



SOUNDRoom



Genzler Magellan 800 head & Bass Array12-3 cabinet

BY JONATHAN HERERRA

JEFF GENZLER IS ONE OF BASSDOM'S MOST seasoned amplification gurus, having offered up a host of innovative designs over a three-decade-plus career. While many players were saddened to hear of the demise of his old company Genz Benz, those same fans are thrilled that he's back, this time with Genzler Amplification. An early proponent of Class D/SMPS amps, Genzler currently offers a single head, the Magellan 800 reviewed here, with new designs forthcoming. Genzler also developed a reputation for intriguing lightweight cabinets at Genz Benz, and his new venture continues the innovative tradition, most notably with a line of cabs that incorporate a neodymium "line array."

GENZLER MAGELLAN 800

The Magellan is as handsome an amp as I've seen in some time, with a beautiful brushed-aluminum chassis that conveys a high-quality look and feel. The posh vibe continues with the smooth-turning knurled metal knobs, confidence-inspiring push buttons, and metal front-panel ¼" jack. As is becoming the norm in all but the cheapest bass heads, the Magellan offers an extensive feature set, capable of contending with almost every musical environment. The MUTE and PAD functions are switchable via the front panel, while the rear offers connectivity for headphones, an auxiliary input, effect loop, phantom-protected op-amp-driven

BALANCED OUTPUT, and an optional footswitch. Like most SMPS amps, the Magellan sports a universal power supply in case you need to bring the amp overseas.

The Genzler preamp is a versatile design. A CLIP light is on hand to help set the CLEAN input gain control. If a dirty sound is desired, a switchable DRIVE circuit can be engaged via a front-panel button or footswitch. Its two-knob GAIN/VOLUME design is ideal for precisely adjusting the desired amount of signal-path saturation. Ingeniously, Genzler has taken the standard-issue contour control up a notch: Rather than offering only the typical mid-scoop shape, an A/B switch also gives the player access to a mid-boosting contour. The level of both contours is controllable with the SHAPE knob. Last on the front panel is the 3-band EQ, offering shelving BASS and TREBLE filters with a semi-parametric midrange. A helpful array of LEDs indicate the status of each of the circuit's relevant stages. Like the EBS Reidmar reviewed on page 42, the Genzler Magellan is based on ICEpower's 700ASC/X module. Given the ubiquity of the unit in bass heads, the sonic differences among amps is due largely to their contrasting preamp sections and the implemented features of the power amp module.

The Genzler's interior construction was superb. In spite of the cramped quarters, the through-hole preamp board and output boards were solidly installed and stood off from the power amp module with shields to prevent interference. Genzler made excellent use of the available space.

BASS ARRAY12-3

At least as notable as the arrival of the Magellan 800 is Genzler's striking new Bass Array12-3 cabs. At first glance, it's obvious that the cab represents an unorthodox approach, at least in the bass-amp world. Rather than the more conventional woofer plus corner-placed tweeter, Genzler's design pairs a conventional 12" neodymium woofer with an array of 3" neodymium drivers in a line-array pattern. We've all seen line arrays at large concerts, but this is the first time I've seen the concept trickle into a bass cabinet. In a line array, several drivers of the same type are placed in a line and fed a signal of equal phase and output. If correctly designed,

the speakers' outputs constructively interfere, increasing the signal's amplitude and directional coherence. Since the 3" drivers also extend to lower frequencies than the typical horn tweeter, cone transducers can be utilized, improving sensitivity and lowering distortion.

Our test cabinet was impeccably constructed. It featured rugged textured black vinyl covering, metal corners, a heavy-duty strap handle, rubber feet, and a custom grille designed to accommodate and protect the slight protrusion of the Bass Array's array column. Genzler sourced Italian-made Faital drivers for the Bass Array, pairing them with a custom-wound crossover. The schleppable cab weighs in at 34 pounds—not the lightest 1x12 on the block, but the only one I know that pairs its woofer with four additional drivers.

GLOBAL SOUND

I tested the Magellan 800 and BA12-3 together and with other amps and cabinets, using a variety of instruments. As I've mentioned here and in the EBS review, a well implemented ICEpower module sounds like ... well, itself. It's in the preamp where a modern lightweight amp designer shows his stuff. The Magellan was loud, authoritative, and fast when I ran everything flat. It had a razor-sharp transient response and remarkable extension into both extremes of the audible frequency spectrum. I never wanted for additional volume or headroom, even when I intentional abused the B string of my F Bass BN5. The tone-sculpting circuitry performed as advertised. I loved the mid-bump feature of the CONTOUR control, and while I didn't think the DRIVE sound was super inspiring, it also was just the right thing for adding a touch of fur to my otherwise crystal-clean tone.

Paired with the BA12-3 cab, the Genzler half-stack proved itself to be a remarkably accurate and high-fidelity rig. There wasn't any forgiving tube-like plushness; rather, there was instantaneous response and high-precision definition. Even in the sometimes boxy lower midrange, the Genzler proved its revealing nature, allowing harmonically dense instruments to speak with clarity and good note-to-note separation. The EQ made itself useful when I needed to subtly bump the lows in a bass-shy room or roll back

some treble from an especially zingy bass.

The return of Jeff Genzler to the bass-amp marketplace should be cause for glee among players. Never satisfied with the status quo, Genzler has long established his knack for delivering smart and innovative designs at a reasonable cost. It's rare that someone introduces new (to us) concepts into bass amps, but given the success of these models, I'm excited to see what Genzler has planned next. **BP**

S SPECIFICATIONS

GENZLER

Street Magellan 800, \$760;
Bass Array12-3, \$880

Pros Excellent rig that offers enormous volume and high fidelity; flexible preamp; good construction

Cons None

Bottom Line Industry legend Jeff Genzler continues to impress, this time with a burgeoning line of innovative and lightweight amps and cabs.

SPECS

Magellan 800

Power rating 400 watts @ 8Ω; 800 watts @ 4Ω; 800 watts @ 2.2Ω

Input impedance 1MΩ

Tone controls BASS: ±15dB @ 75Hz;

MID: ±15dB @ 150Hz-3kHz;

TREBLE: ±15dB @ 6kHz

XLR DI output PRE/POST switch and GROUND LIFT

Power amp Class D

Power supply Switchmode

Output jacks One Neutrik Speakon

Weight 6.2 lbs

Bass Array12-3

Configuration 1x12" woofer + 4x3" line-array tweeter

Impedance 8Ω

Power handling 350 watts

Frequency response 32Hz-15kHz

Sensitivity 98dB @ 1W/1M

Connectors Neutrik Speakon x2; ¼" x2

Made in Taiwan (head), USA (cabinet)

Contact genzleramplification.com