



ADAM Audio A7V

Active Monitors

With newly designed drivers and Sonarworks integration, ADAM's new A series promises a lot of monitoring for your money.

waveguide's 70° dispersion is designed to help reduce unwanted desk and console reflections.

Another feature of the HPS waveguide is that it can be rotated through 180°, which allows you to position the A7V horizontally or even upside-down, thanks to the M8 inserts on the underside of its cabinet and using a series of mounts that will soon be released by ADAM Audio. Personally, I prefer to position two-way loudspeakers horizontally whenever possible, as I feel that this improves the subjective integration of the high- and low-frequency drivers but, as the saying goes, your mileage may vary.

Voice Activated

In the A7V, amplification is supplied in a hybrid fashion, with a Class-D, PWM amplifier providing 90W RMS to the MLM bass driver, and a 15W RMS Class-A/B amplifier handling the X-ART high-frequency driver. Although these RMS figures may seem low to some, these amplifiers endow the A7V with a frequency response of 44Hz-41kHz (-3dB) at up to 108dB SPL (RMS) at 1m, which is going to be plenty loud enough for anyone using the A7V in the nearfield.

I work in a compact space in which my monitors are backed up quite close to a wall, so I was a little sorry to

ADAM Audio A7V £1198

PROS

- Delivers superb sonic performance at an attractive price point.
- A Control remote-control application provides an easy to use, intuitive user interface.
- Sonarworks SoundID room calibration profiles can run on its embedded DSP platform.
- Easy to work on for long periods.

CONS

- None

SUMMARY

A superb nearfield monitor that delivers an assured and superbly detailed audio performance, and which can run Sonarworks SoundID profiles on its embedded DSP.

BOB THOMAS

It doesn't feel like 10 years since I reviewed (in *SOS* June 2012), and subsequently bought, ADAM Audio's A77X, a three-way version of the company's two-way A7X nearfield monitor. Much has happened with ADAM Audio in that time, including their purchase by UK-based Focusrite PLC in July 2019. Focusrite CEO Tim Carroll said at the time: "With so much expertise between us in acoustics, sound reproduction, DSP, Audio-over-IP, and control, the opportunities are abundant." With the launch of the new ADAM Audio A series, which includes the A7V reviewed here, it would appear that at least two of those opportunities have now been very definitely seized.

ART Of Noise

The A7V's vertically oriented black cabinet features ADAM Audio's signature thick, deep-bevelled baffle, which strengthens and stiffens the cabinet, helps minimise cabinet diffractions, and provides a stable mount for the monitor's high- and low-frequency drivers. The baffle itself has an attractive aesthetic, with the front-facing bass reflex port's large, flared twin apertures sitting beneath and on either side of the 7-inch bass driver. It almost creates the appearance of a pair of cartoon eye sockets! The port and the internal profile of the flares are designed to optimise airflow and thereby to minimise port noise which,

in practice, I found that they did very successfully.

The A7V features a new bass driver, the cone of which is made of MLM (Multi-Layer Mineral), a unique blend of mineral fibres baked together to create a lightweight, highly stable composite material. In combination with a new magnet assembly, this new material not only enables the A7V bass driver to deliver high output levels with low distortion, but also makes for a great-looking cone.

The A7V crosses over at 2.8kHz, at which point ADAM Audio's signature X-ART (Extended Accelerated Ribbon Technology) high-frequency driver takes over. Hand-built in the company's Berlin factory, the X-ART driver's pleated ribbon construction delivers precise transient response and highly detailed resolution up to 50kHz. In the A7V, a new 120x70° HPS (High-frequency Propagation System) resin and glass-fibre waveguide has been designed specifically to match the X-ART's dispersion angle in the crossover region to its accompanying bass driver. In the horizontal plane, this matching, coupled with the waveguide's wide dispersion angle, results in a smoother off-axis response and creates a larger usable 'sweet spot'. In the vertical, the HPS





see that the A7V's on/off switch and input sensitivity controls have been relegated to the cabinet rear panel. This panel also houses the monitor's Room Adaptation and Voicing settings, and its balanced XLR and unbalanced RCA phono analogue inputs.

Although there are physical switches present for room compensation and voicing, in a first for ADAM, these two functions — plus EQ and crossover duties — are handled by a DSP system that has been designed not only to provide greater tuning precision and predictability than can be found in all-analogue monitors, but also to offer the possibility of future enhancements and upgrades.

Room Adaptation is controlled from the rear panel by four push buttons that cycle through the available cuts and boosts at frequencies that ADAM Audio labels as Bass, Desk, Presence and Treble.

The Voicing button cycles through the three available options: the flat-response Pure; UNR (Universal Natural Response), which, according to ADAM, is a dynamic, natural-sounding response curve based on a variety of previous ADAM loudspeakers including the A7X; and Ext, which selects a Sonarworks room calibration profile that has previously been loaded into the onboard DSP from the A Control software application.

The A Team

An Ethernet port on the A7V's rear panel allows you to connect a computer running the A Control application to it, giving you real-time control not only of the Room Adaptation and Voicing functions outlined above, but also access to a six-band fully parametric equaliser in the ADV (advanced) mode. If you are running a stereo or multi-channel setup you'll need to connect your A7V via a router so that your computer can address all your monitors. A Control runs only on computers running Windows 10 and above and Mac OS 10.15 and above.

Installing the A Control software went very smoothly on my iMac running

10.15, and the two connected A7Vs were quickly recognised, with full control being instantly established. Once you've checked that the virtual L-R positioning matches the real world, operating A Control is a simple and intuitive process.

Having remote control of each monitor's rear-panel functions and internal six-band parametric equalisers is a real convenience in itself, but if you're already using, or plan to use, Sonarworks SoundID calibration software (registration of your A7V gives you access to a 60-day fully functional trial licence), A Control's ability to load a SoundID-generated calibration profile into the A7V's DSP platform, and that platform's ability to run that profile independently of the computer, will no doubt prove extremely attractive to you. If you've no idea what I'm talking about, read John Walden's review of SoundID in *SOS* July 2021: www.soundonsound.com/reviews/sonarworks-soundid-reference.

In Use

I spent a good few hours playing music through the A7V and experimenting with the rear-panel settings so that I could get used to their performance. In the Pure mode, my initial impression was of a monitor with an effortlessly clear and detailed treble, a midrange that displayed real clarity, detail and presence and a fast, well-controlled and detailed bottom end with great transient response. To me, the A7V's ability to resolve fine details is one of its great strengths, as is its ability to create a wide stereo soundfield in which instruments and vocals are precisely delineated and positioned.

For a great many users, the room adaptation switching will be sufficient to match the frequency response of the A7V to their musical environment. With its intentionally limited range of EQ adjustment I found this facility to be quick and intuitive to set up, again using the Pure voicing as my starting point. Obviously, if you don't have a computer that is capable of running the A Control application, this will be the only voicing available to you.



Listening to two of the most detailed recordings that I know of, and know well, (*Spes* by the Finnish choir Cantus with Frode Fjellheim, and *Via Crucis* by L'Arpeggiata), I heard small details with great clarity and definition: the dying reverberations in the ceiling of the church where *Spes* was recorded, and the tiny details of the renaissance instrumentation of L'Arpeggiata.

Going to the lower end of the scale, Deadmau5's Grammy Award-winning *4x4=12* features a synthesized low end that not only takes some handling, but is also extremely detailed and which poses a real challenge to any loudspeaker, small or large. Admittedly, the A7V is never going to be able to move enough air to equal the low end of a much larger monitor, but given the way that it handled and resolved the detail in the opening track of the Deadmau5 album, I'd be pretty confident that making low-end mixing decisions on the A7V would work out well. However, if I was working regularly on tracks with a lot going on in the extreme low end, I'd be inclined to add ADAM Audio's Sub 8 or Sub 10 into the mix.

I really liked the overall sense of detail and clarity in this voicing and, as with my A77X, the X-Art driver's effortless delivery and lack of harshness doesn't tire you out and makes working with the A7V for extended periods a pleasure rather than a chore.

Next, I tried the UNR mode. With its pushed low end and high end giving a slightly »

— The rear panel houses controls for accessing the Room Adaptation and Voicing presets, as well as an Ethernet port for connecting to ADAM's A Control software.

» scooped feel across the midrange, this voicing has a lot going for it. Personally speaking, I wouldn't use it for tracking, mixing or mastering when I was being paid to do a job, but I felt that it had a lot going for it when I was messing around with my synths, doing overdubs and listening to streaming services for pleasure when doing studio maintenance and the like.

The ADV voicing's powerful six-band, fully parametric equaliser is accessible only from the A Control application. The primary use of this EQ will either be to tailor the response of the A7V to your own personal taste, or to try to persuade it to sound like another monitor of your acquaintance. If you want to try to optimise the A7V for your room, I feel that using it successfully would require either a lot of patience and care or the use a standalone frequency response analysis program, which seems a bit of a hard way of achieving a result that Sonarworks SoundID will turn out with very little effort on your part.

This final voicing slot, EXT, is where you can store and access the calibration profile that you have generated using Sonarworks SoundID. All you have



to do is to download and install the included trial version of the program and, with a Sonarworks-calibrated measurement microphone (or any other flat-response capacitor microphone) and an audio interface in hand, in 20 minutes and with very little effort you'll have produced the calibration profile for your A7Vs in your room and exported it in 'adam' format. Loading that profile into A Control and applying it to your A7Vs takes seconds, and ADAM have



— Sonarworks SoundID correction curves can be uploaded directly to the A7V.

ALTERNATIVES

The ADAM Audio A7V is parachuting into a hotly contested area of the nearfield monitor market, where you'll find competitive offerings from manufacturers such as **Eve**, **Dynaudio**, **Focal**, **Genelec** and **Neumann**. The A7V's remote control and Sonarworks integration are big pluses in this context, though some of these rivals offer proprietary alternatives such as Genelec's GLM system.

provided a tutorial on how to do all this at <https://bit.ly/400W4m3>.

With my self-generated calibration profile loaded into the review A7Vs, switching between it and the Pure setting was interesting and revealing. With the profile active, the A7Vs felt slightly more present, somewhat tauter in the high frequencies and more even in the bass. It was a subtle difference that's difficult to describe in words, but I did like it and I'd definitely use that profile when checking my own and other mixes. I think that for tracking, overdubbing and mixing, I'd be tempted to stick with the Pure and UNR voicings, as I do like the sound of my room and I know how to get the best out of it. However, if I didn't particularly like the sound of a room or I was taking the A7Vs out on location, I'd definitely use SoundID (as I do already) to optimise the A7V for such spaces.

Final Thoughts

The new A7V is, in my opinion, a significant step forward in the evolution of ADAM Audio's nearfield monitoring. The X-ART treble/midrange driver and MLM bass driver combine to produce a highly detailed presentation that I found very attractive to listen to and easy to work with. The effective onboard room adaptation switching, and the remote control facilities and Sonarworks SoundID integration offered by the A Control software, provide an intuitive user interface that allows for on-the-fly switching between ADAM's voicings and a Sonarworks room-correction profile.

Both technically, sonically and operationally, the A7V is one of the best nearfield monitors that I have heard at its price. If you are looking for an affordable, high-quality two-way active monitor speaker, you really should have a listen to the A7V. **///**

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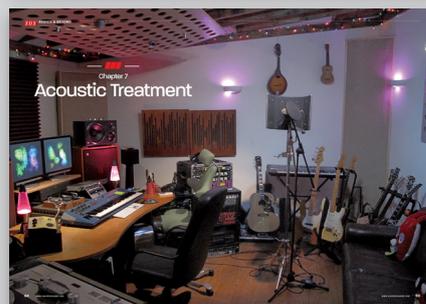
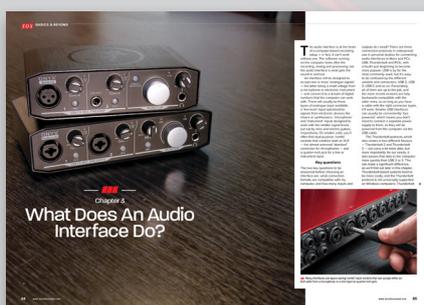
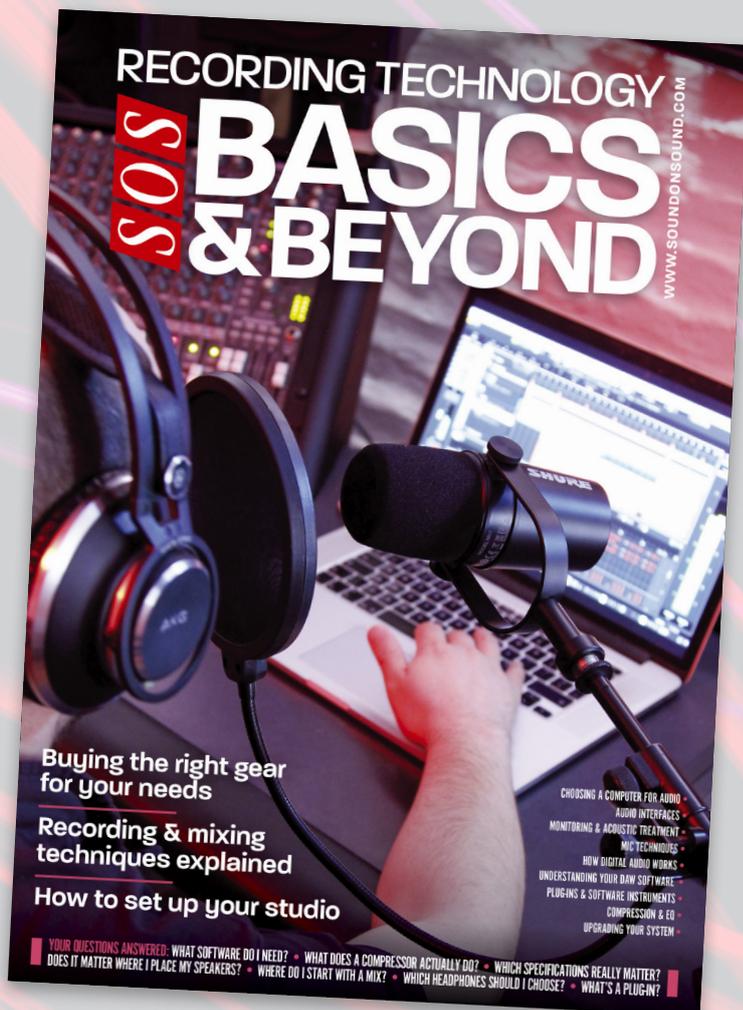
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