



VELODYNE

DIGITAL DRIVE 10 PLUS



Text & Pictures

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Velodyne Acoustics Digital Drive 10 Plus

Price: 4.590 Euro

Distribution: Audio Reference GmbH

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Velodyne Acoustics

www.velodyneacoustics.com



REVIEW

If you are looking for an impressive subwoofer for your home theater, you will definitely come across Velodyne sooner or later. The manufacturer has been in business since 1983 and has made a name for itself for precise basses with all kinds of additional features. In 2019, the subwoofer manufacturer moved from California to Hamburg. We tested the Velodyne Digital Drive 10 Plus from the current range.

The Velodyne Digital Drive 10 Plus is one of a family of four subwoofers. In the manufacturer's largest class of devices, the DD-10+ is the smallest model. However, small is relative. The Velodyne MicroVee X rather falls into this category. The DD-10+, on the other hand, weighs in at an impressive 34 kilograms with dimensions of 36 x 33 x 42 cm. The number ten in the product name represents the size of the driver. In this case, 10 inches (25 cm). Connections, functions and performance do not differ from the siblings. They are just bigger with 12", 15" or 18" drivers.

The Velodyne Digital Drive 10 Plus is driven by a Class D amplifier. The subwoofer is rated with an average power of 1,250 watts RMS. At peak times, it should reach up to 3,000 watts with a lower cutoff frequency of 18.7 hertz (+/-3 dB).

The connection panel is more like an AV receiver than a bass speaker. Here we find RCA and XLR jacks, speaker connections, trigger and RS-232 inputs, an infrared and Ethernet interface, and a video output in addition to the typical LFE input!

AUDIO REFERENCE X VELODYNE ACOUSTICS

When Dave Hall launched Velodyne Acoustics in 1983, with the aim of transforming the enjoyment of music and movies home into a new experience, he had a unique feel for an upcoming mega trend.

Today, it is impossible to imagine consumer electronics without subwoofers. By pioneering products and patents, Velodyne Acoustics has left a significant mark on an entire product category.

In 2019, Mansour Mamaghani, with his company Audio Reference, a long-time German distributor of Velodyne Acoustics, acquired the company. And so, the Californian subwoofer forge joined the "Hanseatic League."—ready to define a new generation of bass for the next 30 years to come.

VELODYNE EQ

The Velodyne Digital Drive 10 Plus is delivered in two packages - one contains the subwoofer, the other a lot of accessories. These include a measuring microphone with floor stand, a decent collection of cables and two CD-ROMs. Most of it is needed for the calibration. For this, we connect the microphone to the subwoofer once and set it up at our listening position. Velodyne offers three measurement methods: "Self-EQ", "Auto-EQ Plus" and "Manual EQ". These are described in the detailed user manual as "the first equalizer", "power up" and "adjust as desired".

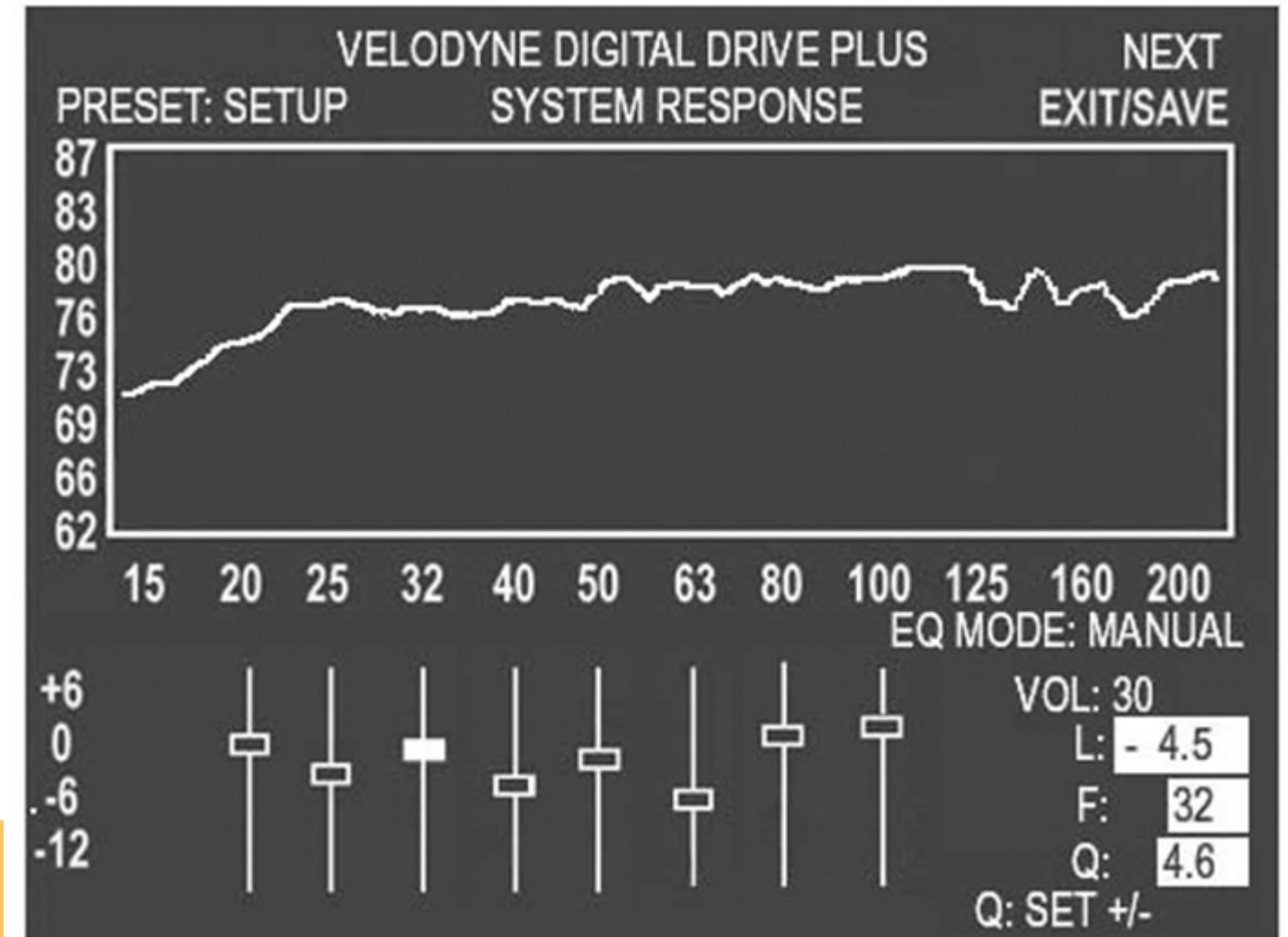
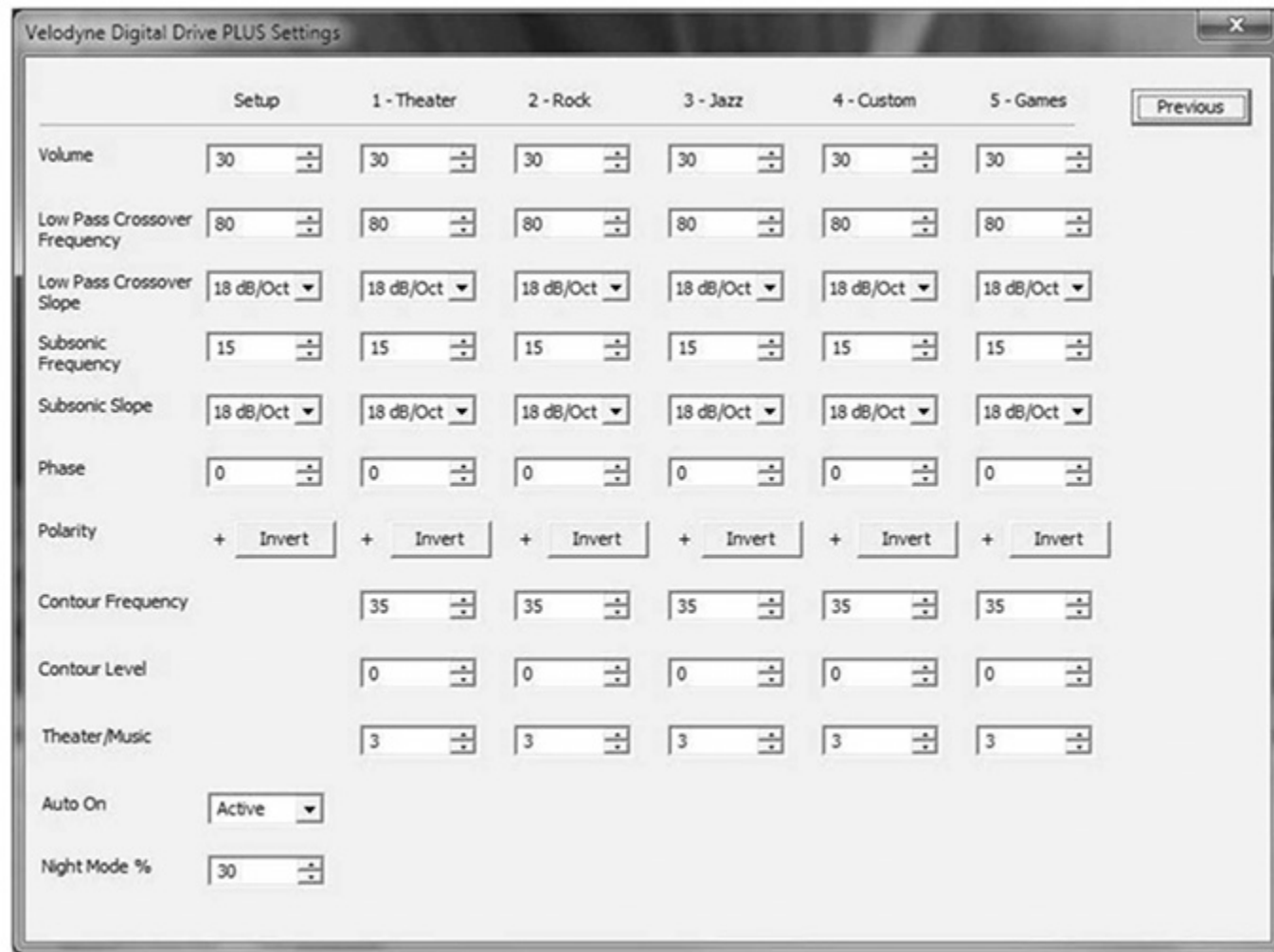
In "Self-EQ" mode, the subwoofer generates a sweep tone that the microphone picks up and passes to the digital signal processor in the DD-10+. The latter then calculates a suitable frequency curve taking the room into account. This is an effective and goal-oriented solution. The "Auto-EQ-Plus" function goes one step further. Here, the sweep sound comes from the enclosed CD. If you don't have a CD or Blu-ray player, you can find it for download on the Velodyne website. Besides the filter parameters, the subwoofer can now also adjust the volume, crossover, slope and phase. The result is convincing in the test and should be more than sufficient in most home theaters and households.

The manual EQ is suitable for particularly problematic rooms. It offers dozens of setting options, but also requires a certain expertise. The parameters can be accessed on the PC via Velodyne software. Mac users cannot avoid connecting the subwoofer to the TV or AV receiver via composite or S-Video - if one of the devices still has these connections. If not, you have to borrow a Windows laptop for the sound settings. After all, you don't adjust the room every day.

What else do you get for the money? Much more than an ordinary subwoofer in terms of appearance, too. The side panels here are curved and taper slightly towards the back. This makes for a fresh look and reduces standing waves inside the enclosure. Damped feet prevent energy transfer to the floor. The top is covered with a glossy finish. Underneath is a subtle woodgrain pattern.

The 10-inch driver sits on the front in a sealed enclosure. A display, USB and microphone input and two knobs complete the front. The accessories also include a front cover.





LISTENING SESSION

We have started our Velodyne Digital Drive 10 Plus review with the Auto-EQ-Plus calibration. It delivers an excellent result in our room and integrates the subwoofer perfectly into our test system. When Zeus fires his lightning bolts in the action comedy "Thor: Love and Thunder" on Disney+, the sound is much more atmospheric. Explosions and fights sound more mature. The sub not only provides more depth, but also a larger soundstage. The DD-10+ reaches the pit of the stomach when Thor crashes to the ground from an enormous height and the bass wave works its way deep and crisp through the room.

One of our favorite test scenes is the car race in the science fiction adventure "Ready Player One". Although it lacks deep effects, it is so beautifully chaotic that it is a challenge for every home theater system.

The Velodyne subwoofer ensures better localization of the many effects and makes them appear clearer. Basses are served up by the DD-10+ to the point. The overall picture seems more coherent. The entire system benefits from the sub's Auto EQ Plus optimization.

Nothing changes when we switch from home theater to a home concert. In the concert film "Live In Prague", film composer Hans Zimmer performs with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra and The Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr. The DD-10+ provides the appropriate foundation, much needed in many of Zimmer's compositions. Our test setup noticeably gains in size, detail and volume in the bass. But even in the works that avoid excessive bass energy, the Velodyne subwoofer provides subtle support and proves to be a very musical playing partner.

CONCLUSION

The Digital Drive 10 Plus offers what is generally expected from a subwoofer: deep bass and more than enough power to push air powerfully into the room. With the various tuning options and a high-quality measuring microphone, you can perfectly integrate the subwoofer into the playback chain. Furthermore, we like the access to all sound parameters and the diverse connection options. Thus, the subwoofer is both a plug'n'play device and the perfect occupation for tuning professionals. ■