

Lake People G105 MKII and G108 review

Lake People G105 MKII and G108 are headphone amplifiers. They not only want to meet the needs of interested parties with high demands with their low-noise and low-distortion performance, but also with their features.



Lake People G108 and G105 mkII

The name Lake People has long been known to connoisseurs. The manufacturer based in Constance on Lake Constance develops and manufactures its well-known high-quality microphone, headphone and phono amplifiers as well as A/D and D/A converters by hand on site. How far the portfolio goes becomes clear when you consider that in addition to devices for recording studio use with the Violectric brand, they are also responsible for high-quality headphone amplifiers in the hi-fi sector. And since the majority of the components used come from Germany, the “Made in Germany” label can be taken seriously here.

In any case, we have tested two studio devices for you here with the Lake People G105 MKII and the G108, the first of which appears as the successor to the successful G105. That's why we keep giving you information about the comparison of both models at crucial points. So if you own the first version of this headphone amp, hopefully this review can give you some helpful clues as to whether the G105 MKII is worth getting for you. But even if you are thinking about buying a new headphone amplifier, you will find information here that can certainly help you beyond the specific model. Alright, so what do the Lake People G105 MKII and G108 have to offer?

Lake People G105 MKII and G108 Quick Facts

- Pre-gain switchable (internal)
- Balanced output (G108)
- Made in Germany

Scope of delivery of Lake People G105 MKII and G108

The scope of delivery of both headphone amplifiers does not contain many parts. The amplifiers are each delivered in a folding box extensively equipped with convoluted foam. In it, the G105 MKII and the G108 are well protected and can be transported without much effort if a change of location is necessary. A suitable power cable is also included so that the devices can be used immediately after unpacking. A detailed bilingual operating manual is also on board with both. It contains clearly formulated safety instructions, circuit diagrams, information on the pin assignments, detailed explanations on all functions and controls, an overview of the technical data of the respective device as well as illustrated instructions for setting the internal jumpers. Above all, the fact that these operating instructions really deserve their name and that Lake People actively support the user makes the scope of delivery convincing at second glance.



The detailed manual is the highlight of the scope of delivery.

Body of LP G105 MKII and LP G108

The housing of the Lake People G105 MKII and the G108, as well as their front and rear panels, are made of matt black painted anodised aluminium. Four non-slip rubber feet are glued to their undersides. The dimensions of the new version of the G105 MKII differ primarily in the depth/length of the chassis. It is about 19 cm tall. This makes the MKII version an impressive 4.5 cm longer than its predecessor.



The fronts of both headphone amplifiers offer large controls.



But only the G108 offers a balanced XLR output.

controls

The volume and balance controls are on the left on the front. Both are equipped with high-quality aluminum caps with a diameter of 25 mm. The caps, which are larger than the MKI version, now allow better fine-tuning of the controls. A toggle switch for selecting the three operating modes "Mono", "Stereo" and "Phase" is placed in the middle. The G105 MKII offers two stereo jack sockets

in 6.35 mm format, for which a split function can be activated via a push button. You can read how these selection options work in practice in the practical part of this review. In addition to an unbalanced stereo jack socket in 6.35mm format as a second output socket, the G108 has a single four-pin XLR connection instead. A symmetrical signal can be obtained via it.



The backs of the headphone amps are identical.

LP headphone amp inputs

Two unbalanced stereo channels can be connected to each of the headphone amplifiers via the cinch sockets on their backs. It is also possible to feed the headphone preamps with symmetrical signals. Two XLR inputs are available for this. You can switch between the two pairs of sockets using a push button switch. All inputs process line level. A grounding screw is also available here. There is a connection for a Schuko cable for the power supply. This socket can be unscrewed to access the fuse behind it.

Technique and technical values of Lake People G105 MKII and G108

A look inside the Lake People G105 MKII makes it clear that a lot has happened technically. While the previous version relied on two smaller transformers, a single large transformer is now responsible. It provides the internal operating voltage. At +/-25 V, it is higher than the +/-15V that is otherwise common and should lead to potentially higher amplitudes.

The special thing about the headphone amplifiers from Lake People is their pregain function. With their help, the internal preamplification of the device can be adapted to the connected headphones. To do this, connectors must be implemented inside the amplifier. As a result, the control path of the volume control can always be optimally used. Incidentally, the pregain of the two headphone

outputs can be set independently for each of the two stereo outputs. If you want to get to know this feature, but have a smaller budget than for the two test devices, you don't have to look into the tube. With the Lake People G103 MKII, which we have tested for you here , there is also a much cheaper entry-level device that also offers this feature.

The versatility of the levels of amplification that can be selected has been increased again by Lake People with the new version. While the pregain could previously be selected in three stages, which were at -4 dB, +8 dB and +14 dB, the MKII is not only larger in scope. With an increased selection of five levels between -6 dB, 0 dB, +6 dB, +12 dB and +18 dB for high-impedance headphones, there is now also a 0 dB setting.

The G108 goes even further. It offers seven different pregain levels by additionally providing -18 dB and -12 dB. Due to this wide bandwidth in the preamp, headphones with an impedance of 16 to 600 ohms can be used on both devices. The G108 can elicit significantly more output levels than the G105 MKII. If you are not only looking for a new headphone amplifier, but also want to treat yourself to the right new headphones, you will find a good place to go in our test marathon The best studio headphones that can give you an overview of the current market.

There are also differences in the transmission range. If you want audio output up to 150 kHz, as with the first version of the G105, you have to go for the G108. The G105 MKII, on the other hand, "only" reaches up to 100 kHz according to the manufacturer. And when it comes to measured values for crosstalk, the G108 is also slightly ahead. However, these are technical subtleties whose marginal differences will probably not be noticeable to many users in practice. So that you can compare the technical values at a glance, we have also put together the following table for you:

Practice

Handling of Lake People G105 MKII and G108

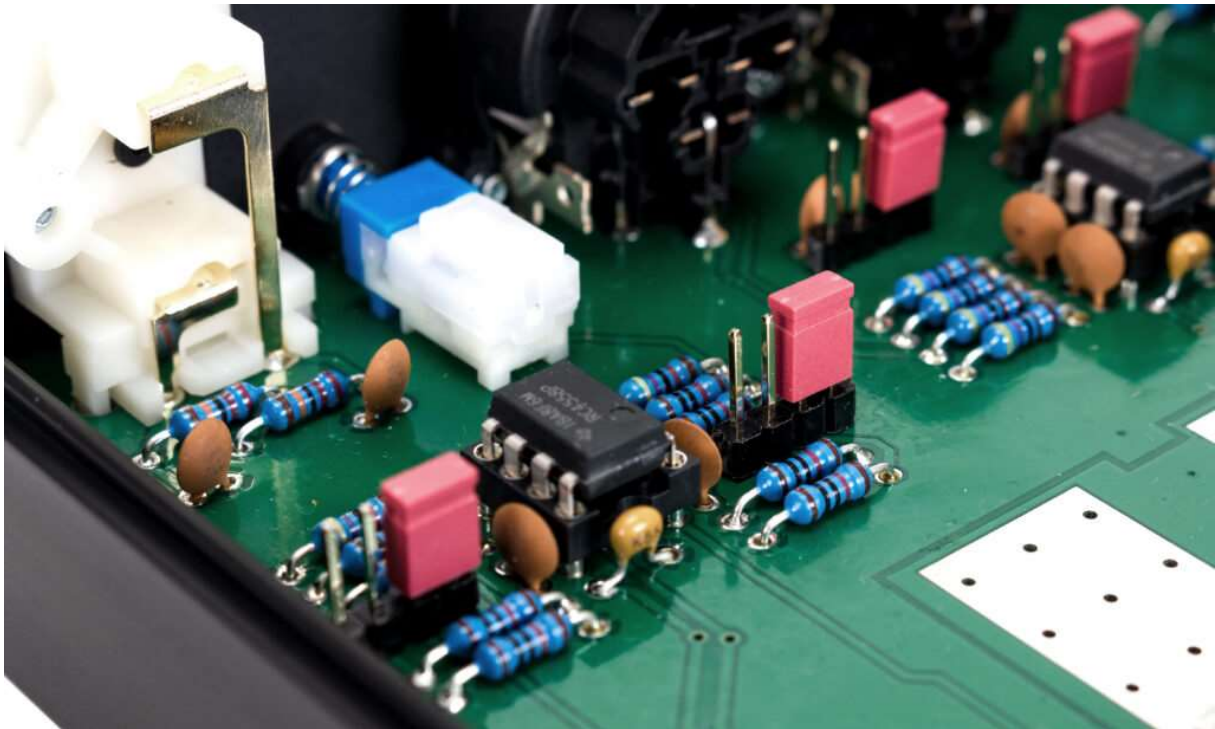
The rubber feet of the headphone amplifier ensure a non-slip stand on smooth surfaces. Plugs can therefore be plugged in and unplugged without hesitation and pushbutton switches can be pressed without the devices sliding wildly back and forth. When switching on the Lake People headphone amplifier, a clearly perceptible mechanical click can be heard. The haptic feedback from the pushbutton switch also shows that we are dealing with a high-quality product here. When connecting the XLR plugs to the rear, this is also supported by the sockets' retention locks. These ensure that the connected cables cannot be accidentally pulled out.



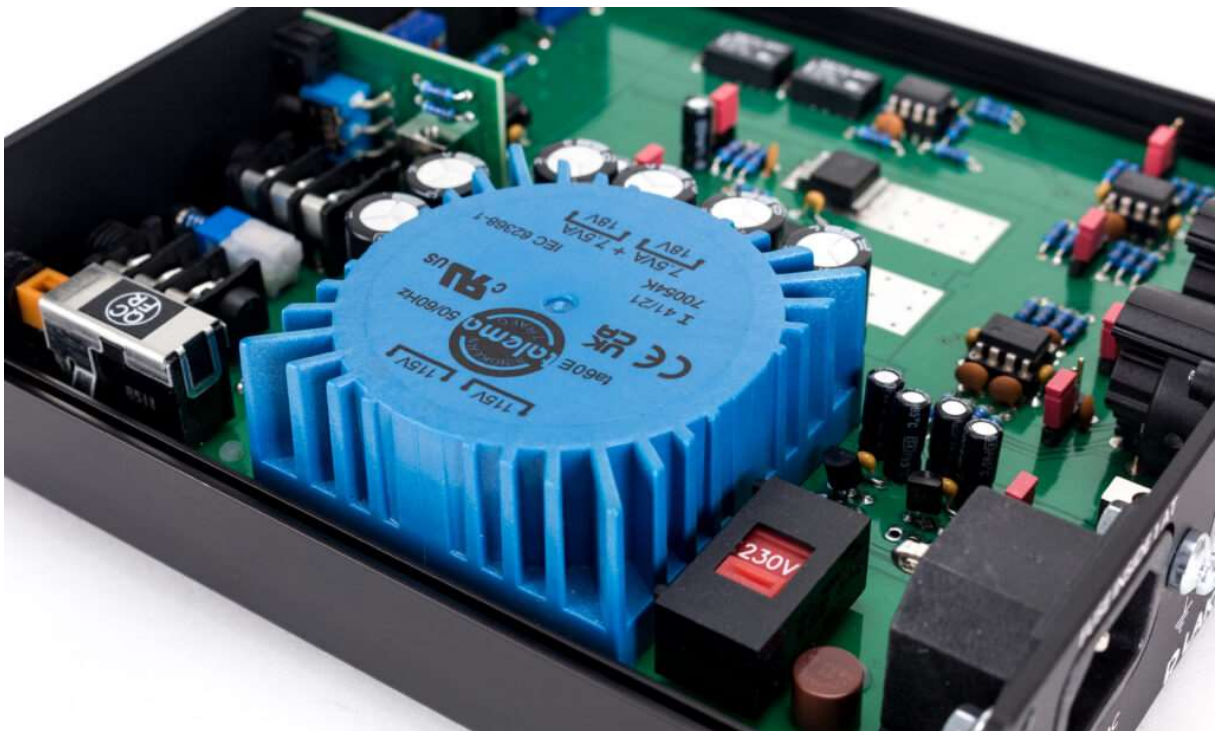
Non-slip feet ensure stability.

Settings inside on the circuit board

If you want to optimally adapt the G105 MKII or the G108 to the load impedance of the headphones of your choice, you cannot avoid setting their preamplification. For this purpose, the top two housing screws on the front and back of the respective amplifier must be removed. This is a little cumbersome, especially since there are also two different screw driver profiles at the start with Torx and Allen. Even higher-quality headphone amplifiers therefore sometimes offer small slide switches on the back instead of internal jumpers. This solution is then more flexible, but also leads to higher costs for the buyer. However, once the housing has been opened, moving the connectors is child's play. The detailed operating instructions help enormously.



The preamplification of both headphone amplifiers is adjusted internally using jumpers.



A single transformer now converts the operating voltage.

Once the pre-gain and ground lift are set appropriately, the control path and the resolution of the volume control can be optimally utilized and any ground loops will not occur. The controller runs with gentle resistance and steplessly. The handling feels consistently valuable. This also applies to the balance control. Its center position is conveniently gridded. The toggle switch for selecting the operating mode also clicks in with high quality. And even the snapping of the jack plug of the

headphone leads is particularly rich and particularly powerful on this headphone amplifier. In daily use, the entire handling is evidence of high operational reliability and comfort and is consistently pleasant. But what strikes me is that the front panels are quite sensitive and scratches and unsightly stains can easily occur during handling.



With the now larger caps, the controls can be adjusted nuanced.

How do Lake People G105 MKII and G108 sound?

When switching from stereo to mono mode, it is positive that Lake People have taken care of the required level equalization at this point. The two levels are by no means simply added together. If the split feature, already known from the first version of the headphone amplifier, is activated on the G105 MKII, the two outputs each output the left and right channel. With the help of this function, about two channels can be amplified separately from each other in the studio with the G105 MKII. If the split function is used in combination with the mono mode, the balance controller can be used for the individual output volumes of the two headphone connections.

Both the G105 MKII and the G108 have a phase mode. It causes the polarity of the right channel to be inverted. This function can be used as a mix aid. If instruments are particularly quiet in this mode or fall out of the mix completely, the phase position of the respective instrument should be checked. This makes the G103 MKII and the G108 not only headphone amplifiers, but also mixing tools.



Three different playback modes are available.

Lake People G105 MKII Headphone Preamp Mix Features

In stereo mode, the Lake People G105 MKII and the G108 show their fine-resolution tonal face. The stereo width is large and the depth of sound offered is enormous. The headphone amplifiers implement bass in a powerful and differentiated manner. Overall, the signal appears sober and factual, without embellishments. Distortions play no role here, even up to high levels of amplification. The output signal remains clean and transparent, depending on the headphone and the selected preamp. With the best will in the world, self-noise cannot be detected even when using headphones with low impedance. The overall tonal appearance of the headphones seamlessly continues the superior line that he started with manufacturing quality, features and handling.

Conclusion

Lake People G105 MKII and G108 are real workhorses for me as headphone amplifiers. The scope of delivery for both models is spot on. Their matt black metallic housing gives the devices value and robustness. The serious appearance of the headphone amps is also underlined by the professional feel of their controls. Their low-noise, fine-resolution and factual sound reinforces this good impression. If you want to connect headphones via a balanced XLR connection and need more leeway to adjust the preamp, you can use the G108. If you can do without it and instead consider the split feature of the G105 MKII to be helpful, you will opt for this model.

High-quality controls as well as stereo, phase and mono mode with level adjustment also speak in favor of these Lake People headphone amplifiers, as does the additional split feature on the G105 MKII) and the balanced XLR output on the G108. With the G105 MKII and the G108, Lake People

Studio users not only offer high-quality headphone amplifiers with individual adjustment to the headphones of choice, but also provide helpful mixing and editing tools.

Pregain, internally switchable (G105 MKII): -6 / 0 / +6 / +12 / +18 dB

Pregain, internally switchable (G108): -18/ -12/ -6 / 0 / +6 / +12 / +18 dB

Headphone suitability: 16 to 600 ohms

Output impedance: < 0.1 ohms (G105 MKII) / <0.125 ohms unbalanced; >0.25 ohms bal. (G108)

Input sensitivity: +6 dBu

Transmission range: 5 Hz to 100 kHz (G105 MKII) / 5 Hz to 150 kHz (G108)

Self-noise: <-120 dBu (G105 MKII) / <-100 dBu (G108)

Dynamic range: >128 dB (G105 MKII) / >126 dB (G108)

THD+N (@ -1 dBFs): <0.001%

Crosstalk (G103 MKII): -90dB (1kHz) / -70dB (15kHz)

Crosstalk (G108): -100dB (1kHz) / -80dB (15kHz)

Inputs: 2x cinch socket (line level, unbalanced, L/R stereo)

Inputs: 2x XLR socket (line level, balanced, L/R stereo)

Outputs (G103 MKII): 2x 6.35 mm jack socket (stereo)

Outputs (G108): 1/4" jack socket (stereo); 4-pin XLR socket (stereo)

Power supply: 115/230V AC switching power supply, 6 watts

Dimensions (H x W x D): 5 x 16.7 x 19 cm

Weight: 1.3kg

Website: lake-people.de

Made in Germany