

L-ACOUSTICS MTD Series

Trevor Cronin avails himself of some French 'polish'.

French speaker system manufacturer L-ACOUSTICS is famous for its revolutionary line array concert sound system, V-DOSC. Its innovative line source design has been a major influence on all the other major speaker manufacturers in recent years. What people aren't so aware of is that L-ACOUSTICS has a wide range of conventional speaker systems – well, almost conventional.

The MTD Series is a range of high quality, co-axial speaker systems that are built for versatility – as a main PA, wedge monitors, wall-mounted, under-balcony... you get the idea.

For the purposes of this review I was supplied with a system that consisted of a pair of MTD108a speakers and the complementary SB115 sub bass units with a system drive rack that included L-ACOUSTICS LA48 amplifiers and an MTD108LLCa controller and some mounting brackets. Also included were the ETR8 mounting brackets.

The MTD108a – The 108a is a smart-looking small speaker enclosure containing a dual-concentric driver that consists of an eight-inch bass speaker and a one-inch horn. An internal passive crossover is used, set at 2kHz. The MTD108LLCa stereo analogue controller provides optimum equalisation, active sense return protection and protection for use with a sub woofer. The speakers use a front-loaded 'bass reflex' design with the cabinet having two ports. Weighing just over 10kg, the unit punches well above its weight – producing a heavy-weight 123dB peak output. Frequency response is very respectable for its size, producing 85Hz to 20kHz with a variation of less than ± 3 dB. The box sounds very smooth when used with a microphone or recorded music, producing no obvious peaks or cabinet resonances. Meanwhile, the 108a exhibits reasonably tight dispersion characteristic (a 100° conical 'sound beam'). The speakers are made with high quality components. The HF unit has a light-weight but powerful neodymium magnet and a titanium diaphragm.

The birch plywood enclosure is a trapezoidal design with 45° and 22.5° degree angles – so when the cab is pressed into floor monitoring duties, it can be either near-field or upstage. The units are finished in a hard-wearing brown-textured paint finish. The front grille is made of steel with a thin foam covering material.

The mounting options are numerous, with the back of the unit sporting four screw sockets for a standard 'omnimount' bracket and a pole mount socket on the base. The company also supplies a very natty (ETR8) mounting bracket that allows flush mounting to walls and roof surfaces. It has a quick release locking pin mechanism that facilitates simple and fast mounting or removal of the cabinets. This mounting bracket makes

accurate pointing of the speakers at the audience a simple task. Elsewhere around the back there are two Speakon connectors wired in parallel for connection to the system's amplifiers.

The 108a is suitable as a very low profile floor monitor as well as an unobtrusive under-balcony in-fill. It's a great speaker for smaller high quality audio-visual and surround sound applications as well.

The SB115 sub bass speaker enclosure – The laws of physics dictate that 'you can only get a pretty average output efficiency of low end sound from a eight-inch speaker – better to use something bigger for down there! [That's some physics text book you're using there Trevor! – CH.] This is where the SB115 sub cuts in. The SB115 features a single 15-inch speaker (again, front loaded and ported) housed in an 18mm plywood cabinet. It's a compact sub, weighing 29kg, which has a quoted frequency response of 40Hz to 100Hz, is very linear (± 3 dB) and has a chunky 126dB output peak (120dB RMS).

MTD108 LLCa Controller – This 1RU device supplies the amplifiers with a suitably-equalised and band-passed signal to suit the speaker system. When used with a sub bass unit it acts as a crossover. It features a sense return circuit that monitors the current driving the speakers and limits power when the speaker reaches its maximum output level – saving costly repair bills.

So what was the system like to use? Well, it's very easy to configure, amazingly lightweight and sounds tremendous. It's hard to believe the output capabilities of these speakers when you look at their dimensions – the level they produce is just sensational. This system is loud, clear and is of studio monitor quality. (Although, if you are going to use the 108a in the studio [for some reason] or in A/V applications, you should watch the magnetic shielding, as it caused some disturbance in video monitors – but this also indicates the strength of the speakers' magnets!) Meanwhile, the SB115 sub certainly adds an extra dimension, and is a great addition where genuine low end is required.

Be left in no doubt; this audio equipment is genuinely professional, and is suitable for high-end use with the best artists and the most critical audiences. Any discerning professional with an ear for quality will doubtlessly be giving the MTD series a test drive.



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• MTD108a: \$3,190; SB115: \$3,040

