

A77X reviewed by AUDIO MEDIA magazine

The first review of the new AX-series' offspring – the horizontally designed A77X – comes from AUDIO MEDIA magazine. In its February/2012 issue producer, author and filmmaker Stephen Bennett found words of praise to describe the A77X. Please read some extracts of that review below.

[...] The A77X is part of the company's AX series and, of course, features the characteristic and distinctive X-ART tweeter that sets the ADAM range of speakers apart from other contemporary designs and which gives the range a distinctive 'family' tonality. These are hefty active near-field speakers configurable for both horizontal and vertical mounting. The individual drive units are powered by their own amplifier, a 50W A/B amp for the X-ART tweeter and a 100W PWM amp for each of the bass/mid-range units – of which there are two per speaker. These enable the A77X to get very, very loud without audible distortion or noticeable compression that made them comfortable to listen to for long periods of time.

The two seven-inch drivers, while ostensibly identical, perform different tasks in the A77X. Both are responsible for the sub-bass frequencies, but only one covers the mid-range – ADAM says that this prevents interferences between the two drivers. The X in the X-ART ribbon tweeter indicates that the frequency range has been extended up to 50kHz, and ADAM also claims higher efficiency at greater Sound Pressure Levels (SPL) for the driver. The A77X is port loaded with two large bass ports dominating the lower centre of the speaker. Using a ported design like this is always something of a compromise – it enables the speaker to reproduce lower frequencies than their relatively diminutive size would allow if they were a sealed unit design but it also adds its own colouration, and the different way in which manufacturers tackle this compromise is what makes monitor design such an interesting challenge. However, the A77X does not suffer from the 'one note' and bass overhang characteristic of poorly designed ported speakers, and the bass seems to be pretty smoothly integrated with the other drivers.

The front panel of the A77X features an on/off switch and a level control that usefully remembers its setting on power down. The cabinets are gently sloped at each corner and are finished in a matt/gloss black that can easily take the daily knocks of a busy studio – something I found out when I accidentally dropped a power amp on one! The rear panel has an IEC mains connector, XLR signal input, and screwdriver-adjustable mini potentiometers that allow for some adjustment of the tonal characteristics of the speakers. You can vary the high shelf and low shelf over by +/-6dB, while you can adjust the tweeter level over a range of +/-4dB – but in my reasonably well treated studio, these controls were not needed, the A77X being tonally well-balanced between its various drivers.



Listen In

For listening comparisons, I set up the A77X against my usual PMC TB2 passive transmission line speakers and a pair of sealed box ATC SCM20 active monitors. As predicted all three monitors sounded completely different, the A77X proving slightly brasher and with an obviously more extended low end than the other two. In fact, the bass response of the A77X is more in line with my Dynaudio M2s – which are also ported but about twice the size! If your prejudice is that ribbon tweeters usually sound harsh and seemingly dissociated from the other drivers in the cabinet, the A77X might come as somewhat of a surprise. Compared to ADAM's smaller A7X, the A77X are smoother and more detailed in the mid-range, making mixing decisions much easier. Somehow the ribbon tweeter sounds more 'integrated' into the whole monitor. I'd have no problems if these were the only speakers that I had to use for making critical mixing decisions.

ADAM has taken its popular A7X designs and improved on it tremendously. The company should be applauded for continuing to provide an alternative to the plethora of soft and hard domed tweeter based speakers out there. It still has something of the 'family' sound, but if you liked the A7X you'll like the A77X even more, and if the company's smaller near-fields weren't your cup of tea, the A77X are definitely worth another listen. They are not much bigger than a two-driver cabinet design, so should slip into any installation where a near-field speaker will fit, but the extra low/ mid frequency drivers mean that the bass is more naturally extended and the mid-range clearer and more detailed.

I like the A77X a lot and they make a refreshing change from the usual mid-priced near-field speakers.

Stephen Bennett, AUDIO MEDIA magazine, February 2012
<http://audiomedia.com/>