



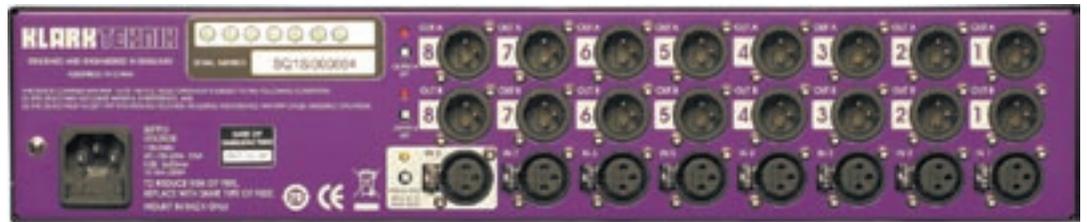
Klark Teknik Square One Splitter

The signal splitter is the most innocuous of devices yet it is often at the very heart of live production broadcast feeds and recording signals.

GEORGE SHILLING says when you've gotta split, you might as well split it good and proper.

Whenever out on a mobile recording job, it has always been reassuring to encounter Klark Teknik splitter units when interfacing with the house system. Klark Teknik has been in business for more than 30 years and has achieved an unrivalled reputation for the reliability and longevity of its equipment. At the same time, it has pushed boundaries and introduced revolutionary and unique units in diverse audio related fields that show a special understanding of customer requirements. Having marketed the first digital delay and digital reverb units, it became best known for graphic EQs, which found favour in the live arena, and splitter units logically followed on.

Available for several years (and still in the catalogue), the Klark Teknik DN 1248 Plus is a



highly sophisticated unit, with a number of factory options for particular requirements. Even in this increasingly digital age, it is still often more sensible to split the signal in the analogue domain before going A-D where necessary. However, the DN 1248+ is undeniably a rather expensive solution, especially if you won't make use of the extra outputs and

factory options. The new Square One Splitter slots into the now familiar purple range, which includes a Graphic EQ and an 8-channel dynamics unit, both built to a high standard but at reasonable cost. All three of these British designed and engineered units come with a reassuring three-year warranty. Costs are undoubtedly reduced by virtue of the assembly

taking place in China, of course, but the build seems excellent. This new Splitter is an off-the-shelf solution at vastly reduced cost compared to the DN 1248+ (although that unit has four more channels), and the Square One aims to perform to high standards while shedding one or two bells and whistles. Like the more expensive unit, the Splitter offers parallel inputs on front and rear, but not quite so many output options. However, in some areas it even improves on the DN model, for example with finer adjustment of gain, and the provision of a 30Hz High Pass Filter. But let's take it from the top...

The SQ1 is an 8-channel 2u device, with a host of XLRs front and rear for inputs and multiple outputs. All sockets are top-notch Neutriks with proper latches, and the steel chassis makes this box suitable for the rigours of live and road use. However, I did feel that an extra millimetre of front panel thickness, especially at the rack ears, might have substantially improved ruggedness.

Included are two sets of preamps that are 'inspired by' the highly regarded Midas XL8 design. The electronically balanced outputs boast an extraordinary >122dB dynamic range, along with a high common-mode rejection ratio, allowing input signals of up to +22dBu, while transformer balanced (fixed gain) outputs boast >140dB dynamic range. The audio performance is certainly way beyond adequate in any scenario imaginable, and a superbly clean and detailed signal is guaranteed, whatever you are interfacing with.

The eight XLR input sockets on the front are usefully mirrored on the reverse, making setup easy in real-world environments. Channel numbering is especially clear, so even on a dark stage with a small torch (*Usually in your teeth. Ed*), any configuring or re-configuring should be straightforward.

Mains input is helpfully an auto voltage-sensing design with an all encompassing range of 100-240V, +/-10V. A LED indicates power present on the front panel, but there is no power switch — probably a sensible omission, as you wouldn't want any accidental power loss. Two sets of outputs are fed by the gain stage, and gain is set on each channel with a rotary 9-position knob, with a range from zero to +40dB in 5dB steps. These would normally feed FOH and monitors respectively. The third set of outputs is on the front, independent of gain; these are intended for recording or OB scenarios. These are transformer isolated outputs fixed at -6dB, and provide perfect clean audio from the inputs, whatever else is occurring, thanks to the complete galvanic isolation. Sonically they are not discernibly different from the main outs.

Other input switches provide individual phantom power with accompanying LED and remote sensing, and a useful 30Hz filter (again with a LED). The circuitry cleverly senses the presence of phantom power on the electronic outputs, and phantom is supplied to the inputs on a 'logical-OR basis' with the switches. The LED indicates phantom present in either scenario. Meanwhile, the filters switch with no clicks or pops and clean things up for all ensuing processes and signal paths, with no degradation of the signal.

At the top of each of the eight strips is a useful four-segment three-colour LED meter (showing Output level post-gain) with green indicators showing signal present at -15dB and 0dB, with yellow warning of +12dB and red showing cause for concern at +21dB. There is also a latching Solo button with LED on each channel that feeds the headphone circuit. The headphone output appears as a standard stereo jack socket on the front with accompanying level knob,

with plenty of grunt to enable signal checking in noisy environments. Another sensible provision is that of the scribble strip underneath the XLRs and channel strips of the front panel, with large numbering and space to scrawl a clue as to the signal.

On both front and rear inputs, channel 8's XLR is labelled also as Media Split. This is a clever feature, useful in broadcast situations for press feeds and other multiple distribution situations, which sends the signal in input 8 to all 16 outputs on the rear. This is enabled with a small recessed button adjacent to the rear input eight socket, accompanied by a LED, while a LED on the front also shows the status of this circuit. Also, alongside each row of outputs is a small recessed button (again with a LED) for Pin 1 ground lift. This could be a useful problem solver when a mystery hum or buzz occurs, and the design shows good understanding of real world situations by providing separate ground lift for each of the two sets of outputs.

Klark Teknik has again come up with a solid design; the SQ1 Splitter is a highly useable solution for many potential users, at a sensible price (UK£750 + VAT). The manual is excellent; the design layout is straightforward and logical, all controls are accompanied by LEDs where possible, and the overall impression is of a superb unit designed to make life easier. ■

PROS

Simple; reliable; clean sounding; good design; well-featured; good value.

CONS

Could do with a thicker front panel and thicker rack ears.

Contact

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