

# LONG COOL ONE

*Bose L1 Compact sound system*

\* BY CHRIS GILL

**A**BOUT A YEAR and a half ago we reviewed the Bose L1 Model II with the ToneMatch audio engine, a compact but powerful sound system with pristine sound quality and professional effects. As impressive as the Model II's features are, its steep price tag probably inspired as many dropped jaws as its spec sheet did.

Fortunately, Bose has introduced the L1 Compact sound system, which offers performance and sound quality comparable to the L1 Model II/ToneMatch package for about a third of the price. The biggest differences between the two systems are that the L1 Compact's speaker configuration is not expandable and its output is not as powerful. But like other products in Bose's L1 family, the L1 Compact breaks down to a portable, easy-to-carry configuration that is small and light, yet loud.

## FEATURES

**UNLIKE BIG, BOXY PA** systems that feature large speakers in heavy cabinets, the Bose L1 Compact system consists of a tall, slender cylindrical speaker array with six small speakers arranged to disperse sound with about 180 degrees of horizontal coverage, two extensions that elevate the speaker array (and automatically make connections to the power amplifier without the need for separate speaker wires), and a compact Power Stand base with a built-in amplifier, mixer and bass speaker. The entire system weighs 29 pounds and packs into two included carrying bags. You can set up the system in either an extended column configuration with the speaker array elevated about six feet above the ground using the extenders, or in a collapsed tabletop configuration by mounting the speaker array in the base. Other than plugging the AC cable into an outlet and connecting your microphone, instrument, or other sound sources to the mixer, no cable connections are necessary.

The Power Stand's mixer section provides two separate ToneMatch channels, each with its own fixed, customized preset: one for a microphone and the other for acoustic guitar. The microphone channel includes an XLR

jack, treble and bass EQ knobs, and a volume control. The instrument channel features a 1/4-inch input jack with a line-level/ToneMatch acoustic guitar preset switch, stereo RCA inputs, a stereo 1/8-inch jack for an iPod or other audio source, and a volume control. Audio sources plugged into the RCA and 1/8-inch inputs are not affected by setting of the line/ToneMatch switch. When the ToneMatch switch is set to "off" there is no processing applied to the 1/4-inch connection. The Power Stand also provides a 1/4-inch output jack for linking multiple L1 Compact systems together or to connect the L1 Compact to an external sound system (if you want to use the L1 Compact as a stage monitor, for example), and stereo RCA output jacks for sending audio to a recorder.

If you need to connect more instruments or mics to the L1 Compact or want more ToneMatch presets and effects, the optional Bose T1 ToneMatch audio engine greatly expands the L1 Compact's capabilities.

## PERFORMANCE

**BECAUSE THE SPEAKER** array is stowed in the Power Stand when transporting the system, setting up L1 Compact in its collapsed configuration is simply a matter of plugging in the power cable and connecting your mic, acoustic guitar, or other sound sources. To set up the L1 Compact in its extended configuration, simply remove the speaker array, insert the first and then the second extender stick, and attach the speaker array on top.

Although the L1 Compact is not quite as loud as the L1 Model II (it has fewer speakers), it's more than loud enough to fulfill the needs of solo performers in small venues like coffeehouses or clubs with a capacity of about 100 people. It's also loud enough to use as a personal monitor onstage with a full electric band. Because the



OVERALL VALUE

## SPECS

**LIST PRICE** \$999.00  
**MANUFACTURER** Bose, bose.com  
**SPEAKERS** Six small drivers (array), bass speaker (Power Stand)  
**INPUTS** XLR microphone, 1/4-inch line/instrument, RCA L/R, 1/8-inch stereo line  
**OUTPUTS** 1/4-inch line, RCA L/R  
**CONTROLS** Volume, treble, bass (mic channel); volume, line/acoustic guitar input switch (acoustic guitar channel)

The upper speaker array features six speakers that disperse sound with 180 degrees of horizontal coverage.

The Power Stand base contains the amplifier, mixer and bass speaker.



system is entirely self-contained, it's engineered to provide crystal clear, distortion-free sound even when the volume is turned up all the way. The ToneMatch preset for the acoustic guitar input is a great match for most acoustic-electric guitars, providing deep bass, warm midrange and just enough high-frequency cut to project with authority.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

**IF YOU DON'T** need all the bells and whistles and louder output of the L1 Model II/ToneMatch audio engine system, the Bose L1 Compact is an affordable alternative that offers many of the same benefits, such as compact design and impressive sound. **BC**

<b>+PRO</b>	<b>-CON</b>
FAST SETUP AND BREAKDOWN • EXCEPTIONALLY SMALL AND LIGHT • CLEAN SOUND	SPEAKER CONFIGURATION NOT EXPANDABLE