

Mackie SRM150 Compact Active PA System

by Michael Saracino



Live acoustic music can turn an average patio bar into a hot spot. All summer long I've been playing shows with Christina Piacenti and I've watched people pour off the streets for a drink, which then often ends up as an entire evening. I love the gigs, both for the fun of it and as a source of income. The only downside to all these gigs is the set-up and tear down. With this in mind, and no huge budget for roadies yet, I'm always looking at ways to make it easier. Enter the SRM150 from Mackie. The SRM150 is a compact 3-channel mixer/active speaker combo designed to serve a wide range of applications. This thing is extremely well thought out and well built, like most Mackie products. It has inputs for mic and instrument level signals (i.e. Acoustic/Electric guitars), it has phantom power, it attaches to both tripod stands and mic stands, it has a "thru" XLR jack with a mic/line switch for sending its mix to either loudspeakers or mixers, and it has an input for use as a straight-ahead powered monitor. For solo gigs in smaller venues with less than 100 people, you could get away with bringing the SRM150 alone, which would be so simple and compact. For larger rooms/crowds, you could bring the SRM150 and send the mix to a loudspeaker and have a great monitor and a perfect understanding of what the crowd's mix is like since it would be fed from your own mix through the SRM150. For duets that use more inputs, it would be best to bring an external mixer and send that mix or an auxillary mix to the SRM150 as a monitor.

I play in a duet so for my Road Test at the Blue Martini Lounge at the Hilton Niagara I used the SRM150 in conjunction with one of my loudspeakers and a mixer and I found it to be incredibly handy. Unlike bulky floor wedges, this thing is small and it really kicks. When you're playing on floor 32 of the Hilton, size matters.

For this particular gig, we set up one main large active speaker, which is connected to a Mackie VLZ mixer and used an aux send to feed the SRM150. It sounded clear and detailed, and the bass response was very acceptable for its compact nature and use. When setting up normal floor monitors you are limited in terms of positioning, but because the SRM 150 can be mounted on any standard mic stand, things were flexible. For mounting and positioning of the SRM150

we used a Hercules Mic stand, which handled the weight of the speaker without any problems. I put the stand off to the side and extended the boom arm in between Christina and I in a place that allowed both of us to get a nice amount of monitoring. The clarity of the speaker actually gave me a greater level of confidence when singing the more complex harmonies. If our set-up was smaller we could have gotten away with using the internal mixer, which would have made set-up even easier, but Christina sings and I play guitar, Roland V-drum trigger pedals, and do harmonies – so I needed the extra inputs.

I would definitely consider using this in some of the smaller venues in town as a main speaker when playing solo. There are other uses that I did not test for such as A/V applications, but logic dictates that it would handle these applications very well based on my other tests.

All and all, this is an extremely useful product that delivers on its promises. It's well designed and well built and would prove very useful in the arsenal of giggering musicians.

Michael Saracino – Winding Path Media.

Distributor's Comments

The Mackie SRM150 Compact Active PA System is ideally suited for applications ranging from A/V to live music performance and can be mic stand mounted, placed on a tabletop, or used in traditional stage monitor position. The built-in three-channel mixer provides 3-band active EQ, true 48V phantom power and accepts mic, line, and instrument level inputs. A built-in limiter protects the powerful 150 watt Class-D amplifier and exceptionally loud 5.25" full-range speaker. The cabinet is made of the same composite material as the legendary Mackie SRM450. MSRP \$389.99 CAN.

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