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ADAM Audio T8V Active Studio Monitor

The largest member of the T series offers body, range, and that classic ribbon tweeter tone

REVIEW BY ALEX HAWLEY

Berlin-based ADAM Audio has been designing loudspeakers for over twenty years. The company is best known for its easily identifiable accelerated ribbon tweeters (ART), which are found in various forms in all T, AX, and S series monitors. The tweeter design is based on the Air Motion Transformer invented by Oskar Heil in the 1960s that features a plated diaphragm capable of accelerating air four times faster than traditional piston-based methods—a core element of all ADAM Audio design concepts. The T8V represents the newest and largest member of the affordable ADAM Audio T series studio monitors, alongside the T5V, T7V and the T10S subwoofer.

Overview

The T8V is a powered two-way near-field monitor featuring an 8" polypropylene woofer, a rear-firing bass reflex port, and a 1.9" U-ART tweeter (same tweeter as its T series siblings). The U-ART tweeter is made of a high-tech polyimide film, has an extended frequency response up to 25 kHz, and contributes to an impressive SPL rating (118dB per pair). The tweeter is embedded in a precision waveguide that shares dispersion attributes similar to the HPS waveguide found in the flagship Adam Audio S series monitors. It provides a smooth off-axis frequency response, resulting in a wider sweet spot.

The 8" woofer provides excellent bass extension, with a listed frequency response down to 33Hz. With larger LF drivers than its T Series siblings, there isn't much need to supplement its bass response with the T10S (or any subwoofer), which was designed for the T5V and T7V. It also features

very low distortion for its class, coming in at 0.5% (> 80Hz). The crossover frequency is DSP-based and located at 2.6 kHz. T8V is bi-amped with Class D amplifiers, delivering 20W RMS to the tweeter and 70W RMS to the woofer.

The back panel, which is steel plated, features a volume control, two three-way tone shaping switches (LF and HF shelves, both toggle between -2dB, 0dB, and +2dB), input connections, a power switch with an LED indicator, and the bass reflex port as previously mentioned. The input connections include balanced XLR and unbalanced RCA, complemented with an input selection switch that toggles between the +4dBu and -10dBV input options. The volume control ranges from -60dB to +10dB, with a mark at 0dB for reference. I wish it were detented at 0dB for easier level matching, but the variable knob is nice to match the output level of other monitor pairs or easier calibration



in a larger system. The power connection is a standard IEC cable, which is included with the monitors. Each monitor weighs in at 21.6 lbs. and is a sizable 15.8" x 9.8" x 13.2". The cabinet has a beveled edge and is vinyl foil-covered with a clean black aesthetic. The T8V comes with a two-year warranty that extends to five when registering the monitors with ADAM Audio.

Impressions

After burning in the T8V pair overnight, I began mixing and listening to a wide variety of material in a professionally treated control room. The low frequency response is quite impressive and lends itself beautifully to bass-heavy material such as electronic music, pop, and film scores. The midrange feels slightly pulled back in general, while still offering detail, especially in the upper range. The high frequency vibe is airy and vivid, with excellent clarity and brightness without being harsh or offensive.

I found that the vibrancy of the tweeters shined with acoustic, orchestral, and even jazz recordings. Willie Nelson's *My Way* (which has been one of my go-to mix references since its release), recorded and mixed by Ed Cherney, translates with a deep soundstage, incredible image, and a lifelike realism to the string and brass sections. The kick drum, notably in 'Fly Me To The Moon', while seldom used in this arrangement, translates with deep-reaching impact in the low-end department. This is an excellent indication that well-recorded and mixed material will translate great on these monitors, and less-than-great mixes are also equally as revealed on the T8V—a mark of good monitors.

After some 8-10 hour mixing days on the T8V system, I did notice a bit more ear fatigue than I usually endure, although it wasn't until these longer mixing sessions that this became apparent. I think this can be attributed to these monitors' detailed high end. While pleasing to listen to, it can contribute to fatigue faster than some other monitors. The other area that took a bit of getting used to is the low midrange, specifically around 80Hz – 150Hz. This

range seemed a bit muddy to me. Also, 60Hz – 80Hz is full and punchy but sometimes leans a bit to the exaggerated side. It sounds great for some material, and I quickly learned to adapt when checking how mixes translate elsewhere.

I made use of the -2dB HF shelf on the back panel after feeling fatigued, which helped out in that department. While the -2dB didn't alter the clarity I came to expect from the T8V, it softened it just enough when mixing for long periods.

The soundstage is quite impressive for monitors of this class—a wide usable sweet spot that feels very natural, with excellent phantom center definition. Its image has incredible depth as well, providing space and separation between instruments in the stereo spectrum. The midrange and high-frequency transient response feel very fast and tight, with only the low end feeling slightly less tight in that realm. I found that hip-hop and other percussive genres sound full and punchy.

Concluding Thoughts

The T8V monitors provide enough bass to feel in your chest—the SPL here

is quite impressive. If you have a larger room that requires a loud and clean output, these deliver just that. I initially set them up in my home studio where they overpowered the space. The A room at Coupe Studios provided the perfect listening environment; there I was able to push them harder without the room negatively impacting the sound. While they may not be ruler-flat in frequency response, nothing was standing in the way of accurately mixing a range of material on them while providing some client-pleasing gratification in the process. Once I adjusted the HF switch on the back panel to -2dB, I was comfortably mixing full days without much fatigue. I did most of my listening without a sub, and I don't think one would be needed in most configurations—the 8" woofer provides plenty of body and range. All around, the ADAM Audio T8V is a great monitor for the price, and a great addition to the T series for those who need a bit more power at their disposal! ➤

Price: \$299 (Each)
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