

ADAM AUDIO S1X

MONITOR

They might not be new to the market, but **Stephen Bennett** explains why these nifty nearfields – combined with a Sub 10 for this review – are still well worth a look.

ADAM Audio speakers continue on their quest for X-ART tweeter-based monitor world domination via the two-way active S1X.

The X-ART Air Motion Transformer tweeter has come to define this range of monitors and gives the company's products a definable sound. So what does the nearfield monitor bring to the studio?

A robust crinkle-finish cabinet encloses the aforementioned tweeter, a midrange unit and amplification. The monitor weighs 6kg, but is not electronically shielded – I didn't find this a problem in practice and a five-year warranty demonstrates the company's commitment to quality control. The X-ART tweeter offers a flat impedance and phase response, alongside high efficiency and an extended frequency range and there's a specially designed 50W Class A/B amplifier for driving it. The familiar Kevlar HexaCone midrange/bass unit is present, driven by 200W of Pulse Width Modulation (PWM) Class D amplification.

Specifications are impressive for a small cabinet: a 40Hz-50kHz frequency range is coupled with low distortion and a 103dB maximum SPL. ADAM monitors are usually happy to go really loud with few problems and the S1X is no different in this respect. I was pleased to see that the front panels are devoid of tweakable controls, which are a nightmare in educational situations. The uncluttered rear panel features controls for equalisation and input level

setting alongside the usual IEC and XLR signal connectors. The two rear Room EQ controls have a 6dB boost or cut at 6kHz and 150Hz and a boost or cut 4dB adjustment for the high frequencies to balance the bass and treble levels.

Also on test is the Sub 10 active monitor. This unit allows you to audition signals from 150Hz down to 25Hz, both helping create better mixes and frightening small animals. A paper-coned 10in driver moves the air via a 200W amplifier. It's a sturdy beast, weighing in at 21kg, but with dimensions of 560mm x 300mm x 400mm it shouldn't be difficult to place.

The rear panel features a cutoff filter control for setting the upper frequency of the sub, a level control, an output for daisy-chaining several Sub 10s and various ins and outs for attaching satellite monitors including XLR balanced and 0.25in unbalanced connectors. The controls section has a setting to turn on the sub when a signal is received or for continuous operation, a phase switch and an 85Hz Dolby-ready high pass satellite filter button.

Front panel LEDs indicate the standby situation of the monitor.

IN USE

Adding a sub unit to a monitoring system can often create more problems than it solves if the room is not ideal, but luckily, for this test, I was able to set up the three speakers in a new acoustically treated control room. The first thing that is apparent when listening to the S1Xs alone is that they exhibit 'the ADAM sound' that is familiar to anyone who has spent time with the company's speakers – a detailed top end, revealing midrange and a quality of bass that has no right to be emanating from such small speakers. They can also go extremely loud without apparent distortion – although the tendency to 'shout' can become tiring at high SPL.

In comparison to my ATC SCM25s the bass is a little 'one note' – a common issue with ported designs – and some work was required with the rear panel controls to get them sitting nice in the room. These controls also came in handy when adding the Sub 10 to the monitoring chain, but really, did I leave

Key Features

- X-ART tweeter allows for increase in frequency response up to 50kHz
- Specially designed 50W Class A/B amplifier
- HexaCone woofer provides more linear excursion for higher maximum SPL
- Midrange/bass unit driven by PWM amplification
- Weighs just 6kg

RRP: S1X pair = £1,799; Sub10mk2 = £849

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all those noises down there? The sub worked without fuss and the results in use were similar to my normal low frequency unit that cost a lot more and is a lot bigger. The integration of the Sub 10 with the S1Xs was pretty seamless and had me hankering to audition a complete surround system using these speakers, the X-ART tweeters bringing out detail in both voice and effects. Using the Sub 10 with my ATCs also worked a treat and I spent a happy few hours hi-pass filtering almost everything I have ever recorded.

In the right room, a sub can be an essential addition to any monitoring system, while in a space with acoustic problems, it can make auditioning and mixing almost impossible. If you have the right studio space available, the Sub 10 is a really nice low-frequency speaker that you would be happy to use every day. If you like the ADAM sound – and many do – the S1X is a really competent small monitor that stands out in the crowd of near-field speakers by virtue of its unique high-frequency driver. It's detailed, powerful and compact and doesn't mess up your sound in any appreciable way.

The Reviewer

Stephen Bennett has been involved in music production for over 30 years. Based in Norwich he splits his time between writing books and articles on music technology, recording and touring, and lecturing at the University of East Anglia.