

FBT MaxX Powered Sound System

BY JAMIE RIO

To tell you the truth, I had never heard of FBT prior to receiving six boxes of their PA gear. I soon found out that even though the company has only been selling in the USA for a year and a half, Ferrari (F) Baldoni (B) and Tanoni (T) have been building sound equipment since 1951. Let's take a look at the system.

I would like to start with the MaxX 9Sa powered sub woofers. FBT sent me two of these rotomolded, polyethylene babies for my review. And I have to say that the enclosures are deceptively small and light, considering how much power they carry. 40Hz to 125Hz of bass are produced through a 900-watt power amplifier pushing one 15"

woofer with a die-cast aluminum basket and neodymium magnet. The woofer is designed by FBT and built in the B&C speaker factory (also in Italy). The entire package is very modern looking, weighs in at about 55 lbs and has a small 19" x 20" footprint.

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Of course you need satellite speakers to go with any subs, so FBT sent two MaxX 4a powered two-way enclosures to handle the job. These speakers feature gas injected molded cabinets, bi-amplified power (300-watts for lows and 100-watts for highs), a 12" woofer with neodymium magnet and a high compression horn. They are handsome, lightweight (about 35 lbs) and can be flown or used as stage monitors. Now that we have some idea of what we are working with lets take a look at how this system performed in the real world.

The Gigs

Every Friday evening for seven weeks during August, September and October, I used the FBT system as the PA for the Blue Barrel Blues and Jazz festival in Valencia CA. Each week a new blues or jazz band would play outside to an audience of approximately 500 people. I mixed sound for everything from a three-piece Chicago blues band to an eight-piece Brazilian jazz group. Probably the best thing about running sound for this type of event is that there are no rock bands to deal with. Consequently, there aren't any egomaniacal guitar players who think they have to turn their amp up to 11 in order to perform. Just to clarify, I am a guitar player in a rock band. I just enjoy a nice mix.



Anyway, each week I would start my mix from the bottom up with the drums and bass first. Those 900-watt FBT subs add a lot of punch to the kick drum and bass guitar. They really make it easy to set up a nice bottom for your bands. After the drums and bass, I add percussion, electric guitars, keyboards, horns, harmonica, accordion or whatever. Vocals and effects are last. The MaxX 4a enclosures carry most of the frequencies but also deliver buckets of bass (especially for 12" two-ways). They have high, mid, and low EQ, gain and volume built into every cabinet. This makes it a piece of cake to balance volume and EQ between the subs and satellites.

For it's size, the FBT system is the most powerful I have used. It takes just a few minutes to set up and has no problem delivering quality sound to upwards of 500 people.



SOUND CHECK

The Gear:

FBT MaxX Powered Sound System

The Gigs:

The Blue Barrel Blues and Jazz Festival - Valencia, CA

Who It's For:

Giggers and Soundtechs Doing Medium-sized Gigs

How Much:

- MaxX 9SA Powered Subwoofers \$1299.95
- MaxX 9S Passive Subwoofers \$799.95
- MxX 4A Powered Speakers \$899.95 ea.

Pros:

- Lightweight (for powered speakers)
- Great sound
- Easy to set-up and run

Cons:

None

FBT North America
P.O. Box 8144
Berlin, CT 06037
Tel.: (860) 829-0434
Fax: (860) 829-1026
www.fbt.it