



Marshall Lemmy 1992LEM, 1979L, MF280L Rig

When it comes to signature bass tones, Lemmy is certainly unique. So to what extent does this signature rig provide Mr Kilmister with an 'ace' up his sleeve?

There are rock icons and then there are the gods of rock: very few attain such status. But Lemmy Kilmister is one such legend. When it comes to amplification, very few players have the prestigious honour of having a signature bass rig developed in their name yet as part of their Signature Series to commemorate the long standing association between both parties Marshall have released the Lemmy all-valve head and monstrous 4x15-inch and 4x12 stack. Lemmy's rig is as important to his overall sound as his trusty Rickenbacker basses, the pair compliment each other so well that were he to use anything else, the magic would surely be lost. Marshall bass amplification has a reputation for being loud and proud, it doesn't hide behind frills and gimmicks so clarity and finesse tend to be disposed of to make way for volume and sheer brute bass power. So it was with some trepidation that I approached this rig, fearful that I may well lose a few fillings and brain cells in the process.

Build Quality And Features

One look at this rig is enough to instil a degree of fear in even the most battle hardened bassist. The thought of four fifteen-inch speakers and an additional four twelve-inch speakers pounding out equal amounts of distorted, snarling bass is certainly not for the faint hearted but it is indicative of the requirements and demands of the player for whom this was put together. Certainly, the whole rig has been built to the usual high standards associated with Marshall gear: immensely robust cabinets, protective sturdy steel grille cover sans cloth, and thick vinyl covering. The cabinet containing the fifteen-inch drivers is especially deep, no doubt to improve the power handling of the unit as a whole especially when you consider the power required to project the bass frequencies emanating from this cab alone, and is capable of delivering 800-watts at 8 ohms. The 4x12 cabinet looks equally adept at performing the task for which it has been chosen and is based on the Marshall Mode Four



Visuals replicate Lemmy's Murder One original Marshall.

series making it essentially a guitar cab fitted with bass drivers.

The Super Bass amp is no slouch either and comes fully armed; the power amp section features four EL34 valves to provide the 100-watt output whilst the preamp consists of three ECC83 valves for gain and tonal colouring. Built to last, the amp recreates Lemmy's own 1992 Super Bass head, politely titled 'Murder One' and features the resplendent gold crests and single red plastic corner of the original. For the purpose of this commemoration Marshall have attempted to source parts and components from the original suppliers of the 1992 model although to facilitate a wider breadth of tone, certain sonic elements of the 100-watt Super Lead amp have been incorporated. In theory, this should tighten the sound up and improve the already blistering high-end on offer.

The amp comes with two channels and four *Inputs*, channel one offering a brighter tone via *Volume I* compared to channel two which has a relatively flat tone (operated from *Volume II*) prior

to anything being added from the amp. This amp has huge potential should you own a bass with stereo outputs as you can run the amp in such a way that each output from the bass can utilise the different inputs and balance output from the separate volumes. But even with a standard mono-equipped bass it should be possible to coax a fairly monstrous tone from this set-up. The controls all felt very sturdy and turned smoothly. In fact, the whole amp looks great with the distinctive vintage Marshall vibe pouring from it.

Impressions

So with the power switched on, I approached the *Standby* control with some trepidation... how loud and brutal could this be? Extremely, was my initial thought! This rig produces a huge beast of a sound, which is predominantly thick and grinding with the cabinets working in tandem. The sheer level of valve power on offer is quite thunderous but then this is no ordinary bass stack. On their own, each cabinet has a different tone based on their design and respective speaker

configurations. The 4x15 cab is very bottom heavy without a great deal of tightness or definition but then this cab is designed to promote trouser flapping, almost to the point of feeling the bass end rather than hearing it. The 4x12 on the other hand compliments the 4x15 and gives the whole system some balance by giving the distorted tones some clarity due to the faster response of the twelve-inch speakers. A useful feature to get the maximum from the system can be achieved by running into input two and then running a patch lead between input one and the second input two which effectively links the preamp inputs so that you get the full brightness and warmth of the whole stack.

Going back to the amp, I found that the *Presence* control was quite noisy when used to dial in some extra body and guts to the tone although the change in tone was quite noticeable. I was surprised by how little effect the *Mid* and *Treble* controls made to the sound and on an amp like this that doesn't actually have a lot of tonal options (as it doesn't need it based



1992LEM

Price: £1399
Made In: UK
Controls: Power, standby, presence, bass, middle, treble, volume one, volume two, output selector, mains selector
Inputs: ¼-inch instrument input (x4) (two for channel one, two for channel two)
Outputs: ¼-inch speaker outputs (x2)
Power Output (RMS): 100-watts
Dimensions: H/W/D 31cm x 75cm x 21.5cm
Weight: 21 kg

1979L MF280L

Price: £750 (4x15) £680 (4x12)
Made In: UK

Contact Details

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What we think

Plus: It's a signature rig so if you want to sound like Lemmy there's no better place to start.

Minus: Expensive and difficult to transport. It does what it does, there are no frills.

Overall: A unique sound for a unique player. Love it or loathe it, it does what it was designed to do.

BGM RATING: 1992LEM Amp	
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★

BGM RATING: 1979L & MF280L Cabs	
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★

Gear Marshall Lemmy Signature Head And Cabs

on the players requirements) I would have to be sure that my personal requirements were met from the overall tonal experience. The mid and treble controls have an effect when turned up to halfway but from that point on the presence control takes over intensity of tonal alteration. This will be of no surprise to owners of an original Super Bass 100-watt or guitarists cranking up their stacks on a Plexi head where those tone controls have minimal impact.

Using a number of different basses, it became clear just how much the amp colours the natural sound of each bass but with an amp like this, and with so many valves in place, this is to be expected. The amp really has a signature sound of its own and regardless of whether I used an active or a passive bass, the inherent valve warmth came through which actually helped to project the signal from the passive bass. How adaptable this system is with regard to different playing styles is simple to answer... it isn't! But what it is capable of doing is reinforcing and delivering a rock tone that is synonymous with the artist who uses it and it does this with some aplomb. For most players, the amp and the 4x12 cabinet would be ample for the majority of gigs but the 4x15 takes this rig to another level bearing in mind that this is a rig where the bass guitar is almost a lead instrument so Mr Kilmister is effectively playing two roles, without even mentioning his vocal duties as well.

Test Results

This is the real deal, make no mistake. I can only compare it to being a Panzer tank of the bass amp world. The whole system has been very well made and is solidly constructed, the combination of which adds up to a



Four inputs offer dual bright or normal options.



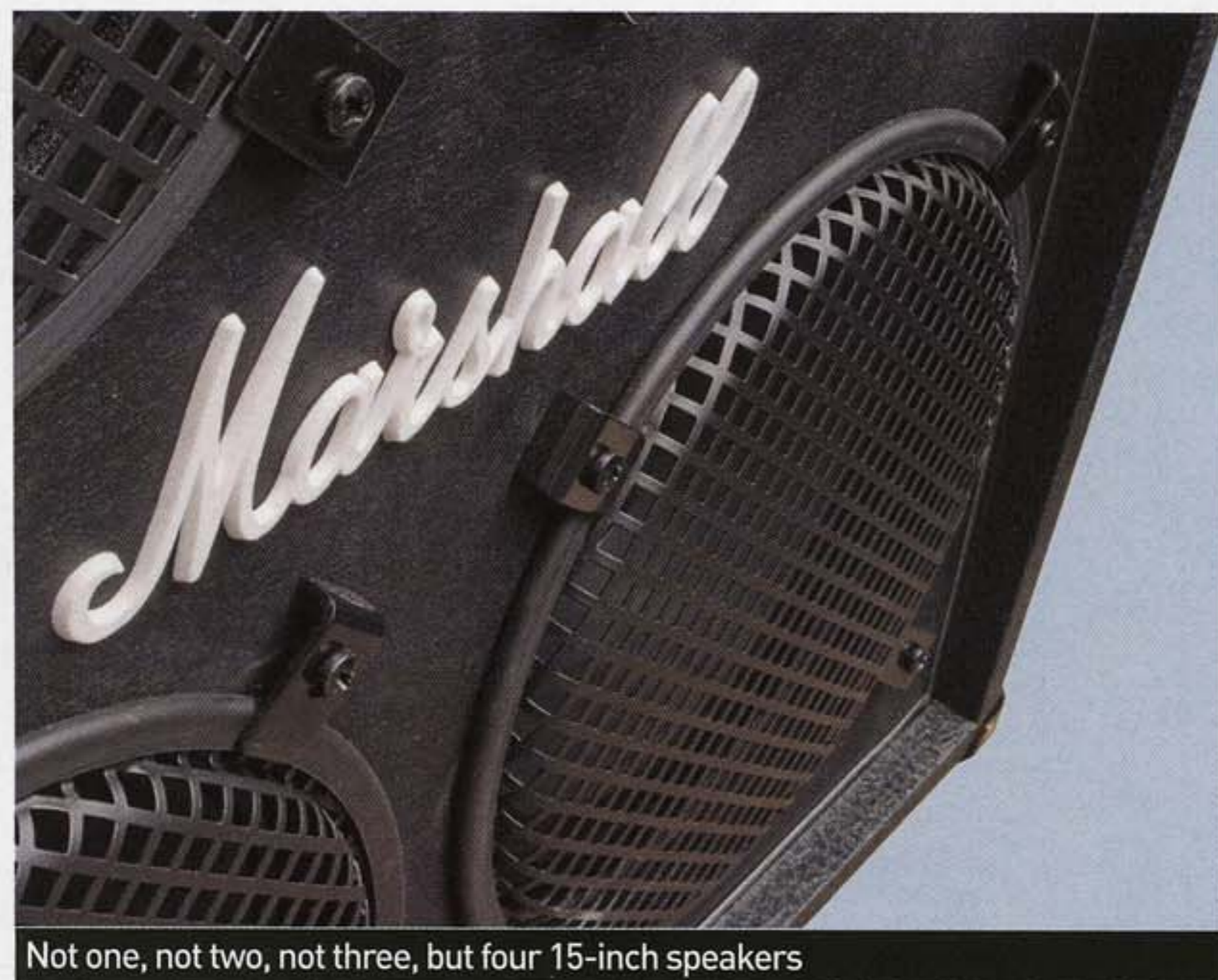
Jim Marshall and Lemmy Kilmister grace the rear panel with their signatures.

very special sound indeed. Leaving one cab out would simply detract from the overall sonic impression. The power of artist association should never be under-estimated and will certainly ensure that this system catches the eye of a number of bassists out there. Nevertheless, there is no denying that it is something of a novelty product - perhaps reinforced by the three Lemmy plectrums and signed certificate that accompanies the amp - with a potentially limited audience and in terms of functionality, I can't see that it has mass appeal. The price is fairly steep, the amp alone costing a snip under £1,400 and transporting those cabs could cause a few headaches not to mention the amount of bass clout produced on stage, which may give sound engineers and bandmates a problem. But irrespective of these

points, there is much to enjoy playing through a rig of this size; in a bizarre way, it actually makes you play differently by making you think about what you play and how you play it. There's no getting away from the fact that for authentic rock sounds, valves still rule the roost and while players

such as Lemmy continue to use gear such as this to great effect, the world of valve amps will continue to flourish. Rock on!

Mike Brooks



Not one, not two, not three, but four 15-inch speakers



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Amazingly, this is where Marshall Amplifiers began