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ART Pro Audio MyMonitor II

5–6 minut

Want to hear ‘more me’? Not a problem...

Nothing enhances a performance as much as good monitoring! With a competent FOH or monitor mixer and decent wedges or in-ears, the ideal balance can be found quickly. But many gigs don’t have such luxuries, making a personal monitor system very helpful.

Overview

ART Pro Audio’s **MyMonitor II** isn’t new, but I recently acquired one and was impressed enough to write this review. It combines a mic preamp, line mixer and headphone amp in ART’s standard, robust aluminium case, and allows the user to balance the levels of their mic with mono instrument and stereo line feeds. The mic and instrument signals are duplicated to thru outputs to feed, for example, for a FOH console or audio interface.

> Buskers will value that this device can be battery powered...

There’s a handful of user controls on the front, and connectors on both front and rear. Power is via an included 150mA 12V DC wall-wart with a non-latching coaxial plug. An illuminated on/off button activates the unit, and buskers will be pleased to note that it can be battery powered. The stated 15mA current drain means a theoretical life of over 25 hours for an alkaline battery and more like 80 hours for a lithium one.

When a mic is connected to the front-panel XLR, the signal is passed to a rear-panel XLR for onward connection to the PA or recording system. A silent mute button alongside the input XLR could be viewed as useful or a liability! I expected the mic input and output to be a hard-wired

pass-through, but it appears to be electronically buffered, as the specs give an input impedance of 4.5kΩ; I measured a 0.9dB loss at the output and clipping distortion appeared when the mic input exceeded +9dBu (3dB above the specified maximum). Either way, there's generous headroom, needing well over 120dB SPL into a sensitive capacitor mic or more than 150dB SPL into an SM58 to cause an internal overload. My Audio Precision system revealed that the thru output, which comes via a buffer, adds just 0.001% THD (0.004% in total) and roughly 0.1dB of noise. That wouldn't worry me in a studio, let alone on stage!

Phantom power isn't provided but can be passed on from a console or interface. The maximum preamp gain through to the headphone output is +44dB, which may sound stingy but it is ample in practice, even with an SM58.

The rear-panel, quarter-inch mono TS instrument input presents a 1MΩ input impedance and accepts signals up to +12dBu, and is clearly optimised for an electric guitar or bass. Again, there's a buffered thru socket (quarter-inch TS) for onward routing. A line-level source can be fed to this input, thanks to a front-panel button accommodating signals up to +32dBu. In this 'line' mode, the volume control spans -45 to +17 dB, while the default instrument mode's maximum gain is +35dB. The instrument input will accept an electronic keyboard's output, but I found the volume control was easier to fine-tune in line mode, due to the higher output level compared with a guitar.

The quarter-inch TRS line input receives an unbalanced stereo mix, such as from a headphone output. Its maximum input level is also +32dBu, and separate volume trims (-15 to +14 dB) are provided for the left and right channels: useful if there's a click on one feed, for example. Keyboard players who prefer to hear their instrument in stereo can use the stereo line input, leaving the instrument input (in line mode) for mono foldback, if required. Of course, this requires the keyboard to be split externally to feed FOH (eg. using a stereo DI box), but this reallocation of inputs worked well for me.

Helpfully, the stereo headphone output is provided on both quarter-inch

and 3.5mm sockets, so in-ears can be connected without an adaptor. There's no global volume control but adjusting the four input levels to achieve an acceptable volume is not difficult. The headphone output clipped around 2dB higher than the specified maximum (+12dBu), which translates to almost 0.5W into 32Ω. That's quite generous.

Verdict

Being picky, I'd prefer a locking power connector or a cable clamp on the battery door, and I plugged the instrument cable into the thru socket more than once (the latter is adjacent to the stereo input socket, while the input is lower down). But this doesn't detract from the MyMonitor II's usefulness or effectiveness. It's an excellent aid to personal monitoring control, and for anyone wanting their own 'more me' control, it's a great solution.

Summary

A simple, compact and very effective personal monitor controller, the MyMonitor II boasts good technical quality and a well thought-out feature set.