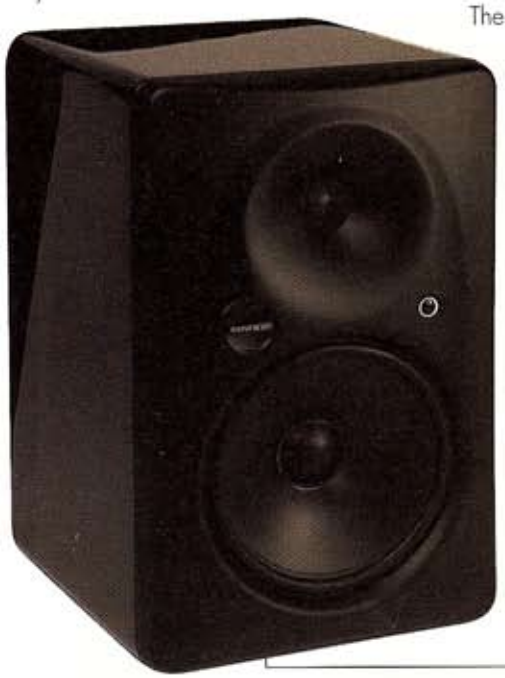
Mackie HR824 Mk2

By Scott Trask

As we prepared to remodel one of our production rooms we talked about what type of control surface, microphones and peripherals we wanted, but the topic at the forefront was the type of studio monitors we would select. Questions arose: Active or passive? Nearfield or midfields? What monitor would provide us with the best sound quality?

After researching and talking with others, we selected a pair of Mackie HR824 Mk2 speakers. These are the successor to Mackie's HR824 series of active two-way studio monitors.



The first thing that jumps out at you is the size, even though we knew the dimensions, 16.8"×10.8"×13.8", it was hard to picture them in our drawings—that is until we got them out of the box. They are slightly larger than their predecessor and finished with a Sherwin Williams Piano Black paint.

Design and construction

The monitor features an 8.75" woofer to handle the low end and mid-range with a synthetic cone, a magnesium chassis and a 1.6" voice coil. Handling the high frequencies is a one-inch titanium-dome tweeter, with a 6"×12" flat piston passive radiator to the rear. Also on the front of the monitor is the power ring and overload indicator.

The power ring around the power switch illuminates when the power amplifiers are on and turns off when the amplifiers are in standby mode or off. The power ring flashes red when the overload protection circuit has been triggered. The switch on the front works in conjunction with the power mode selector switch on the rear panel of the monitor.

The HR824 Mk2 has three protection circuits to safeguard the monitors: Overload Protection, Thermal Protect and Integrated Magnetic Shielding. Overload Protect is indicated by the blinking of the power ring on the front of the monitor at which time the signal level of the input needs to be reduced.

The monitor is built to be efficient both electrically and thermally. If the heatsinks get too hot it will place the monitor into standby mode until they cool down. Always ensure sufficient airflow to the rear of the cabinet.

The rear panel sports the signal input connections and the adjustments to tailor the frequency response to fit the room. There are three signal inputs: XLR, TRS and RCA. The input jack connectors face downward so the speakers could be mounted against a wall. The XLR and TRS inputs can accommodate balanced or unbalanced input signals.

Along with the signal inputs are switches for Input Sensitivity, Acoustic Spacing and Filter settings for low and high frequency adjustment. The monitor expects a line-level signal and is designed to operate with a +4dBu signal in the normal position, which is set using a rotary switch.

The Acoustical Space switch sets the bass level to suit the room; Quarter is best for speakers placed near corners. Half is for speakers placed against one wall, and Whole is set when placing the speakers away from the walls. Mackie recommends that these not be placed against any corner or wall.

The Mk2 has a switch to set the low frequency performance; it has roll-offs at 80Hz, 47Hz and 37Hz. Use the 80Hz setting for THX applications. The 37Hz setting is used when the speakers are used with a sub-woofer in non-THX environment. When the room is too small to work well at very low frequencies, the 47Hz setting is the one to use.

The High Frequency filter has settings of +2dB and -2dB beginning at 10kHz. Leave this switch in the 0 position unless the sound needs to be brightened or darkened.

The performance

Like any monitor, the Mackie HR824 Mk2 has its own sound. Being that we had a set of HR824s in a studio, there was concern that

Performance at a glance

Active studio monitor

8.75" LF transducer

1" titanium dome, ferrofluid-cooled tweeter

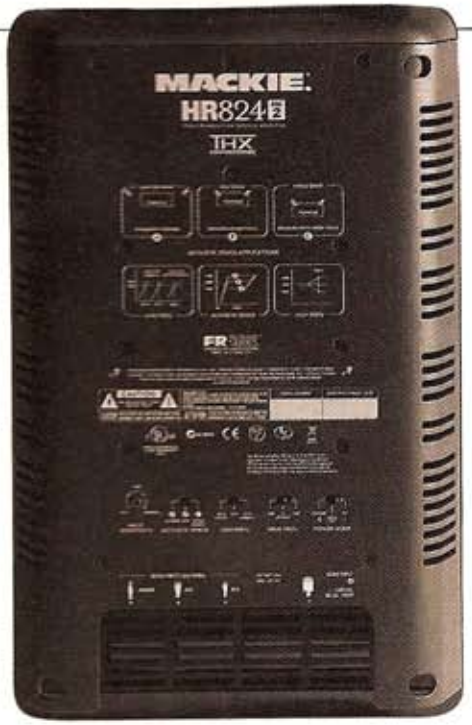
150W LF, 100W HF amp

Bass extension to 35Hz

Balanced XLR, TRS, and unbalanced RCA inputs

Omnimount ready

THX PM3 certified



The rear panel includes the input connections and adjustment controls.

Mackie may have made a lot of changes to affect quality of the monitor. We couldn't have been more wrong; despite the physical changes the overall sound is still smooth and well balanced. Well-mixed material seems less in your face with the mid range holding its clarity. The bass response is impressive for the size of the monitor.

The Mackie HR824 Mk2 is reliable and designed very nicely. I think you will like the sound. Vocals seem alive and bass can get very low due to the passive radiator. If you liked the originals then you will like these monitors also.

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