



ELECTRONICALLY REPRINTED FROM MAY 2008



Mackie MR5

(\$199, www.mackie.com)

I'll admit it: A monitor at a price point of less than \$200 makes me a bit wary. After all, I believe that in the recording world, you really do get what you pay for. Still, I'm a huge fan of Mackie monitors; give me a pair of HR626s, a boom box, and a stock Dodge system and I'm confident I can turn out a pretty nice mix no matter what studio I'm working out of.

So I thought I'd give these a try. Long story short: I'm glad I did, as they are now a permanent fixture in my suite.

Especially given the size (the main driver is only 5-1/4 inches), the low end frequency response on the MR5s is stunning. Seriously, if anything is worth mentioning about these monitors it's that they can hang with some of the bigger dogs in terms of packing a clean punch in the gut—perfect for hip-hop producers with mobile rigs or small studios.

While at first some of the highs weren't as articulated as I would have liked them to be, I didn't see such as a cause to overreact; I knew my room was less than perfect from the get-go. Thankfully the MR5s come with HF and LF acoustic setting switches to help you compensate for low-rent boxy suites that aren't yet properly treated. After dialing in the correct settings, the



MR5s struck me as very neutral and unflattering—not quite as brutal as NS-10s, but they certainly don't lie to you.

For those of you who need to mix at reasonable levels and want a pair of inexpensive monitors that don't hype up your mix for you, I have to suggest you check these out. The MR5s' response is pretty nuanced, the monitors are rife with cool features (XLR, 1/4" and RCA inputs are certainly welcomed), and the sweet spot is much wider than you would assume given their dainty size. Good stuff, for sure.

—Matt Harper