorporates quite practical, sizable carrying handles, easy-access ports and control panels. We are talking about an amplifier, a three channel mixer, a subwoofer and two satellites that can be transported with ease in a tidy package. To this end, the two satellites are locked securely to the main housing.

Weighing all of 1,000 grams each, the satellites are screwed onto a pole and the system’s cabling is thereby connected with a few twists of the wrist. On the surface, this mode of installation appears surprisingly delicate, but also very well thought-out and solidly made. Their performance, however, makes it clear that we are dealing with a real PA.

Oomph!

Installed in a bass reflex enclosure to serve as the subwoofer, the eight-inch speaker can handle 44 Hz to 190 Hz while delivering 116 dB sound pressure. The speakers in the small satellites feature a particularly elaborate build. A 3 ½-inch driver, designed to render a frequency range from 190 Hz to 20 kHz, gets the job done. The specified sound pressure level of 112 dB is very impressive for satellites of this size.

Housed in a bass reflex enclosure, the three-channel Class-D amplifier delivers 160 watts to the subwoofer and 35 watts each to the satellites. Also integrated here is a three-channel mixer with two stereo channels, one mono channel, combination connectors and RCA inputs. Each channel has its own volume control and a tone control that may be switched to mic or line mode depending on the source and has been optimized to work with different voicings for speech applications and music. Unfortunately, there is no master volume. The mixer’s output section offers the choice of a composite signal of all three channels or the signal from channel 2 for monitoring applications using

ENTRY LEVEL

That’s what’s been missing all along: a sophisticated little PA as a combination of active subwoofer and two satellites.

a cord with ¼” jack plugs. There is also a THRU jack for connecting further Nanos.

Sound

The system’s sound is nothing short of excellent. We first used it as a disco PA driven by a computer and addressed via a CD player. The sound comes across as very balanced and very powerful considering the size of the system. The subwoofer’s volume may be controlled separately, so matching the level to that of the satellites was very easy. The satellites and subwoofer only begin to lose their composure at the system’s limit, which is clearly indicated by a red flashing LED. However, as long it is operated within the specified performance parameters, this mini PA simply sounds great, and that in a variety of constellations.

Of course, we tried out the Nano as a sound reinforcement system for vocals, fed it with strident jazz sounds and piped in bass sounds triggered by a drum set. We also used an electric piano and a lot of samples, which we sent to the console of the Lucas Nano 300 via an audio interface. The result is a thoroughly enjoyable rehearsal weekend for the band and a nice closing concert with a fat sound.

A second mini PA was used to this end: Plug a stereo cable into the designated jack, flip a switch, and the Nano 300 runs as a left or right mono-block. The satellites are simply pushed together at their contact rails.



Specs:

- Three-channel Class-D amplifier
- Active eight-inch subwoofer
- Power output: 160 watts
- Max. sound pressure level: 116 dB (SPL)
- Frequency range: 44 Hz to 190 Hz
- Built-in three-channel mixer
- Limiter
- Microphone input
- Two stereo outputs
- Record, Thru & Link output
- Weight: 8.3 kg

Satellites:

- 3 ½-inch fullrange speaker
- Power output: 35 watts
- Frequency range: 190 Hz to 20 kHz
- Max. sound pressure level: 112 dB (SPL)
- Weight: 1.0 kg

Lucas Nano 300

Manufacturer: HK Audio
Internet: www.hkaudio.com
Price: 679 Euro

- ▲ Excellent handling
- ▲ Great flexibility
- ▲ Sophisticated design
- ▲ Dynamic sound
- ▲ Good workmanship
- ▲ Good value for money
- ▼ Mixer without master volume

Sound: ■■■■■■
Workmanship: ■■■■■■
Bang for buck: ■■■■■■
Rating: ■■■■■■

Click - and suddenly two small satellites become one that is twice as large. It provides quite a bit of sound pressure. And we’re having fun.

Conclusion

We’ve been waiting for something like this. The Lucas Nano 300 from HK Audio is a very successful little PA with surprisingly big performance and excellent sound. Everything’s included. On top of that, there’s the super-easy handling and superior versatility. The bang-for-buck factor is also excellent. Add the two together and another benefit emerges: If I need more power, two synchronized Lucas Nano 300s are a real alternative to a similarly powerful conventional PA because the Nano will still be lightweight, easy to handle and, above all, as versatile as ever. ■

Alternative

none