

“A&ER RECOMMENDS  
these speakers highly”

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*“... the Mini’s imaged excellently on vocal material and set up a nice wide soundfield with that excellent off-axis response resulting in a good-sized sweet spot for listening.”*

by Dale Casler

Paradigm’s Mini Monitor is the starter in a line of five speakers from this Canadian company. The Monitor Series is designed to be a step-up line from Paradigm’s very affordable line of “regular” speakers. The Mini is a medium-small speaker at 13”H x 8”W x 11”D. Picking up one of the Mini’s confirms its solid construction, weighing in at just over 15 pounds. Radial bracing is employed throughout the Monitor Series resulting in a nice stiff, dead cabinet. This pair was finished in black ash, light and dark cherry finishes also being available. The finish and the overall build quality of the Mini was very good, including the light gray inset panel that makes up the face of the cabinet.

The detail in Paradigm’s design is evident throughout and the Mini Monitor features Paradigm built drivers. The tweeter is a 1” titanium dome protected by an interesting “low diffraction” grille and inset

into the faceplate of the cabinet. The tweeter face is slightly horn loaded and combined with the grille provides what Paradigm calls a “Controlled Waveguide™” to enhance high frequency dispersion.

The 6-1/2” woofer also has some interesting design features. A cast aluminum chassis with eight mounting points located right where the frame suspension joins the face is an interesting touch. The poly cone seemed very stiff with a quality butyl rubber surround joining it to the frame. On the back panel a flared port and decent quality binding posts round out the hardware.



**The New Mini Monitor**  
*(Improved over version reviewed for even better sound.)*

*“... in our home theater room ... dialogue and effects were sharp and clear.”*

Putting the Mini through our testing routine with A&ER's LMS system showed that all this attention to detail by Paradigm's designers has paid off. The 30-degree off-axis response of the Mini differed little from the on-axis response, the 60-degree only a little more. These measurements would confirm that the “Controlled Waveguide™” has achieved its design goal. Even with some room artifacts the frequency response measurements were some of the flattest we've seen. The -3 dB down point for the bass was 65 Hz measured in a large room with a concrete floor. Paradigm's specs indicate a -3 dB point of 43 Hz and point out that this would be achieved through listening room bass reinforcement. We would agree as our listening room has a solid, but wooden floor that definitely becomes part of a speaker system. We would rate the efficiency of this system at 90 dB and our measurements indicated a slight (2 dB) rise in frequency response in the range from 200 Hz to 1 kHz. The overall response was very flat, especially for a product in this price range.

The impedance curve was slightly unusual and this may indicate the same attention to detail evident in the rest of this system. From 4.5 ohms at 45 Hz impedance rises to 16.8 ohms at 80 Hz, falls to 4.1 ohms

**Mini Monitor**



at 185 Hz then goes to 29.5 ohms at 1765 Hz ( $\approx 1.7$  kHz) dropping back to 6.9 ohms at 10 kHz. The peak that occurs close to the stated crossover frequency of 1.8 kHz is the slightly unusual part. Looking at the flatness of the frequency response we measured, however, indicates that whatever is creating this peak has a positive effect on performance. This peak really shouldn't affect the performance of most amplifiers either.

*“... the frequency response measurements were some of the flattest we've seen.”*

The Paradigm Mini Monitor did well in listening tests. Earlier in this review I mentioned the difference between the measured data, during which we try to eliminate room effects, and listening in room where these effects will be apparent. This is why we always recommend trying speakers in your listening room before making a final purchase decision. Paradigm's predicted -3 dB downpoint for the low end of 43 Hz would seem to be realistic after hearing these speakers. We were surprised and impressed with the low end performance of the Mini Monitor. So many small to medium speakers on the market get reviewed and there's always the caveat that “these small speakers are really great but they don't reproduce the last octave of bass ... etc., etc., ... and will need a subwoofer ...” Well at A&ER we like bass. We like bass of the heavy-duty electric six-string variety. We did not find the Mini Monitor lacking in bass. We let Jimmy Haslip (Yellowjackets) and John Pattitucci (Corea Elektric Band) work out on the Mini's. We cranked them and we were not disappointed by the low end reproduction as we have been with some other small speakers.

The Mini was up to the task in other areas as well. The slight hump that we measured from 200 Hz to 1 kHz was only just apparent during listening and again this

could be a room interaction because our main speakers exhibit a bit of this too. We felt this speaker was very neutral sounding, some people might even say “laid back.” The manufacturer recommends stands for these speakers so at this point we got out the stands. This made the difference by further decoupling the speaker from the floor and improving the tonal balance by lessening the mid-bass and emphasizing the treble a bit more. We positioned the speakers 1-1/2 feet from the back wall and 3-1/2 from the side. With a small amount of toe-in the Mini's imaged excellently on vocal material and set up a nice wide sound-field with that excellent off-axis response resulting in a good-sized sweet spot for listening.

*“The Mini Monitor shines ... with its focused overall performance and affordable price.”*

The next thing we tried was using the Mini as the main front speakers in our home theater room. They worked well here also. Dialogue and effects were sharp and clear. If you like your theater effects dramatic and rumbling deep you'll want a subwoofer, but just as in music listening these speakers performed well in the low end. The variety of finishes available combined with their moderate size will make the Mini Monitor easy to integrate into any living room decor. A&ER recommends these speakers highly. The combination of performance, workmanship and price really makes this an attractive package. It's a really great choice for someone who wants good overall performance without committing a lot of dollars and space to a large speaker system. People living in apartments come to mind. The Mini Monitor shines, especially on classical and jazz, with its focused overall performance and affordable price.