

EVE Audio SC408

FOUR-WAY ACTIVE LOUDSPEAKER

Nigel Palmer finds that it's worth making room for the largest loudspeaker in the EVE Audio product family.

As I said in a recent *Audio Media Buyer's Guide* article, EVE Audio is a company going places fast. Starting in 2011, it's risen in three short years to become a recognised and trusted brand combining cost effectiveness with quality. Roland Stenz, managing director and chief designer, has a particular talent for extracting the last few percent from any given configuration, making his company's range of DSP-controlled active loudspeakers one to watch.

Overview

The SC408 is the largest four-way loudspeaker EVE currently makes, measuring 710 x 330 x 440mm (27.95 x 12.99 x 17.32in) WHD and weighing in at a fairly hefty 29.5kg or 65lb. The front aspect's appearance owes something to the D'Appolito configuration, with twin 200mm woofers set either side of a 130mm mid driver and an Air Motion Transformer tweeter – these latter two occupy a silver-coloured plate which can be rotated 90° by undoing four screws so the monitor can be set up either vertically or horizontally. A feature of the plate is a push-and-turn rotary encoder that performs a number of functions: the default is as a volume control with an 80dB range, level selection being indicated by a series of LEDs around the encoder; a number of filters are also available. First is a low shelf affecting frequencies below 300Hz in 0.5dB steps, with up to 3dB boost and 5dB attenuation; this is partnered by a 3kHz high shelf, also +3

and -5. In addition there's a bell EQ which behaves differently depending on whether you're cutting or boosting: if the former, it acts as a narrow-band filter at 160Hz to help mitigate the effect of reflections from consoles or other hard nearby surfaces, and in the latter case it offers a broader lift at 80Hz to 'punch up' the lower frequencies. At first sight the available EQ doesn't appear to provide much in the way of correction in the midrange, however raising or lowering the two shelves together can help this important area.

A look around the back of the loudspeaker reveals a set of DIP switches to lock volume and EQ settings if required – a sensible feature, especially in a facility with multiple users – and also set the overall operating level. Audio inputs consist of analogue balanced XLR and unbalanced RCA phono connectors: the SC480 is DSP-controlled and immediately converts incoming signals to digits via a Burr-Brown AD for greater precision, so the omission of AES and/or SPDIF digital inputs is at first slightly surprising. That said, my experience of running 'digital' speakers both ways tells me there's little practical difference, and reducing the connector count must surely help when designing to a price point.

The speaker has four amplifiers, one per driver: two 250W units for the LF drivers, a further 250W for the midrange and finally a 50W for the tweeter; all are Class D, an efficient design generating relatively little heat and in this case

protected by a limiter. Optimising the low frequency response are two large rear-firing reflex ports across the shortest sides of the cabinet – these have rounded corners to reduce noise, and to my ears produced a nicely extended and vice-free LF response.

In Use

Setting up the SC408s in the mastering room at Lowland Masters was simple enough, albeit requiring a friend to help with placing them on stands; this resulted in tweeters at ear height in portrait orientation which I maintained with, after various experiments, flat EQ for the review period. It was quickly apparent that the 408s like space and a good-sized listening triangle: in my 30sqm room, sitting 2m back from the monitors gave a generous open sound with controlled bass and no sense of port hype, and although I was quite comfortable I had the sense that I was about as close as one would want to be with these speakers. As usual, I started by listening to some familiar material before working with them, and favourites such as tracks from Grace Jones' *Hurricane* album (mixed by Cameron Craig and mastered by Bob Ludwig) sounded every bit as big and bold as they should. I was untroubled by any obvious anomalies at the 250Hz and 3kHz crossover points, and was treated to a very smooth and powerful ride right across the EVE's 30Hz-21kHz bandwidth.

To get an external opinion, the SC408 pair was installed



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at Crooks Hall Studio in Suffolk, which is owned by John Metcalfe. He commented: "They're a high-quality piece of kit, mostly suitable for large rooms and at their best when positioned some way back from the listening position – too close, and I notice something phasy about the sound in the mid to upper mid range. This is less noticeable when you sit further back and they resemble

my normal system better". While the phaseyness wasn't evident back at Lowland Masters (and may have been helped by the 160Hz filter), the general point about room capacity is well made. As this is a midfield monitor listeners should, of course, keep recommended distances and not use it as a near field monitor.

Conclusion

In a larger space there's a lot to like about this loudspeaker, the way it combines clever design and reasonable cost with a big, neutral-but-involving sound making it a winner. Definitely one to put on the audition list for those who want to move air without sacrificing the niceties, make room for the EVE Audio SC408. ■

The Reviewer



Nigel Palmer

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INFORMATION

Feature Set

- A pair of 8in SilverCone woofers cover the frequency range from 30Hz-250Hz
- A 1.5in voice coil is responsible for creating a greater linear excursion
- Featuring EVE's Air Motion Transformer RS3, which houses a bigger magnet system to deliver a higher output level with less distortion
- Balanced XLR inputs and unbalanced RCA inputs

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