

# ZOOM H4 Handy Recorder



**One of the most useful little gadgets I purchased of late is the Zoom H4. It's probably the most portable piece of recording kit you can own and at a very reasonable price of around the £190 mark.**

I have come to rely on its versatility for all sorts of different situations. I set it up alongside my camcorder and record a soundtrack live which matches the one on the camcorder track. When I transfer the camcorder film to my Computer editing program, I also add the Zoom track to the timeline. I use the camcorder sound track to edit my clips to. When I have finished the picture editing, I mute out the camcorder soundtrack and use the Zoom one. It's infinitely better in sound quality. Plus I can switch it into my sound editing program to make any tonal adjustments that may be required, then switch

the adjusted version back to the timeline. The key here is to make sure that both the camcorder sound track and the Zoom track are perfectly aligned, otherwise the picture track will be out of sync with the Zoom track. Strangely enough, I have also come to use the Zoom for recording solo acoustic guitar tracks. The onboard stereo microphones aligned in an X/Y pattern, produce a very authentic sound if positioned correctly and I use the 48k mode to record the stereo track for my guitars. I then transfer the tracks into my Sony Sound Forge music editing program for usage in whatever format I want. I also record small sound clips in the Mp3 mode to upload to the internet to send people sound samples of particular vintage guitars.

There is a multitude of other recording modes and an onboard DSP processor for effects and amp modelling. Apart from a great stereo recording unit, it can also be used in multi track mode up to 4 track recording. The Zoom comes bundled with a Cubase software program that you can install on your computer. You can then transfer the 4 track recording into Cubase for editing. You can buy different Secure Digital media cards of different memory capabilities which is a godsend to such a small unit at the Zoom. Basically this little gem can be used for live shows, podcasts, rehearsals, song writing and it will do a good job of band recording as well to a reasonably useable standard. I use it for speech recording as well and for interviews for various articles I write for magazines. There is also an option of using two external microphones of your choice which are inputted by 1/4 inch jack plugs and are phantom powered. These inputs will also handle guitars, bass or any other line driven instruments and you can utilise Zoom's most incredible microphone, guitar and bass modelling, accurately reproducing the tone of the most famous microphones and amps ever made.



*H4 Mic. inputs*

continuous recording. It also comes supplied with an tripod adaptor that mounts easily onto a camera tripod or with a change of female sockets, onto a microphone stand. A windshield is also supplied which will drastically reduce noise from wind in an outside situation. When the H4 is connected to a computer via USB, it also functions as an SD card reader. This allows you to drag and drop audio files to your computer

like you would pictures from a digital camera. Create a media player sound library, tailor a recording with a waveform editor, then mix and master with a DAW. Then create your own CDs, send files by e-mail, or use them for podcasting. The possibilities are endless.

The H4 will even function as a portable MP3 player.

Its easy-to-use control interface uses cursor keys and a jog dial that lets you operate most functions with one hand. Its backlight LCD makes for easy navigation, even in dark settings, thanks to a clear graphic layout and well-designed icons. A key-hold function prevents inadvertent operation during recording.

I can't recommend the N4 highly enough, especially to acoustic guitarists or singer songwriters. I have actually used this to record my new 12 string Blues CD. Just solo 12 string and voice and it has produced the live sound of my playing and singing to a very high state of accuracy, transparency and definition. I take it everywhere I go these days, because you never know when you may need to use it. Having the alternate choice of using it with batteries is also useful in situations where no mains are available. Other features include a versatile tuner for guitar and bass, a metronome for use as a rhythm guide and A/B repeat capability.

**Paul Brett**



*H4 built in mics.*



Audio can be recorded as WAV or MP3 files and moved to a computer via USB for easy editing, mixing and mastering. The manufacturers claim that the Zoom H4 has more recording tools available than any other device ever made and it fits into the palm of your hand weighing only 6.7 ounces.

You can use the Zoom with a power supply or with a pair of AA batteries, which will last about four hours of