

Yamaha GA32/12 Live Mixing Console

Over 25 years Yamaha have gained a good reputation for their live mixing products. Trevor Cronin puts their latest effort through its paces.

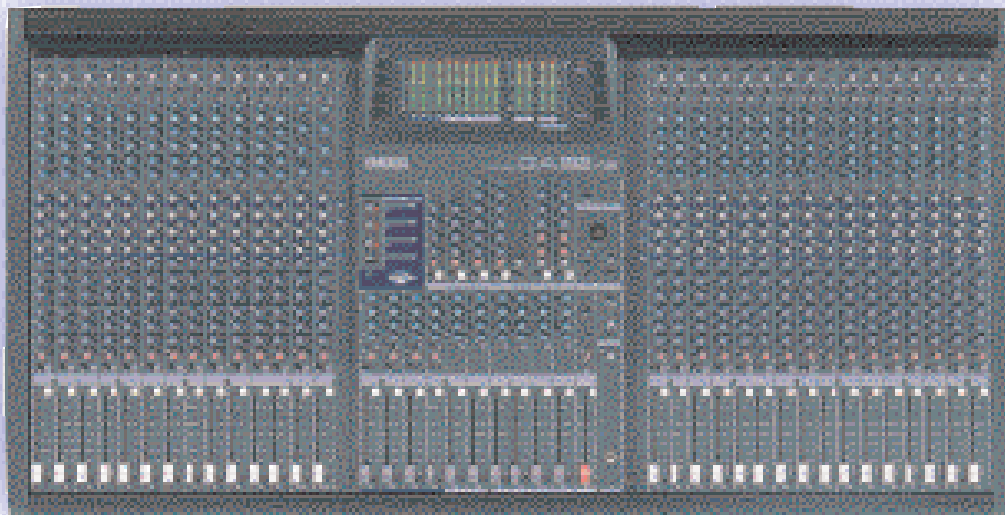
The Yamaha GA32/12 and GA24/12 (32 and 24-input channel versions) are a new line of budget priced mixing consoles designed to be extremely flexible, and can just as easily be used in live sound or recording applications. They feature an interesting 12-bus architecture which allows up to 10 independent monitor mixes, in addition to the main stereo mix. These consoles also feature Yamaha's 'GA (Group/Aux) Diversity' feature which allows four buses to be used as aux or group buses, in effect, the console can be configured as a four group out, six aux send, FOH mixer, or a 10 send monitor mixer. This is a very handy feature, making these consoles suitable for a wide variety of applications. The console I have looked at is the larger 32-input version.

6.5mm jacks. Both have an insert point. Other outputs include two matrix outs and a control room out. A pair of RCA tape in and out connectors finish off the output section. Finally on the rear are eight channels of aux returns, also on jacks.

The input connectors are arranged either side of the master section. This 32-channel frame size sports 28 mono and two stereo input channels. The first 12 are conventional mono mic/line inputs using XLR connectors for mic inputs and 6.5mm jacks for the balanced line inputs, while stereo 6.5mm jack connectors are used for all insert connections. Channels 13 through to 16 are stereo input channels, and only accept 6.5mm jacks for line input. There are no insert points on the

stereo channels, to aid cost saving. Channels 17-32 are all of the mono input mic/line variety. For each block of four input channels (apart from the stereo ones), there's a global phantom power switch – shame that they didn't use an individual switch on each channel, as problems can occur with some equipment when unnecessary phantom power is applied. However, in the meter section on the front of the console there's a helpful LED indicator to show when phantom power is active.

The work surface of the console is split into three distinct parts, with inputs to



Back up

The rear panel is of a steel construction with a couple of ventilation slots either end. In the centre section there's the power cable and power on/off switch – not exactly a great position for it on a live console, as people can easily tamper with it. However, Yamaha have considered this and fitted a recessed switch. At the bottom there are 10 balanced aux output connectors (M1-M10) using gold-plated XLRs. There are also insert points for the first four auxiliary sends. Next are the two discrete balanced stereo outs – the first pair on XLRs, the other using stereo

to the left and right of a central master section. Looking down a mono channel strip, we firstly have a -26dB pad, which is quite a small button, however it has a strong spring in it (so it's not too easy to accidentally switch on and off). Then we have the gain pot, a phase reverse push button and the high pass filter, which operates at 80Hz with a 12dB/oct slope. Beside that there's a LED which indicates when the input is -3 dB below channel clip. The EQ is four-way, with a shelving response top and bottom (10kHz and 100Hz, ± 15 dB), sweepable peak high-mid, (400Hz-8kHz, ± 15 dB), and low mid (80Hz-1.6kHz, ± 15 dB). In its entirety this is quite a serious

amount of EQ. An EQ bypass switch is provided on all channels, so equalisation can be punched in or out for quick comparison, or disabled when using an inserted equaliser.

Underneath the EQ section we have 10 aux sends (M1 to M10). The top four have an on/off switch which is quite handy for presetting effects send levels and punching them in when required. Underneath we have another six sends, which can be switched to receive a pre or post fader signal in groups of two (5/6, 7/8, and 9/10). Beneath the sends we have the pan pot, with centre detent to indicate the pan cancel position. There's a mix bus selection switch, to enable the routing of the input straight to the stereo group, or to take it out of the mix, which can be very handy in certain mixing situations.

Above the fader is a Channel On button with no associated LED, an omission that will fill many engineers with dread! The PFL button is nice and large, and although I had a mishap with one button flying off during the review, I'm assured that this isn't a design flaw. The 100mm long throw faders are serviceable enough, if a little flimsy.

The stereo line inputs are quite similar to their mono counterparts, although they use fixed frequency EQ: high 10kHz (shelving), high/mid 3kHz (peaking), low/mid 800Hz (peaking), low 100Hz (shelving), all offering a maximum 15dB of cut or boost. These channels are perfect for effects returns, CD return, and the like.

Master of diversity

There's a few interesting features present in the master section. There's a section called GA Diversity that has four buttons, with associated LEDs, which convert the first four aux sends into subgroup buses. Once activated, the on/off switch then becomes the group select switch and the attenuation pot is bypassed.

Bus masters M1 to M4 receive either the pre-fader aux signal or the post-fader group signal from the input channels, depending on the setting of the GA Diversity Fix/Vari Button. Each has a three-band equaliser (shelving top and bottom at 100Hz and 10kHz), and a sweepable mid section (from 300Hz-6kHz) with 15dB cut or boost. Underneath is situated an EQ in/out button and a pan control, as well as a 'To Stereo' button, which assigns the mix bus signal to the console's stereo bus. Each features the same 100mm faders as the input channels and offers AFL buttons for monitoring. Bus masters M5 to M10 receive the auxiliary send signal from the channel send pots. Like the previous four they have three-band equalisers, an EQ switch, faders and AFL buttons.

Turn on the stereo

The stereo bus feeds two stereo output pairs: Stereo One and Stereo Two. The main stereo faders feed the balanced Stereo One outputs, with an associated AFL button. The Stereo Two signal can be switched pre or post the Stereo One fader, and feeds an unbalanced output pair via a rotary pot. A mono switch is also provided for this output.

The auxiliary return pairs one and two have a level control pot, to adjust the level of the returned signal sent to the M1 to M4 sub-mixes and the stereo bus. Auxiliary return pairs three and four can be sent to any of the remaining mix buses (M5 to M10), or to the stereo bus. All the aux returns feature on/off and PFL buttons.

Matrix controls can be used to set up two matrix sub-mixes from the M1 to M4 mix buses and the stereo bus. These also have on/off switches and AFL buttons.

Monitoring and other features


Running through the other features... there's a control room monitor and headphone output with level controls. Peak-reading LED bargraph level meters provide visual monitoring of the 10 mix buses, the stereo bus, and PFL/AFL. Record outputs provide a line-level stereo output for the recording of the mix. Stereo tape inputs with a level control allow the output from a tape machine or CD player to be easily added to the console's stereo output.

Over on the right hand side, we have an input for a talkback mic, and above this a meter select button – in the up position it's measuring PFL/AFL tape in, and in the down position it registers matrix in. There's an LED to indicate power on, and another LED for global phantom power on/off. The internal power supply, which is mounted underneath the meters, uses air vents either side of the meters on the face of the console. So keep the beer away! [Yeah, no-one likes warm beer! – CH]. The finish is a nice looking grey, with a steel front panel, plastic meter bridge, and plastic side caps.

Great expectations

The versatility of the routing in the GA32/12 means that this console would be great for those operators who need their gear to be as equally at home in the studio as it is in a live situation, and as such represents great value.

Because of the lightweight construction I wouldn't necessarily recommend this console for extended road use, but it is an ideal candidate for installation purposes. It has a clean clear sound, lots of ins and outs, and would be an ideal and affordable replacement for the scratchy unreliable old consoles that you come across around the clubs.

Generally budgets aren't getting any bigger but expectations from installers and engineers are not getting any more modest in the process. They expect multipurpose versatility, great sound, and sturdy construction. With this mixer it looks like Yamaha have got it right, with yet another reliable workhorse in their range. 

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• GA24/12: \$4995; GA32/12: \$5995 RRP