

REVIEW: Dressler D200S

high power 2m amplifier



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There have been very few commercially made 2m band valve linears that have been reasonably available in Europe, the only ones that I can immediately think of are, in order of succession, a Belcom one using the antique 829 valve, the German Fischer F200 which could be supplied either with a 4CX250B, or R (the latter having a higher power rating). These were succeeded by the Nag, which incorporated a 4CX350, or alternatively, the Tempo 6M2 from the US which glided along gracefully at well above a kilowatt, but at a huge importation cost. Now we have the German Dressler imported by Harvey Lexton, who kindly supplied the review sample. The Dressler is by a considerable margin the easiest of these valve linears to drive, by far the easiest to service, and probably the simplest to use.

Facilities

This linear is housed in a very handsome cabinet, having a thick and well plated chassis and is generally very well constructed and robust. The UK model is provided with a mains transformer suitable for 240V AC.

This replaces earlier Dresslers sent to the UK with only 220V transformers, which caused much overheating and bad troubles. The mains input socket is a normal IEC one. The input to the linear is on a 50 ohm BNC socket, whereas the output is on a 50 ohm 'N' type. A switch on the back permits the input drive to feed straight through to the grid circuitry of the 4CX350A Eimac valve, or via a passive capacitive variable attenuator which can cope with drive levels from around 2W to well over 15W for full output. The coaxial relays are of very high quality which bypass the input to the output directly when the amplifier is not in use, or on standby. The input attenuator on the low gain input is varied by a trimming tool, via a hole in the back panel. Two RCA type phono sockets, as used in many audio amplifiers, are provided for PTT connections, one causing the linear to go to the transmit mode when the line is shorted to the screen, whilst the other socket requires between 5 and 15V DC to transmit. By having these two alternatives, a very wide range of equipment can be immediately used with Dressler, and this is extremely

convenient. As if this is not enough, there is an RF sensing circuit which requires just over 0.5W on the input to activate it, a variable hold-on time being controlled by a potentiometer on the panel (almost instantaneous fall back up to 1.5 seconds variation).

Across the front panel are the anode tuning control, and further knobs for off / standby / operate / operate with mast head pre-amp on, output loading, left hand meter switch for measuring HT volts, grid 1 current, grid 2 current and output power, whilst the right hand meter is always on anode current (FSD at 0.5 amp). Finally, a switch selects SSB or FM operation, the standing currents being set respectively at 100mA and below 10mA for those two modes.

The very heavy duty mains transformer is of a highly efficient design and is situated towards the back of the right hand side of the equipment. Air intake holes are provided underneath the transformer, air being sucked in by quite a large and very smooth running fan in the centre of the linear, which blows the air straight through the valve area and out through a hole in the side panel on the left cheek. This hole is amply protected with a mesh internal cover. Under normal operation at intermediate power levels on SSB this air outflow was just slightly warm, but when the linear was working hard at, say, 500W PEP one cannot hold ones hand near the outflow for more than a few seconds without severely feeling the pinch! This is one of my very few criticisms, and I feel that the air flow should be at least 50% higher as valves are so very expensive.

When the pre-amplifier mode is selected, 15V DC is put onto the centre pin of the antenna feed socket for activating a Dressler masthead pre-amplifier. SSB Products models also work well with this facility, the 15V being withdrawn immediately on the linear switching to TX, either by VOX sensing or by PTT.

There could be a problem here in the use of the mast head pre-amp if RF sensing is being used, particularly if you are using a fairly low level input to achieve full output power. There is insufficient gain in the RF sensing circuit for the Dressler to change to the TX mode at the slightest sniff of RF, and so low power could go sailing up to the masthead at around half a watt and perhaps do some damage. To obviate this, a Dressler accessory switching unit, their VV-Interface,