

# GENZ BENZ SHENANDOAH 150LT

AN ACOUSTIC AMP THAT'S BOTH LIGHT AND LOUD? DAVID GREEVES IS INTRIGUED...

**Genz Benz was a respected builder of PA speaker cabinets before the company branched out in to bass amplification around 10 years ago. The move proved successful, and acoustic and electric guitar amp designs followed, though Jeff Genzler's amplifiers remain less well known here than in the USA.**

This solid-state acoustic combo from the company's Shenandoah range is competitively priced and packed with features, but what may attract the interest of many a travelling acoustic troubadour is its weight – the 150LT weighs just 12kg. That's really light, especially considering that there's 150 watts of power on board, linked to a 12-inch speaker and a high-frequency tweeter.

## FEATURES

On the front panel of the amp we're presented with two identical channels with balanced XLR and unbalanced jack inputs. Each channel has a three-band EQ with a sweepable mid band, a level control and a knob marked 'effects', which sets how much of the signal (if any) is sent to the

built-in digital effects processor. There's also a phase invert switch (flipping the phase of the signal by 180 degrees can help reduce problems with feedback) and a 'clip' LED to warn you if you're overloading the input stage.

The aforementioned effects section could hardly be simpler – there's one knob to select which effect you want to use and another to set the effect's volume (essentially the effects return). As you'd expect, the selection of 24-bit digital effects is big on reverb, with three plate settings, three rooms, three halls and two delays. But you also get chorus, flange and rotary speaker programs, plus combined chorus/plate and chorus/room settings.

Around the back there's an external effects send and return, direct outputs for the individual channels as well as the main output and an additional speaker out that can feed an extension cab. There are also two large bass ports in what is an otherwise completely closed back to give the combo a bit more low end, plus a switch that lets you turn the tweeter on or off, or apply a -6dB pad to it.

The rear-bottom edge of the amp is angled so that it will tip back and project sound up and into the room.

It's a good idea, but since the



amp is so light, it's easy to make it tip back by mistake – when putting something down on top of it, for example. Elsewhere, the controls are nicely recessed and the metal grille on the front feels very sturdy. There's also a hole underneath so you can mount the amp on a PA speaker stand. Though it's light, the 150LT is not all that compact – competing products like the Fishman Loudbox 100 and AER Compact 60 weigh no more and are a good deal smaller.

## SOUNDS

Plugging in, the Shenandoah 150LT kicks out a nicely balanced sound. It won't make a nasty piezo pickup sound like a million dollars, but the parametric EQ means there's plenty of room to tweak your tone. The tweeter switch at the rear provides further control of the high end, and we find that the -6dB setting provides the best compromise. The effects are nicely voiced and sound good when used with restraint.

We're a bit surprised to see the clip LED lighting up at what seems like a relatively low level, but perhaps it's erring on the side of caution – the type of distortion generated in Class-D amps like this is not pleasant. In terms of volume, the 150LT is certainly loud, though not as deafening as the figure of 150 watts might suggest. But there's certainly enough volume for use at most acoustic gigs or as a stage monitor DI'd to the PA.

Overall, this is a well-specified amp with everything you'd need for an acoustic gig. There's some stiff competition in this price bracket, but the Shenandoah 150LT is certainly one to audition. **GB**

**GBINFO**

**GENZ BENZ SHENANDOAH 150LT**

PRICE: £549  
 BUILT IN: China  
 TYPE: Solid-state acoustic combo

POWER: 150 watts into 8 ohms Class-D

FEATURES: Two identical channels with XLR & unbalanced jack inputs, preamp volume, effects level & three-band parametric EQ controls, phase invert switch & clip LED, global master volume control, global 24-bit digital effects section with 15 programs & level control, tweeter on/off/-6dB switch, external effects loop, 2 x speaker outputs, 3 x direct outputs on XLR & jack (channel 1 pre-EQ, channel 2 pre-EQ, channels 1 & 2 post-EQ), ground lift switch

SPEAKERS: 1 x 12-inch Genz Benz speaker, 1 x Genz Benz high-frequency tweeter

DIMENSIONS: 490(h) x 465(w) x 330(d) mm (max, with handle and controls)

WEIGHT: 12kg (26.5lbs)

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**GBOPINION**

**GENZ BENZ SHENANDOAH 150LT**

**GOLD STARS**

- ★ Extremely light to carry
- ★ Great range of features
- ★ Solid, neutral sound

**BLACK MARKS**

- None

**GBRATING**

★★★★★

