

PRESONUS ERIS E66 POWERED STUDIO MONITORS

As manufacturers of an already wide range of pro audio products, PreSonus has clearly been busy creating new monitors. Not long ago, I reviewed its coaxial time-aligned Sceptre S8 monitors and found them to have an unusually large and useful sweet spot. PreSonus' new Eris E66 powered monitor employs an entirely different means of radiation and coverage; it is effective, indeed, and a part of an overall more desirable monitoring system.

The Eris line (including the smaller E44) employs a D'Appolito arrangement—or MTM, midwoofer/tweeter/midwoofer—with a pair of identical 6.5-inch Kevlar fiber woofers sharing the same frequency range, placed less than one wavelength apart at their highest operational frequency, and cradles a 1.25-inch silk dome high-frequency driver in between. The woofers' signals propagate together, acting like a single large driver, "partially containing the dispersion of the tweeter, minimizing phase displacement," according to the company.

Inputs are, conveniently, a balanced XLR, TRS quarter-inch and



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unbalanced -10 dB RCA phono plug. Class A/B amplification provides 140 watts to the woofers and 90 watts to the tweeters. Controls include continuously variable mid and high frequency adjustment (-6 to +6 dB), a variable high pass filter (Flat, 80 Hz, 100 Hz) with Acoustic Space control—a low-mid dip at flat/-2 dB or -4

dB settings.

I work in a mid-field standing control room environment; the sweet spot is about 5.5 feet away from my usual Blue Sky monitors and subwoofer. I placed the E66 pair on my Primacoustic IsoPad acoustic decouplers, defeated room EQ, disengaged my Sonarworks room correction

system and got back to work. My immediate impression was that they sounded broken-in already, covering the large control room well with wide dispersion. The mids sounded a little unfamiliar, but I continued to work with little "new monitor shock."

As time went on, the woofers loosened up just a little, as did my perceptions, and I began to get comfortable with the E66s. That wasn't hard; the horizontal coverage was pleasantly wide with nice imaging that allowed for hearing the opposite monitor even if listening directly in front of the other monitor (a position some clients seem oddly comfortable in). Comparatively, the vertical radiation wasn't as accurately forgiving, but adequate. Even though the top end seemed just right and the bottom end was well balanced, I found myself adding one click on the Mid control, taking out 2 dB of low-mids using the Acoustic Space control. To my recollection, the pots seemed firmer and more easily adjustable than I remembered with the Sceptre's controls.

Closer inspection of the E66 pair revealed a molded, hard plastic enclosure

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AUDIENT iD14 USB AUDIO INTERFACE

In my travels as an audio educator, I've been forced to work with a number of desktop "prosumer" interfaces with great disappointment. Conversely, I have reviewed and thoroughly enjoyed SPL's Crimson, quite arguably the best sounding and most flexible pro-grade desktop interface to be found. My recent use of the iD14 USB interface from Audient places it close to the affordable units in price, but also close to the leader in performance. Here's the full feature set: audient.com/products/id14. Product highlights are

sample rates up to 96 kHz, high-performance preamps with Burr Brown chips, a JFET DI, a low-latency software mixer and an all-steel chassis.

Together with my composing partner, Grey Revell, my Macbook Pro [Windows drivers are available for download, too—*Ed.*], my Roland TR-8 drum machine, a Luke Audio AL-X712 pair and headphones, we set out to thoroughly test the iD14.

Upon connecting the drum machine to the iD14's pair of combo-connector line inputs, we discovered

excellent headroom and frequency response, as the TR-8's fat kicks and crisp hats were converted without restraint or color. The control software proved to be effective, with eye-easy graphics, intuitive layout and nice metering response. Unexpected bonuses

like mono-summing, polarity flip and an assignable cue buss were all helpful.

With the Luke Audio C12-type condensers on acoustic guitar, we provided 48 V phantom and cranked up gain. Grey switched over to finger-

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sure with nice fit and form. They are not terribly extravagant in their materials, but are indeed well put together with good craftsmanship, an easy-to-clean surface and a nice overall appearance (and Kevlar woofers look cool). The boxes were not heavy due in part to their efficient A/B amplification. They run warm but not hot, and there was no audible chuffing of the front panel ports.

For this review, the E66s found particularly long-term usage in my studio; they stayed up as my mains for more than two months. I eventually found that the mids were sculpted a

little bit, with a slight dip at good old 400 Hz, and even though I'm philosophically against any monitor color, the E66s' "pretty curve" didn't force me into bad decisions or re-mixes. Dynamically, they're a little contained, but that didn't seem to be a problem, either. And even though they're detailed, they're not super-detailed; "smooth" may be the best description, as the soft dome tweeter and even dispersion is not at all fatiguing or grating.

In all, Eris E66 monitors are quite pleasant and easy to like. They disperse beautifully horizontally, have ample I/O and controls, possess a useful frequency balance and have a nice look about them. Maybe they don't have the excellent vertical dispersion of time-aligned square-horned Sceptres, or expensive cabinetry, or the punch, dynamics and frequency-flatness of premium monitors, but these monitors retail for a ridiculous bar-

gain of \$700 a pair, making them easy for me to recommend. Even compared to numerous other models in the crowded "under \$1,000" marketplace, the E66 is a winner based on its long-term listenability, impressively loud output for such a small box, wide and inclusionary sweet spot and overall pleasantness in use that is refreshing at this price point.

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presonus.com/products/Eris-E66

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picking and I took the gain up further, to 3 o'clock—approximately +60 dB or more. The sound was really nice tonally with lots of bottom, lots of detail and pleasantly warm, although a substantial amount of noise floor came through. Latency, you ask? No problems there. Sure, we could've monitored mic inputs with zero latency, but instead we monitored the DAW—MOTU Digital Performer 8—via output so we could hear some compression while tracking. With 64 samples of buffer at 44.1 kHz, latency was not noticeable.

Subsequent dubs with hot synths sounded great with plenty of headroom, and found us enjoying the use of the software mixer. As a studio guy, I didn't expect such desktop/laptop/mobile adventures to be so user-friendly and sound so good.

Further tests proved the ADAT optical inputs work properly, too, allowing another eight channels of input to be routed through the iD14. That's a lot of audio passing through a unit that will actually fit into my jeans pockets.

Directly compared to my USB interface standard bearer, the SPL Crimson, the iD14 has fewer inputs, fewer features and mic pres that aren't quite as pristine; Audient's iD22 might be a closer comparison to the Crimson, with more throughput and features. But if extreme portability, a max of two convenient inputs and long-term durability sum up your needs then I recommend the iD14. It sells for a barely believable \$299 street. You can't really go wrong with this interface that is clearly far ahead of the rest of the affordable prosumer pack.

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audient.com/products/id14

SETTING STANDARDS

The advertisement features three Neutrik etherCON CAT6A components: a black cable carrier with a silver Neutrik logo, a silver D-size chassis connector, and a silver IDC-termination connector. The background is a dark, textured surface with a white diagonal line.

etherCON® CAT6_A

The new etherCON CAT6A line includes a cable carrier complete with a CAT6A RJ45 connector for self-termination, feedthrough D-size chassis connectors, and IDC-termination D-size connectors. Neutrik's etherCON CAT6A is PoE+ compliant to 802.3at Type2. As with all Neutrik etherCON products, the new CAT6A range features rugged latching and durable housings. For more information visit www.neutrik.com

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