

# Bose Personalised Amplification System

Bose aims to subsume all the usual on-stage and FOH amplification into one easy-to-use PA system. Luke Kungl gauges its success.

**B**ose has certainly created some unique products over the years. Many people will argue that its reputation for creating designs outside the square is the result of a genuine pursuit of advancement in audio reinforcement. Others may contend that Bose is different simply for the sake of being different – a contention, I'd suggest, that really doesn't stand up to scrutiny. Whatever your personal opinion, it's

undeniable that Bose continues to make its mark around the world in the face of an increasingly competitive market. You'd be hard pressed to find an audio company that doesn't keep at least a pair of 802s in its inventory, or an engineer that won't fondly remember at least one gig mixed on them. And now we have the latest Bose innovation, the Personalised Amplification System, or PAS for short.

## The Why of PAS

At first glance, the new PAS doesn't look much like a traditional PA system – and that's simply because it isn't... and that's the whole point. But the concept is, in fact, very simple, almost obvious: place the audio point source back with the musician creating the sound. *Each* musician on stage goes out and buys a Bose PAS, and plonks it behind them on stage. The goal is as much musical as it is technical: give amplified sound the same intimacy as an acoustic gig where the sound emanates from where our eyes/brain expect it. This means no other PA, no stage foldback, no high-powered guitar amps are required. Bose calls the current amplification

status quo as the 'traditional triple system approach' each with its own inherent problems of phasing, room reverberation and varying SPL throughout

the room and stage.

Before we proceed, let's just all agree on one thing: this product is application specific – it will only be really effective under certain circumstances, i.e. intimate performances with small- to medium-sized audiences, where each muso needs only a few channels of reinforcement each. Sound engineers can afford to relax. I do not think we're out of work just yet.

So why is it a good idea? Clearly, every bit of the PAS is designed for musicians. It is compact, very thoughtfully engineered and designed, and very nearly stupid-proof to assemble and use. The sound the player creates and hears is what the audience, and the other players on stage, also hear.

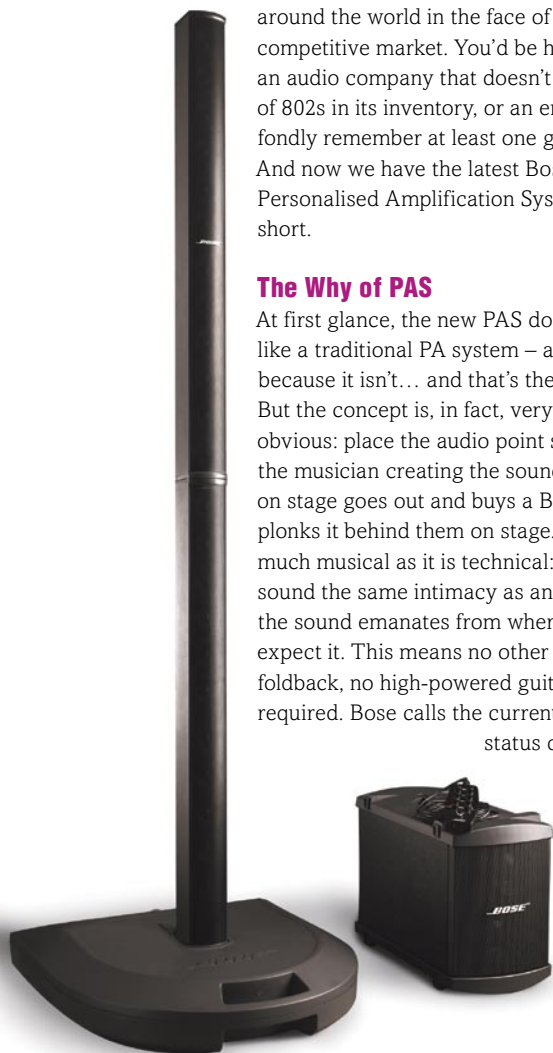
And yes, it's also true that the PAS isn't going to be for every muso. I doubt, that even if Bose developed (and gave away free) a PA that drove itself to the gig and set itself up, that they could convince certain die-hard muso's to leave their quad box at home.

## The How of PAS

The PAS consists of three basic elements. The 'Power Stand' (or PS1), the 'Cylindrical Radiator', and an optional B1 'Bass Module'. The Power Stand houses the amplifier modules, the electronics and acts as the stand for the speaker – the 'Cylindrical Radiator' slots neatly into the PS1, one half on top of the other. The bass module (or 'modules', as the built-in amp module will drive two) plugs into the connection cunningly marked 'B1 bass module' using a four-core NL4. Done. Total set up time, roughly two minutes including unzipping the attractive carry bags. Plug in up to two microphones and/or up to two line-level inputs, tweak, and play. (By the way, the bass units are only driven on two cores of the mandatory NL4. The other two are used for load sensing, so the PS1 can automatically detect how many units are connected and make appropriate compensations. Clever, isn't it?)

## The What of PAS

The PS1 Power Stand packs four inputs. The first two are combination XLR mic/line inputs with switchable 24V phantom, input gain and signal/clip indicators. They also have an XLR line level output and a single



## Right of Reply

The model Luke was looking at had the first series of presets in it. (Hence his comment about the fact that most of the 99 were empty.) We are now up to Series 2 and all of the presets are full. They include common microphones, and lots of instrument modelling as well as some very useful notch filters. To update the PAS you need to download the file off the bose.com website, burn it to audio CD, play it in a CD or DVD player with a digital output to the PAS and you're finished. No interface or PC needed to update the unit

Matthew Fisher, Bose Australia.

point insert point. Inputs 3 and 4 are a basic line level only TS jack and an input level control.

The first two inputs also feature a DSP processor – an easy '00 to 99' selection of various equalisation filters for commonly available microphones, guitar amp modelling and so on. Most of the 100 presets are empty, presumably for later updates and additions (there is a 'data in and out' connection port). These presets sound quite reasonable, and would make this device far more accessible to the EQ-challenged layperson.

The PS1 has three independent amp modules – one for each of the upper and lower cylindrical radiator elements, and one to drive any external bass units. You'll also find an output patch section, which enables you to directly connect to the individual amp modules from an external mixer or preamp for example. All up, there's an impressive amount of flexibility on offer here.



## The Performance of PAS

This might sound like I'm coming from a negative standpoint but: the performance of the PAS impressed me more than I thought it would. It emits a very smooth, very wide coverage – living up to Bose's claim. Although there is no such thing as a feedback-proof loudspeaker, the level achieved from a Shure 58 using the '58' preset EQ model was ample for the manner of use Bose is intending. Intelligibility and detail in the all important mid-range is what Bose does best, and the six-foot-high string of little full-range drivers confirm it – a lovely warm intimate presence of voice, yet sharp enough and accurate enough to handle a number of diverse inputs simultaneously.

I would have loved the opportunity to hear a jazz trio or a folkie plug into a PAS setup. This is just the type of application that the PAS would thrive in, I reckon. And I wait with much interest as to how the market reacts to this new approach. It is not often that a complete sound reinforcement system has been developed to be so easy to set up, and be so effective. One singer with a guitar can be unpacked and playing away in under five minutes. Again, while I do not think that this new offering poses any major threat to sound engineers and production company's livelihoods just yet, if you are a solo musician, or part of a cashed-up small group looking for a pleasant hassle-free solution to reinforcement, you may just have found it.



---

## Distributed by

- Bose Corporation
- Phone: 1800 659433
- Email: [Mathew\\_Fisher@Bose.com](mailto:Mathew_Fisher@Bose.com)
- Web: [www.pro.bose.com](http://www.pro.bose.com)

## Price

- \$3,895. Additional bass unit: \$546.