

BASS AMPLIFIER: Overall Winner

Markbass CMD102P

RRP: £970

Reviewed December 16/9



For a company to be able to produce something as good as the CMD102P in only its third year is quite a remarkable achievement but, take our word for it, this little Markbass unit is the business.

In keeping with modern trends, the Markbass is compact and lightweight – 20kg is pretty sensational for a 400W boomer, and it's been achieved by using a combination of poplar plywood and Neodymium drivers. The attention to detail displayed in this baby's design is impressive: it can either sit up straight or tilt back like a monitor, and there's a Velcro-secured removable slot in the top which pops out easily, giving unfettered access to the back panel. The slightly Hanna-Barbera-style logo and sandy-coloured speakers won't be to everyone's tastes, but we think the whole package looks very striking. In fact, there's a pleasing balance here between contemporary and retro which is further reinforced by the solid black knobs and



sheer simplicity of appearance of the control panel.

You get a basic four-band EQ comprising Low, Low Mid, High Mid and High (each offering 16db of cut/boost),

although the labelling is slightly confusing, with Low Mid being called Mid Low. A pair of filters are on offer, allowing you to take either a retro approach via the VLE option (Vintage Loudspeaker Emulator) or a contemporary one using the VPF (Variable Pre-Shape) control. Handy jack sockets including an Extension Speaker Out, Tuner Out and FX loop, together with an XLR DI Out give you all the facilities you need.

Tonally, the Markbass delivers lows that are tight and fat with a pleasing earthy growl and clean, clear highs that indicate a seriously well-attenuated onboard

tweeter. Dialling in buckets of bass shakes the room with definition, and boosting Mid Low gives machinegun punch. Boosting Mid High gives a fractional increase in an adenoidal quality, but overall it still sounds musical. There's plenty of edgy aggression available via cranked-up highs, although the tweeter renders excessively boosted scenarios way too glassy.

Use the VLE filter if you're into retro-soul, blues or dub, or try the VPF if entering a world of greater attack or you crave the modern, scooped-mids slap tone. Adaptable, portable, powerful – this Markbass is very, very good.

FACTFILE

Description: Single channel, 400W 2x10" transistor combo. Two Neodymium 10" speakers and piezo tweeter. 22mm poplar plywood cabinet with front porting. Made in Italy

Price: £970

Contact: Proel International ☎ 020 8761 9911

Web: www.markbass.it

Previous Winners:

2004 – Hughes & Kettner Quantum QC415