

ROAD TESTED

EVE SC205 ACTIVE STUDIO MONITORS



EVE Audio is a relatively new brand in the whole of professional studio monitoring, but it is one that is making an impact right from the get go. EVE Audio was founded in the European summer of 2011 in Berlin by Roland Stenz who has worked within German based hi-fi companies and developing high end reference monitors for many years. With a background in electronics, he designed and formed EVE Audio in a quest to redesign his studio monitors from the ground up, taking each and every component into consideration. What has resulted from this is a quality range of professional studio monitors and subs to suit a wide range of needs without ever compromising on quality in design or build.

REDESIGNING THE FIVE

There are hundreds of small monitor speakers on the market offering 5" woofers to allow for a limited workspace in project studios and offering precision near field monitoring in larger studios. Most of these fail to impress and generally end up sounding less than they promise. The SC205 is set to change the way many of us look at smaller 'bookshelf' style monitor speakers. It has been thoroughly and meticulously put together to offer all that is can in its small cabinet, giving you the biggest and most accurate sound EVE Audio can deliver in these little units. The secret behind the sound is in the design of not only the tweeter, but the woofer too. EVE Audio pride themselves on not using 'off the shelf' components and have developed both these parts to suit

their speaker designs. The 5" glass coated silver coloured cones are pushed by a 1" magnet voice coil that allows for amazing precision in the lower mid frequencies and a very lively bottom end. It doesn't sound loose or flabby, like a large cone that is struggling to keep up with the transient attacks, but rather gives you a very defined sound in the lower frequencies, whilst still producing a solid low end.

BEHIND THE GRILL

The top half of these speakers features a honeycomb-like grill that houses and protects the tweeter. This is held on magnetically to protect the tweeter, but can be removed for cosmetic purposes once you speakers are set up. As far as I could tell, there wasn't any audible difference with it on or off, so they stayed on for the best part of my test run to save me losing them in the process. Housed behind the grill is a ribbon style tweeter that EVE Audio calls their Air Motion Transformer. Again, the designers weren't happy with any existing ribbon transformer available, so they completely redesigned one to suit their speaker range. What this gives you is an incredibly crisp top end with delicate attention to detail and extreme precision in maintaining transient attacks. Able to reproduce very high SPLs without audible distortion and with very little movement in the components, the ribbon system really allows these speakers to sparkle.

If you are looking for a compact pair of studio monitors that will really let you know where the flaws are in your mix, the SC205s are going to be a pretty safe bet. These monitors' sound great, but only when your mix does. They give a wonderfully accurate telling of all the faults in your mix, especially in the high end detail. Eve have created a pair of monitors that leave no excuse for mediocrity, they are simply awesome!

BY ROB GEE

RRP: \$1398 (PAIR)

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PALMER FAT 50 TUBE GUITAR COMBO



Palmer are a small boutique musical instrument company from Germany making quality Guitar Amps and accessories. They've been around for 30 years but seem to be a lot more well-known in Europe and the United States than over here. With products used by popular artists such as The Black Keys and Joe Bonamassa it's surprising they're not very big here but hopefully that'll change very soon.

GOT THE LOOK

Straight-away I was very impressed with the look of it. An all black 1x12" Speaker combo with a rugged construction, metal grill, 2 channels and a 4-switch footswitch. I was looking forward to giving it a good going-over. It's got a Clean and a Drive channel with a Master Volume. The Drive channel has a Low-gain and High-Gain switch. The Low-Gain is really more of an overdrive sound and the High-Gain is more in the distortion/fuzz ballpark. There's a Drive knob as well which will increase the Drive of either channel. Of course when used with the Drive channel you'll get more fuzz but with the Clean channel you get a really sweet crunch tone.

DRIVER'S SEAT

The Drive, Bass, Mid and Treble knobs work for both

channels. As I said the Drive knob really pushes things up and coupled with either of the channel volumes and a Master Volume you can get loads of different overdrive and distortion tones. The Bass, Mid and Treble are very smooth and are not too fast to affect the tone, which I like, as it makes it a lot easier to find those sweet sounds. There's also a Drive Presence knob if you want to generally brighten things up without it becoming overly sharp. The effects loop is all tube-driven and it has its own volume control to blend in the effects. The 4-switch footswitch means you can change channels, switch reverb in, switch the gain in and have a volume boost. The 12" speaker is an Eminence Governor which is very clear and keeps the warmth. Especially when running 6L6 valves as they're known for their clarity but it's rare that they're super toasty and warm like this! And last but not least you can run 2 x 8ohm cabs or 1 x 16ohm cab. Very cool! This beauty can handle small, medium and large gigs no problem!

The Clean Channel does have a lot of headroom (as they mention in their promotional info) for such a small-sized combo. And it sounds smooth and not brittle at all like many other large-headroom style amps. Maybe it's because of their no transistors in the signal path policy. With the Drive Channel, the Low Gain setting for me is more of a retro/classic sound. The High Gain for me is a bit more modern and the more drive you add the more you can get some metal sounds if the mood takes you. Extremely versatile! The Reverb is very sweet but that's what you would expect from a proper inbuilt spring reverb. No digital simulations here. A fantastic tube combo that for me covers all of the bases. The Clean Channel is especially good and sounds awesome when I used my trusty Rat with it. I'm certainly looking forward to the next drop of Palmer Amps.

BY ANDREW BURKE

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DBX DRIVERACK PA+



I am sure if you look into the rack of any installation PA around town you will more than likely find a DBX DriveRack installed. This is, without a doubt, one of the most invaluable tools you can have to make a PA system sound right in any room. But, don't get me wrong, it is not just designed for installation systems; the DriveRack PA+ is an essential tool for a portable PA system too. It allows you to set up presets for various rooms and control the overall mix to suit the room. Put simply, your PA system may sound good, but it will never sound its best until you get a DriveRack PA+ in the mix.

EASY SETUP

The DriveRack PA+ is designed for use with passive speakers being run from power amplifiers. There is an alternative model specifically designed for use with powered speaker systems. It is installed in your signal chain after the outputs of your mixer and before the amplifiers to allow you to have total control over the master mix that goes to your front of house system. Once installed in your system, it is easy to tune a room with the DriveRack PA+ and store your settings for various venues that you may use the system at regularly. The DriveRack allows you to add dynamic processing and EQ to your master mix to get the most out of your signal after the mixing stage and before amplification

CAPTURE THE ROOM

The front panel of the DriveRack PA+ features all the metering you need to see what is going on with your signal, an easy to read LCD display to show you through the menu options and a series of setup buttons to get the unit working right. Further to this, there is an input for DBX's RTA microphone. With the microphone in the system, you can use it to capture the sound of the room through the PA and tune the system to best work within the room you are set up in. This is an invaluable tool for getting the most out of your PA. It allows you to tune the system in a matter of minutes to take care of any unwanted frequencies and reflections the shape, size and construction of the room may have. Listen to your PA as best you can, tune it yourself, then listen to what the DriveRack PA+ can do for the tuning. You will hear the difference and you won't be disappointed.

BY ROB GEE

RRP: \$599

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YAMAHA P35B DIGITAL PIANO



This year, Yamaha have stepped into a new realm with their digital pianos by releasing the P35B, which gives you Yamaha quality grand piano sounds, 88 weighted keys and a slim, lightweight design all at a price never before seen in a Yamaha keyboard like this. This digital piano is now set to open up the path for many beginner keyboard players who really want to play piano and need the heavier touch of piano style keys.

GRADED TOUCH

Just like with any acoustic piano, the weighted keys on the P35B have a graded hammer action to them. So, the keys in the lower register are slightly heavier than those in the higher registers. The smooth transition of the weighting to the keys feels quite natural and gradually develops as you move along the keyboard. The P35B features the same satin finished black keys that the P105B has, giving you a familiar feel and touch in this lower priced instrument.

SIMPLIFIED CONTROLS

As this is a budget model, some corners have had to be cut. But don't worry, the great Yamaha grand piano sound that you expect is still to be found within the P35B. There are only three controls on the top panel; the On/Off switch, Volume slider and the Grand Piano button.

Hitting this instantly returns you to the better of the two piano sounds within the keyboard. There are ten sounds to choose from all up, but the others are accessed by a combination of the button a certain keys on the keyboard itself. This makes the overall appearance of the P35B very sleek and slimline indeed with less buttons on the top face.

Overall, the length and depth is the same as its bigger brother, the P105B, but the P35B is slightly smaller in height and ever so slightly less in weight. It also features more discreetly placed speakers that further serve to keep the top panel looking less cluttered. This is the perfect option for the beginner piano player looking for a practise tool for at home, or for someone wishing to advance from unweighted keys to a piano feel with 88 weighted keys. The P35B is something that people have wanted from Yamaha for quite some time and now they have delivered.

BY ROB GEE

RRP: \$599.99

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YAMAHA P105B DIGITAL PIANO



Yamaha continue to grow their digital piano line and have recently upgraded the highly popular P95B with the P105B, which landed in stores around the country in the last month. As seems to be a regular occurrence with Yamaha, never happy to leave well enough alone, they are always seeking to better their instruments, so we get to benefit with a better range of keyboards. The P105B comes to us with a few upgrades that make it a real contender in the digital piano market for players who want great feel, slim design and simple use.

UPDATED SOUNDS

As we have come to expect from Yamaha, when they upgrade a keyboard, you always get a better sound set with the new model. The P105B features a modest sound set of 14 different voices. This is not trying to compare with their PSR range that offers a wide variety of sounds; it is designed for someone who wants to play piano but doesn't have the space for an acoustic instrument. So, you get two different piano sounds, but you also get a selection of organs, strings and other sound too. The expansion of these sounds from the P95B makes this a more attractive unit, with some added flexibility.

COSMETIC DETAIL

There are a few subtle changes to the look with the

P105B. The control section has been moved to a more central location, rather than being based on the left side of the top panel and the speakers are housed in a more discreet and slimline enclosure, giving the keyboard an overall neater appearance.

As for the sound, as always, Yamaha do not let you down. The grand piano sound it top quality, you benefit from the research they do in their higher priced models with the sound you get in the P105B. It, like the previous models, features 88 weighted, touch sensitive keys that have a really nice graded feel to them. For the size and the weight of these keyboards, Yamaha is still able to give the user a brilliant piano-like feel under the fingers as you play. There are very few digital pianos on the market in this price range that sound as good as the P105B and definitely even less that feel as good to play. Get into your local Yamaha dealer and give one a try. They look, feel and sound fantastic and represent great value at the new lower price point.

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RRP: \$899.99

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