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Test: Adam Audio A Series

„Built to reveal“ is the motto of the new A series from Adam Audio. And it doesn't just reveal hidden details in the music. A lot was also revealed to us when we personally stopped by the company in Berlin-Adlershof at the end of November to test the new monitors.



Magical sound pyramid: The A-Series models at a glance.

The A-Series has been gradually launched from spring to autumn 2022 and includes five different boxes in the lower to upper mid-range price range - A4V, A44H, A7V, A77H and A8H - suitable for a variety of applications. Both as far as all genres within the music world are concerned, as well as for areas that go beyond music, such as broadcasting or audio plays/audiobooks. The use in the hifi sector is also conceivable thanks to the detailed reproduction. The A44H in particular, with its format that fits into a 19-inch rack, is designed for mobile use, e.g. in OB vans. It is also well suited as a center in surround systems, as its flat format allows it to fit well under a screen.

Horizontal and vertical

The designations H and V in the name stand for horizontal and vertical and are placement recommendations. This means that the speakers were tuned accordingly by the manufacturer. Nevertheless, there is the possibility to rotate the tweeters. Simply unscrew the screws, take out the tweeter (be careful with the cable so it doesn't come loose!),

» With a thoughtful, contemporary overall concept, the A Series offers something for everyone. «

turn it 90 degrees and screw it back in place. A handy feature, as in some studios, for example, the vertical placement of the A44H or A77H might not fit, as both are quite wide. This gives users the greatest possible flexibility. The fact that the tweeters should be turned at all when the setup is changed is due to Adam Audio's in-house development, the HPS Waveguide, which bundles the sound of the tweeters in such a way that it is wider. It makes the sweet spot - the optimal listening area where you sit - slightly wider in the horizontal direction.

Accordingly, it is possible to move further in the left-right direction on the chair without getting out of the sweet spot. The HPS waveguide originates from the S2V speakers of the S-Series and is made of a rather hard mineral mixture, which therefore does not develop any vibrations of its own. A cool feature, and it works!

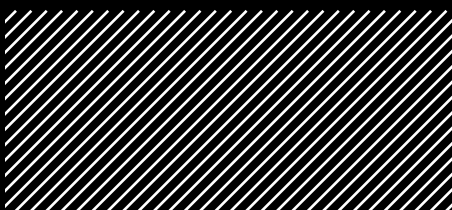
Flexibility thanks to DSP

For room-specific adjustment, there is a digital signal processor (DSP) in each speaker that calculates



A8H (top left), A4V (top right) and A44H (bottom).

filters for tweeters, midrange and woofers. This balances the frequency response of the drivers and optimizes the crossover frequencies between them. These are fixed internal filters that the user cannot access. In addition, there are also user-accessible filters. The UNR filter, which is intended to emulate the „retro“ feeling of the previous AX series, and the pure mode, which sounds as the manufacturer imagines the box to be most linear, can be switched on. Both are upstream filters that act on the overall signal. In addition, to adapt to the spatiality, there are four filter banks for lowering or raising the bass and treble by shelving filters, as well as a desk filter that dampens the reflections of the table, and a presence filter that brings the voice forward or just the



opposite. In addition, there is an EQ with ten bands that can only be written to with the A-Control software - either you do the room analysis yourself and set the filters accordingly, or you let Sonarworks' software do it automatically.

Integration of Sonarworks

Speaking of Sonarworks: Adam Audio entered into a cooperation here, so that the DSP is compatible with their calibration software SoundID Reference. The calibration curves generated with this software can be imported and transferred to the DSP. The acoustic measurement and optimization of the room thus becomes child's play, even for non-professionals. The big advantage is that you don't have to load the Sonarworks plug-in into the last slot of the master channel of the DAW. So you can also listen to different audio devices via the calibrated monitor. Filters can be adjusted either on the back of the box or in Adam Audio's own A-Control Remote software. On the back of the speaker, you can choose between four bass settings and three each for desk, presence and treble. In addition,

the filters Pure, UNR and Ext (e.g. the Sonarworks software) can be switched on under voicing and last but not least there is a volume control. Easier, more far-reaching and more flexible is the operation via the A-Control Remote software, which you can download after registering in the My-ADAM area at no extra cost from the manufacturer's homepage. This is available for Windows and Mac. The box is connected to the computer via Ethernet, which enables the control of all filters and volumes and the integration of Sonarworks.

Quasi digital boxes

However, all of this also means that you won't hear a purely analog signal through the A-Series speakers, because everything is converted from analog to digital and back again with the integrated AD converter at 24-bit and 96 kHz. Here it would be a consideration for the future to unite monitors and audio interface, so that only one conversion of the signal would be necessary (the audio interface converts the signal after all already a first time to send it over an analog cable to the box, where it is then converted a second time). By the way, there is no possibility to switch off the AD-converter, because even the Pure-Filter is based on a digital optimization of the signal. For people who work on a digital level anyway, this shouldn't be a problem in view of the various adjustment possibilities of the boxes, and the advantages should clearly outweigh the disadvantages. Purists, on the other hand, who want to work purely analog should consider getting completely analog speakers instead.

The sound comparison

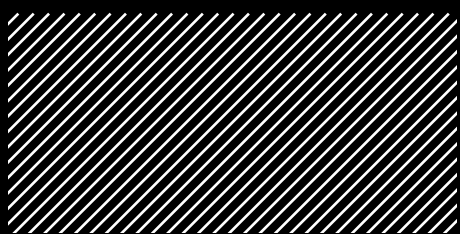
However, we have to state that the digital technology benefits the sound rather than harming it. This brings us to the crucial question of how the A-series sounds. Here we have to differentiate between the individual models. The A4V nearfield speakers surprised us the most, as the 449.99 euros (unit price) 2-way bass reflex speakers are true powerhouses and deliver an astonishingly deep and powerful bass for the size, which extends to 52Hz at -6dB measurement. We inevitably had a wow effect while listening and were really gobsmacked. The low end was also convincing, but compared to the larger models, the A4Vs seemed less finely resolved and honest, but a bit more compact. In the highs, all five models are very convincing and reach up to 45,000 Hz, a range far beyond human hearing - thanks to the high-quality X-Art tweeters, which are the same in all models. For project studios, the A4V are a good choice at a fair price - especially since a subwoofer is not absolutely necessary, at least if you don't feed your own music with sub-basses. The A44H are fundamentally similar to the A4V, as they also are 2-way bass reflex monitors. However, the speakers, which come in at 649.99 Euros, have two MLM woofers instead of one 4", which gives them even more bass power, and thanks to their slim size, they can be installed in a 19-inch rack. The only downer is

the fact that the on/off button is on the back - on all models, by the way. That doesn't seem optimal for rack mounting to us.

Even more details

Those who like higher resolution are well served by the A7Vs, which cost 699.99 euros apiece and are our favorites in the test. The 2-way near-field monitors with a 7" MLM woofer combine the powerful bass energy of the A4V (they even reach down to 40 Hz) with an even better depth gradation, more precise mids and pleasantly silky highs. This has something of 3D for the ears, because you are right in the middle of the music, almost like with headphones. While the A7V is also something for the home studio or smaller studios, the two 3-way variants A77H and A8H are aimed more at medium-sized studios and are mid-range monitors. The bass range clearly goes into subwoofer regions at 34 and 31 Hz, respectively, and the resolution of the mids is also even more accurate than the other

models thanks to the extra midrange drivers. Perhaps a bit too accurate for some, since you can easily get lost in the details of the music. In addition, a certain room size should be given. With a unit price of 1299.99 euros and 1599.99 euros, they are also more for the professional budget. However, we found that the qualitative step from the A7V to the two more expensive models is not that big, so that the A7V should still be the first choice for many applications. Even at high volumes, none of the speakers tinkles or distorts, and even long-term listening should be possible without fatigue.



VERDICT



With the A series Adam Audio delivers a convincing further development of their AX models, which convinces with linear frequency responses on the one hand and very wide frequency spectrums on the other hand, as well as with enormous bass power, which complements the always very high quality Adam tweeters - including the revolutionary HPS Waveguides - well. The resulting sound is very vivid and reproduces a wide variety of genres in great detail. The biggest advantage, however, is the adaptability to different rooms given by the DSP and the coupled A-Control Remote software, so that you can get a linear frequency response even in non-optimized project studios, especially in combination with Sonarworks software. The rotatable tweeters also show that flexibility is writ large. A well thought-out, state-of-the-art overall concept that offers something for every taste.

The A Series from Adam at a glance:

	A4V Near field	A44H Near field	A7-V Near field	A77H Mid field	A8H Mid field
Ways	2	2	2	3	3
Woofer	1x4" MLM-woofer	2x4" MLM-woofer	1x7" MLM-woofer	2x7" MLM-woofer	1x8" MLM-woofer
Midrange driver	/	/	/	1x3,5" MLM Midrange driver	1x3,5" MLM Midrange driver
Tweeter	rotatable X-ART tweeter + HPS Waveguide	rotatable X-ART tweeter + HPS Waveguide	rotatable X-ART tweeter + HPS Waveguide	rotatable X-ART tweeter + HPS Waveguide	rotatable X-ART tweeter + HPS Waveguide
Frequency response @ -6 dB	52 - 45.000 Hz	46 - 45.000 Hz	40 - 45.000 Hz	34 - 45.000 Hz	31 - 45.000 Hz
Amplifier power RMS	110 W (woofer) + 20 W (tweeter)	110 W (woofer) + 20 W (tweeter)	110 W (woofer) + 20 W (tweeter)	250 W (woofer) + 70 W (midrange speaker) + 20 W (tweeter)	250 W (woofer) + 70 W (midrange speaker) + 20 W (tweeter)
Crossover frequencies	3.0 kHz	2.4 kHz	2.8 kHz	400 Hz, 3 kHz	400 Hz, 3 kHz
Input impedance	9 kOhm / 3.3 kOhm	9 kOhm / 3.3 kOhm	9 kOhm / 3.3 kOhm	9 kOhm / 3.3 kOhm	9 kOhm / 3.3 kOhm
max. power consumption	300 W	300 W	300 W	500 W	500 W
max. SPL peak per pair (1m height)	100 dB	100 dB	105 dB	105 dB	105 dB
AD converter 24-Bit / 96 kHz	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
4-band equalizer with bass, desk, presence and treble	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
A Control remote software	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Sonarworks integration	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
AC input voltage	100 - 240 V, 50/60 Hz	100 - 240 V, 50/60 Hz	100 - 240 V, 50/60 Hz	100 - 240 V, 50/60 Hz	100 - 240 V, 50/60 Hz
inputs	XLR symmetrical, RCA, Ethernet	XLR symmetrical, RCA, Ethernet	XLR symmetrical, RCA, Ethernet	XLR symmetrical, RCA, Ethernet	XLR symmetrical, RCA, Ethernet
Dimensions (HxWxD)	268 x 158 x 220 mm	135 x 432 x 350 mm	337 x 200 x 280 mm	236 x 531 x 350 mm	274 x 382 x 329 mm
Weight/unit	5.8 kg	9.7 kg	8.7 kg	17,1 kg	13,6 kg
Unit price (MSRP)	449,99 euros	649,99 euros	699,99 euros	1299,99 euros	1599,99 euros
Purchase	www.adam-audio.com or specialized trade	www.adam-audio.com or specialized trade	www.adam-audio.com or specialized trade	www.adam-audio.com or specialized trade	www.adam-audio.com or specialized trade
Special features		in terms of size, suitable for installation in a 19 inch rack			Available as left and right version

A look behind the scenes: Interview with Felix Beu

(QA engineer at Adam Audio)



Felix Beu is a QA engineer at Adam Audio, which means quality assurance. He ensured quality assurance throughout the project and was involved in the development of the A Series from start to finish. Felix answered our questions on site.

Beat / What was the basic idea behind the development of the A Series?

Felix / We wanted to replace the AX Series and bring something to the market that is better, but is still priced between the T and S series. For us as developers, it is always exciting to be given a price range and to make the best of it in the end.

Beat / Who is the series aimed at?

Felix / There are both somewhat more professional hobby producers who work at home and already buy A4V or A7V boxes, but also more professional smaller studios. The A77H and A8H monitors, on the other hand, are aimed more at larger studios, because you need a larger room to utilize them.

Beat / Was the focus on developing speakers that were as linear as possible?

Felix / Yes, definitely. This is also a big difference to the AX series, which is not quite as linear. We designed the new series to be as linear as possible within our capabilities. We also made sure to not just

make it completely linear on axis, because you're never just sitting in the sweet spot, but sounded out so that it's linear in the overall picture.

Beat / Some of the frequency ranges go very low. Was it a development goal to make subwoofers obsolete?

Felix / I wouldn't say that. The A4V goes down to 53 Hz at -6dB, for example. A subwoofer might still be necessary for various applications like hip-hop. The A7 series, on the other hand, already goes so low that it's not really necessary to have a subwoofer in smaller rooms - even less so with the A8H, which goes down to 31 Hz. But it always depends on what you're producing.

Beat / And how did the integration of Sonarworks' SoundID Reference software come about?

Felix / There has been a close collaboration between Adam Audio and Sonarworks for years. Precisely because we have a DSP that offers this possibility, the idea to integrate the software came up

as a logical consequence. In studios, for example, different people can have different preferences and load them. By the way, after registration, the customer gets access to the Sonarworks software for three months at no extra charge. All they need is a measurement microphone.

Beat / Thank you for the interview.



HANDCRAFTED LOUDSPEAKERS

During our visit to Adam Audio in Berlin-Adlershof, we were also given a tour of the production hall. The lamella-like folded tweeters for all series are manufactured there and the luxurious S series is even completely built there. And they do it by hand, because each loudspeaker gets a certificate of which employee built it. Instead of an assembly line, there are individual workstations there like in a large workshop. So during our walk through the hall, we were able to look over the shoulders of the employees who fold and glue together the membranes for the tweeters by hand or assemble the DSP technology. We were also able to examine the testing technology, which in many cases was individually built by the team itself, and witnessed how devices that did not pass the test were sorted out or reworked. Repairs of sent-in devices are also carried out there. Smiling proudly, they pointed out that there were not too many boxes in this area. Either way, the Adam Audio seal of quality now appears to us in a completely different light.