



By Ken Volpe - GJD

The Zoom H4 Recorder is a versatile little recorder. It's jammed packed with many features such as on-board effects, built-in condenser mics, phantom-powered external mic inputs. Amazingly enough you are able to use it as a 4-track recorder and record these tracks in a 24 bit/96khz format.

I was able to utilize the H4 in a variety of applications. First, I used the internal mics to record my band's rehearsal. The recording quality was very realistic and I was easily able to save the performance to an MP3 for all of the band members to review the songs we had composed and performed.

Next, we recorded some live interviews that aired on GuitarJamDaily with great results. Since this was on the fly, the internal mics were once again the logical choice. FYI: they were the 3 interviews that our own Scotty X did with Brad Whitford, Eric Gales, and Doyle Bramhall II. So go check it out for yourself and hear the excellent results.

The third test of the Zoom H4 was to hook up some external mics and record a high-quality acoustic guitar track. I was very pleased with the results, and could definitely blend the track with a full mix of other instruments without any reservations. Was it as good as my full-on studio-recording rig? Of course not, but the gap has been narrowed.

Here are a few more tidbits about the Zoom H4. Unlike many other similar units, the battery life is not an issue. As far as navigating within the H4, it is a breeze. The menus are laid out in an extremely logical fashion and very easy to read. As a matter of fact one of the H4 contains one of the most clear and concise menu and sub-menu set-ups that I've recently come across.

In terms of ergonomics, the Jog Shuttle Wheel is perfect for your thumb. It is not hard to access and is not overly sensitive. The weight and size of the unit are perfect for easy handling and operation. The LCD display is clear with nice sized fonts. I was able to view all the menus and info even in a dark rehearsal room. Editing of files and tracks were a breeze. Transferring files to the computer was hassle-free. The manual was extremely and clearly laid out allowing me to find a couple of key paragraphs in the manual to really know my way around this unit. For me the less manual reading I do the better...

So, if you are a busy mobile musician on a tight budget, this bad boy is a must have. Simplicity, quality and usefulness are the name of the game with the Zoom H4.

Gear Review : Zoom H4 Recorder

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