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Polk Audio db104 SQ Review

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for everyone**Category:** Other

As mentioned in my previous review, I shall do another critiquing but mostly based on the sound quality of the sub. In the first part, we listened to what TJ would normally play. We were impressed by what the sub can do in this regard. The DB104 can keep up with transients of house music, have a good bottom end from hip-hop and R&B tracks, play out the bass lines from jazz cuts and have good bass extension to satisfy a bass head. Considering its price point, it's one helluva performer.



Incidentally, in the duration of 3 weeks the CR-V underwent some minor updates namely adding a new (old amplifier). This amp was lying around from TJ's previous install and this was a chance to up the ante with his current one. Basically, what happened was, in his previous install, we used a 4 channel Alpine MRP-T320 (sorry, forgot the actual model) amp, pushing around 170 watts of bridged power to the sub and giving his component system (JBL GTO 6502) around 45 watts. With the addition of the other amplifier (V12 MRV-705), we bridged the 2 pairs of channels from his (original) Alpine to beef up the front stage, effectively, giving the JBL GTO seps around 170watts per and some where in the vicinity of 150 to 200 watts to the DB104 with the bridged 705. Though a lot of people may be skeptical (sound and power wise) about V12 amps, at least in my humble opinion, is putting out respectable clean power in that range albeit not too musical. But it's powering a subwoofer, how can you go wrong? As long as the gains are set properly and it's not clipping, it'll do just fine for the time being at least or until TJ upgrades his amps. On a side note, with budget amps, I would still prefer Tekline over V12 amps. The Teklines have more body in them and they sound cleaner (better).

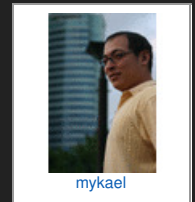
For the listening session, I auditioned the DB104 using a few of my old favorite CD's, a Telarc compilation of classical hits including some with orchestration from conductor Erich Krunzel performed by the Cincinnati Orchestra. Tracks include the theme from the winter games, Back to the Future, the 1812 overture, Round-up (the Marlboro song) and more. The other CD's include Peter's Drury Trio and Patricia Barbers' Blues Café.

First on queue the Telarc CD with the theme song from 2001 A Space Odyssey. In the first 11 or so seconds of the track, in lesser capable systems, you'd wonder if there was anything wrong with the CD. You won't hear a damn thing! I wouldn't blame you for this, as it's supposed to shake your car gradually until it hits higher frequency sounds. Typically, if you had 15's installed in a proper enclosure with ample power, this would be a treat to hear (or felt for that matter). But in this case, we were only able to make out some sound when it reached the upper frequencies (some where around 30 Hz and above). Next cut was the Back to the Future OST. With this track, the DB104 didn't have problems reproducing the part where the mallet hits the drum skin and a rumble follows and this is in the region of 40Hz and down, though, the extension wasn't as audible, but there none the less. There was a remarkable blending between the mid-bass and bass frequencies, though the mid-bass is a tad overpowering (probably in the renewed amplifier configuration). This was evident in the other classical tracks that we played in the Telarc CD. So from there, we switched CD's to Peter's Drury Trio. Their rendition of I'm In Heaven, is filled bass lines and the DB104 reproduced them with ease. There are parts of the song where the bass (the one that looks like a big violin played upright) was playing different notes and where being plucked continuously, the sound came out a bit muddled and seemed like one long continuous note. Probably due to cabin gain and an equalizer (or lack of equalizer bands) bump somewhere in that region which we have to address later on. With Patricia Barbers' Jazz Café, track 3, Too Rich for My Blood, on the hi-point of the song where the toms played a big role, the drummer starts out slowly and gradually picks up pace leading up to bass extensions galore and the DB104 played it with authority while keeping up with the voice of the singer.

To sum it all up, the DB104 sounded great replaying the tracks, it has great detail albeit with proper tuning, and has a lot more potential given the right install. It had a few snags with playing tough songs (full orchestrated classical music) and a few low-end rumbles, which is very typical of a small diameter driver trying to pressurize a cabin as big as a CR-V. But in the end, we wouldn't be listening to it everyday, now would we? Yes, there are other options out there, but, it's a good performer and a very good alternative to what we commonly have available in the market, not to mention a great price. Happy shopping!

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