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World Premiere of Frontbass Audio by Mercedes-Benz and Harman Kardon

DETROIT--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- HARMAN, the global leading supplier of premium audio and infotainment systems (NYSE:HAR), and Mercedes-Benz® are revolutionizing the roadster music experience. The new audio system, takes sound performance to a level never-before attained. For the first time, the Frontbass system places woofers in the footwell in front of the driver and passenger, fixed firmly to the front bulkhead of the car's steel frame. This unique design uses the space between the Frontbass speakers and the vehicle chassis as a large resonating chamber.

Frontbass is the result of many years of cooperation between Mercedes-Benz and HARMAN, the audio specialist and Daimler's long-standing development partner. "This collaboration was unique because it brought the best of engineering and audio acoustics together very early in the design phase. Harman was deeply involved very early in the process, even while the frame of the new SL was being designed," says Sachin Lawande, Chief Technology Officer and Co-President, HARMAN Lifestyle and Infotainment Divisions. "Six years of joint development work and the courage to make a structural change to the vehicle went into the new Frontbass system. And the result is outstanding."

Compared to traditional door mounted speakers, Frontbass offers an extremely clear and stable bass tone across the entire frequency band. The other components of the Harman Kardon sound system also benefit from optimum positioning — tweeters and midrange speakers are placed on one height around the driver and passenger. The sound is focused more than any other sound system precisely on the vehicle occupants, even when the top is down: Due to the location low down in the acoustically protected footwell, the acoustic elements that impact the sound remain inside the vehicle. Furthermore, when the roof is closed, the area outside the car remains peaceful because unavoidable vibrations caused by the door speakers used by conventional sound systems do not arise.

Featured as standard equipment in the new Mercedes Benz SL Roadster, Frontbass will make its premiere during the North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit. In combination with the Harman Kardon® Logic 7® surround sound system with six 50-watt, 100mm midrange speakers, six 50-watt 43mm tweeters, a digital signal processor and a 600 watt Class-D amplifier, the new roadster is transformed into an open-air concert hall.

harman/kardon

The Harman Kardon brand name has been synonymous with audio innovation since the world's very first high-fidelity receiver, the Harman Kardon Festival D1000, which was invented in 1954. Since then, a passion for music and the resulting innovative strength have made Harman Kardon the leading manufacturer of premium audio systems -- at home, in the car, and on the go. Today, Harman Kardon is a world leader in high-performance home, multimedia and automotive entertainment systems, with a legacy of developing premium-quality products. Harman Kardon is the only audio brand to have a product featured in the permanent collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art.

About HARMAN

HARMAN (www.harman.com) designs, manufactures and markets a wide range of audio and infotainment solutions for the automotive, consumer and professional markets — supported by 15 leading brands, including AKG, Harman Kardon, Infinity, JBL, Lexicon and Mark Levinson. The company is admired by audiophiles across multiple generations and supports leading professional entertainers and the venues where they perform. More than 20 million automobiles on the road today are equipped with HARMAN audio and infotainment systems. HARMAN has a workforce of about 12,500 people across the Americas, Europe and Asia, and reported sales of \$4.0 billion for the 12 months ended September 30, 2011. The company's shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol NYSE: HAR.

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