

TAPE OP

The Creative Music Recording Magazine

DAVE SARDY

Barkmarket, Helmet, Slayer, more...

BILLY ANDERSON

Neurosis, Mr. Bungle, Melvins, L7, more...

EMITT RHODES

Home Recording Pioneer

TONY LEVIN &

JERRY MAROTTA

Peter Gabriel's rhythm section and beyond

DAVE DERR

The Fatso Distressor Dude from Jersey!

UNDER THE RADAR

NOISE GATES

PRE PRODUCTION

ANALOG TAPE SP

DIY SHOCKMOUNT

GEAR REVIEWS

recorded at home

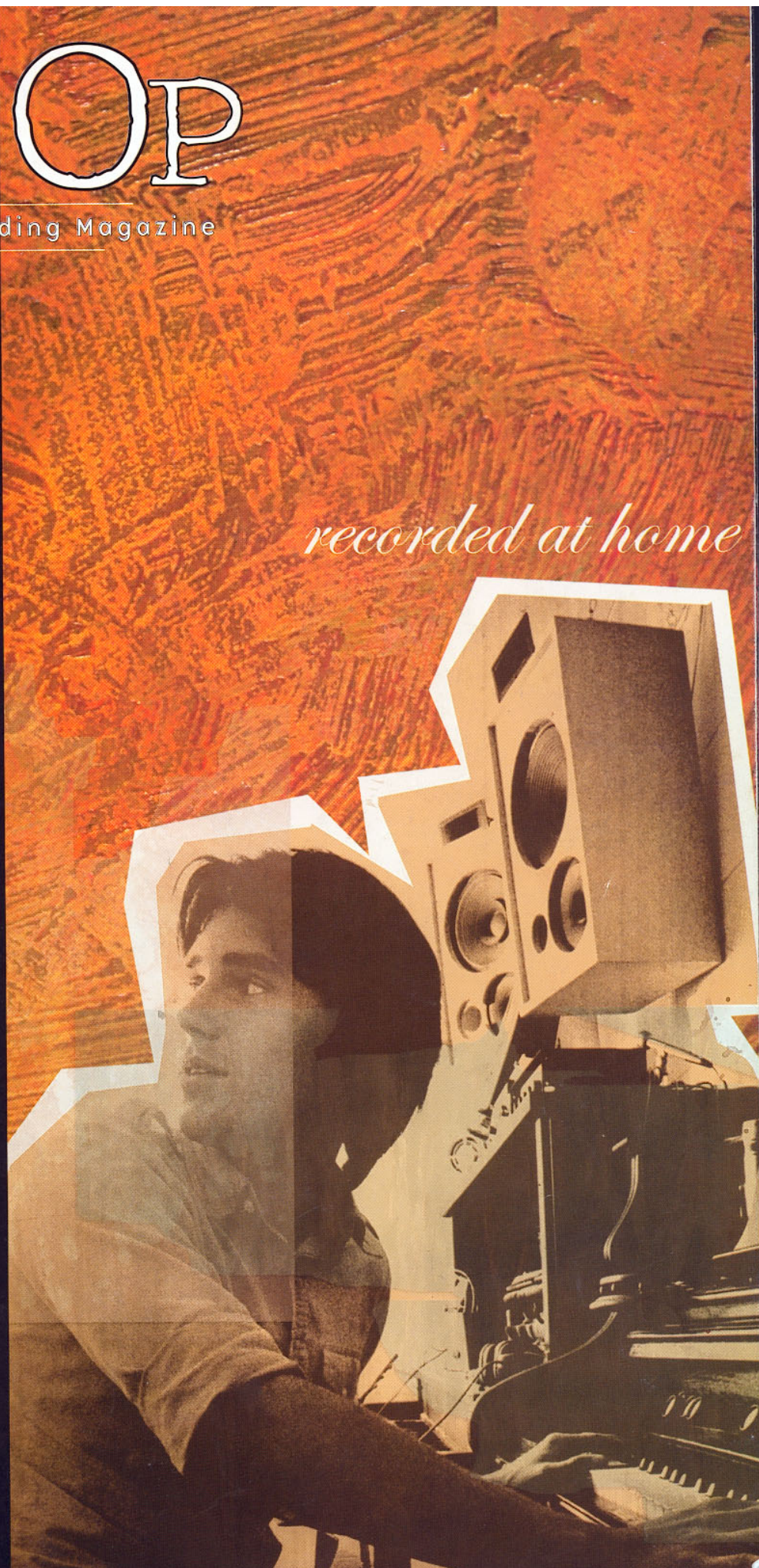


\$ 3 . 9 5

No. 33

Jan / Feb

2003



Blackstone Appliances

Mosfet Overdrive pedal

The MOSFET (Metal-Oxide Semiconductor Field Effect Transistor) was used in attempts to produce tube-like clipping in some '80s Marshalls, Carvins, and other high-powered guitar amps. MOSFETs never sounded much like tubes, but when used correctly, they produced a pleasing, singing sustain all their own—not unlike that of a TS-9. In fact, Blackstone's compact black box sounds far better than most MOSFET guitar amps ever did. Although it probably won't replace the Class-A style sparkle of a Klon Centaur or Matchless Hotbox, it'll give you a thick, tubby, Marshall-like '80s howl that's certainly in the same league. The best Strat/Dimarzio tones on Zappa's *Guitar and Shut Up 'N Play Yer Guitar* come to mind when I use the Blackstone with the Alnico single coils on my G&L Legacy. The Blackstone's two-channel design will revamp your whole program. Each channel has a dedicated Drive and Level control. One footswitch changes channels, and one mechanically bypasses the pedal; so your clean, overdriven, and distorted tones are usually just one click away. This, along with a Mid-Cut control, internal Treble and Gain controls, settings for Hi- and Low-output pickups, and a reasonable price make the Blackstone a winner all around. (\$225, www.mindspring.com/~j.blackstone/)

-Geoff Farina, www.secretstars.com

ADAM Audio

S3-A active monitor

I saw (and heard) a bunch of gear at the annual AES show this past Fall. With so many cool new products to discover, you'd think that it'd be hard for a gear geek like me to choose one product that stood out above all others. Well... guess what. Nothing impressed me as much as the complete line of monitors from ADAM Audio. So much so that I made arrangements to buy a pair of ADAM S3-A monitors right then and there.

The S3-A is a 3-way system with an Accelerated Ribbon Technology (ART) tweeter, two 7.3" Hexacone woofers, and three 150 Watt (RMS) amplifiers. (ADAM recently upgraded the amps from the original spec of 100 W.) Although the two Hexacone drivers look identical, the first driver/amp combination operates below 1.8 kHz, while the second one augments the first below 150 Hz, effectively doubling the woofer size and power at low frequencies. The ART tweeter is unique in that it uses a pleated diaphragm to "squeeze" air out with much greater efficiency and accuracy than a planar driver can push air. Frequency response is stated as 32 Hz - 35 kHz (+/- 3 dB). On the rear panel is a balanced XLR input. On the front is a power switch alongside trim controls for input sensitivity, tweeter level, high-freq shelf, and low-freq shelf.

Two days before the AES show, John Baccigaluppi and I mixed the Nedelle CD at the Bomb Factory studio, and I got to hear the S3-A for the first time. What I heard amazed me. The high-end had so much detail that I could hear recording artifacts and distortion that

had gone previously unnoticed—without the higher frequencies sounding hyped. The two woofers produced incredibly tight, focused low-end. And the combination of drivers provided midrange that was smooth but not glossed-over. (I'm a big fan of midrange, and I can't stand speakers that don't have enough midrange.) Plus, the imaging was fantastic. The S3-As seemed so accurate that I was confident that the mixes were "right." A month later, hearing the tapes at Peerless Mastering confirmed that what we'd heard on the S3-As was indeed the right mix.

Cons? Although the ART tweeter has good dispersion in the horizontal plane, it doesn't have a lot of vertical dispersion. The hi-end balance changes significantly as you go from sitting to standing; curiously enough, it's not as noticeable as you sit down low. Also, the monitors are susceptible to radio-frequency interference. (I live in an area with high RF-density.) ADAM have already devised a solution, which they named the "Hong Mod," as I was the first user to report the problem.

I've owned a pair of S3-As for three months now. Part of me feels like I should write more about my experiences, but another part of me knows that there's not much more to say than this: The S3-A is the best nearfield or midfield monitor that I have ever heard. They sound fantastic—but at the same time, they are brutally honest, revealing aspects of my mixes that other monitors have failed to do. I liked the S3-A so much that I also bought a pair of P11-A active monitors for my home. (\$4,400, www.adam-audio.com) -AH

ADAM Audio

P11-A active monitor

The first thing you notice when listening to ADAM P11-A bi-amped monitors is the incredible detail. These aren't overly bright, thumping speakers with smiley-face frequency response curves—the midrange is very clear and very defined. The top end is accurate without being harsh, and the stereo imaging (in terms of both soundstage width and depth) is simply a notch above other speakers I've heard in this price and spec range. The low end is the only place these speakers don't shine—that's not surprising as each speaker is only equipped with one 7" paper-coned woofer. The lows could get a bit muddy and loose sounding at times, but this never masked any serious problems; things behaved predictably. The first time I heard the P11-A was when I used a pair to engineer a radio broadcast of a mellow, six-piece band playing live. When setting up, I was guessing that mixing would be hairy (lots of equipment, not much time to soundcheck), but the added clarity of these speakers helped everything turn out fine. I was especially pleased at how well the mix translated to other systems. Like its much costlier brother the S3-A, the P11-A is equipped with an ART tweeter and has similar controls for trimming its in-room response. Frequency response is stated as 48 Hz - 35 kHz (+/- 3 dB). These are great powered monitors, and using them was a blast! (\$1700, www.adam-audio.com) -Ramsey Tantawi