



Compact and clever. Hertz H8 with remote control and guided user software included



Hertz H8 DSP

When tone is everything the big guns need to come out!

The world of car Digital Signal Processing has exploded in recent times. As with all new tech however, there are good and bad. Having long been a fan of the offerings from Audison, I was intrigued find out about a device from Hertz, another top technology-led company.

We know that car manufacturers force equalisation curves on us in order to get away with using cheaper speakers in their cars and when considering an upgrade, this needs to be corrected or at least taken into consideration. The best way to do this is to put a DSP in the signal chain between the head unit and amplifiers. To this end, the Hertz H8 DSP can accept up to four speaker level inputs or alternatively four line or low level inputs. On top of this, if you are lucky enough to find a source unit with an optical output, there is a TOSLINK input on the H8 and also an analogue stereo auxiliary input.

These inputs will output to front tweeter left and right front, woofer left and right front with additional outputs to rear, full range channels, a subwoofer output and a centre channel. It is by no means mandatory to configure your H8 for all of these outputs however.

Between the inputs and outputs, a powerful processor and state-of-the-art DSP provides 31-band graphic

equalisation on all channels along with time alignment and both Linkwitz-Riley and Butterworth filters offering a huge amount of capability when it comes to fine-tuning your system. The onboard software can be accessed by PC and will guide the user through all of the steps necessary to balance input levels. Once this is done, users can then begin the simple task of setting up. This involves obtaining a perfect balance between highs and lows as well as establishing a stable sound stage. I would at this stage advise that if you have no prior experience of using such powerful sound manipulation devices, it is very easy to get yourself lost. I have worked in many recording studio environments in my career but can still get completely bamboozled by the finer points of balancing sound and eventually despite spending hours getting a sound, I can come back to it to find it is very bad – unfortunately, sound can be tricky like that. I would always advise you to use a competent installer with skills in this area to save considerable time and potentially, a good deal of frustration.

The H8 DSP has two memories in which to store settings. This is very handy as you can have one of these to play with if that really interests you. However, the key reason for including the second setting is to be able to switch quickly between solo listening where the sound stage might be aligned just for the driver, and family listening where the sound stage can be fixed so that all passengers benefit from glorious stereo albeit with a seating position dependent aspect. Hertz have been extremely clever in this regard and included an A/B memory selection switch input that can be operated manually using a supplied remote control or by wiring directly to the passenger seatbelt switch. This means you can't forget to select multi-passenger mode provided a front-seated passenger joins you!

Regarding the remote control, this smart little interface allows some top-level control of the processor including subwoofer level control. This is always quite handy as sub-bass can be very genre specific and will also be affected by travelling speed and road surface.

Other controls on the remote include source selection, volume, balance and fader - so, all the important ones!

We have spoken to a number of installers who rate the Hertz H8 DSP extremely highly and feel it to be an important addition to their armoury. □

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