

***ADAM Audio**

TAPS OP # 79

A3X powered monitors

I've learned the hard way that small, powered monitors are ideal for my mobile recording work. As the mix setup in my apartment has grown more permanent, I have also found that I need a separate pair of speakers for mobile from the pairs that are inconvenient to move from behind my console. The helpful folks at Dale Pro Audio pointed out the new ADAM A3X, which has met my needs at a reasonable price. Small "workstation monitors" don't seem common in mobile setups, and I'd never really thought about using a pair until the A3X caught my eye. Many monitors this size are budget, consumer speakers; being accustomed to professional studio monitors, I would not feel confident tracking with them. I'd never considered the Genelec 8020A, which is far more expensive at nearly \$500 each. The A3X is tiny, light, and easy to move, though the packaging lacks the handles and non-crumbly styrofoam that's so convenient for moving the ADAM A7 (Tape Op #57). Its small size and light weight also simplifies setup at a mobile session — I can easily hold one under my arm while moving around stands and cabling. ADAM redesigned the folded ribbon tweeter that make their monitors so popular. The new X-ART is similar to the older ribbon, with a bit softer and less fatiguing top that's more forgiving of lower-quality converters. The older tweeter sounds great when coupled with my Dangerous Music D-Box (#61), but can be slightly harsh when connected directly to my M-Audio ProFire LightBridge (#57). For such a small box, and with only a 4.5" woofer, the low end on the A3X is surprisingly good. The ports seem to be around 70-80 Hz, so these frequencies are somewhat murky and emphasized, while lower frequencies are missing completely. While I find the low end adequate for tracking, if I were to use an A3X pair as the primary speakers in my mix setup I would add a subwoofer to provide more clearly defined bass. The A3X does not have as much tonal control as the A7, with only a tweeter-level knob in back. It does feature a stereo-link feature, where one speaker can act as a master volume control for a pair. For mobile setups or studios with limited budgets for monitors, the ADAM A3X is an excellent new option. (\$299 street each; www.adam-audio.com)

-Steve Silverstein <ssilverstein@earthlink.net>

