

## CONTROLLING INTEREST

**A wise man once said that the success or failure of a performance hinges on how well the musicians on stage can hear**—and therefore control—what they're playing. The man was right; which makes it all the more astonishing to notice how often at concerts corners seem to have been cut, one way or another, when it comes to the monitor system. Often this is just thrown together out of what was already there or wasn't needed elsewhere, and almost as often one hears the excuse

that “on that tiny stage there was no room for two monitors”. But compact monitors—even powerful ones—do exist, a case in point being today's test subject. This uncommonly compact and yet powerful monitor answers to the name “AXM 12A” and comes, what's more, from a manufacturer with a great track record: Dynacord.

**One reason the AXM 12A is so agreeably compact is that it is what is known as a ‘coaxial monitor’.** What

this means is that the tweeter is located in the centre of the woofer, which makes it possible to reduce considerably the overall size of the device. But that's not all. A coaxial configuration has other, primarily acoustic, advantages of which we will speak further in the course of this test. First of all, though, let's examine the test subject more closely from the outside: a solid monitor cabinet with a choice of tilt angles; an integrated stand adaptor for operation as a classic PA box on a pole; a control and connection panel safely recessed



### AXM 12A

**Product description:**  
stage monitor

**Special characteristics:**  
Power: 260 + 75 watts RMS  
Max. SPL: 128 dB  
Frequency range:  
50 Hz - 20 kHz (- 10dB)

**Dimensions / Weight:**  
41 x 34 x 48 cm  
14,9 kg

**RRP (incl. VAT):**  
1,090 euros

**Distributor:**  
Bosch Communications Systems

at the side; a solid grille protecting the baffle; a layer of acoustic foam behind the grille to prevent the intrusion of liquids; a hard-wearing finish... All in all, a well conceived and well presented package. Irreproachable, in fact.

## TWO OUTPUTS

On the electrical side, too, the AXM 12A has much to offer. The connector panel, safely recessed at the side of the cabinet, offers three inputs with level controls. Two of these are mono and accept microphone or line level signals on XLR or jack plugs, whilst the third is a stereo input on RCA connectors and is therefore suitable for the playback of recorded music from standard consumer devices. Whilst this may seem somewhat out of place at first sight, its advantages readily become apparent in the rehearsal room or studio, where the presence of this third input is an open invitation to jam along with a smartphone or MP3 player. The two other inputs with their level controls also complement one another perfectly, whether in sound reinforcement applications, as a mini PA for a microphone and instrument, or in monitoring applications, where the second input can be used to provide the performer either with a click or with his or her own instrument independently of, and in addition to, the monitor mix.

## NINETY DEGREE DISPERSION

Time to listen. We take the AXM 12A to a small club gig to serve as a vocal monitor. In addition to the signal cable, a

powered loudspeaker obviously needs a mains lead, and here the AXM 12A concedes its first point: a standard plug for non-heating devices (IEC 60320) is supplied. Admittedly this type of lead is easily replaced if you leave it in the rehearsal room or cellar by mistake, but unlike one with a Volex or PowerCon connector it cannot be locked in place, so if you trip over the lead the plug may come adrift. In other respects, however, this compact powered monitor is solidly convincing. The output of Preset 1 (floor monitor, linear) is plenty loud enough for small and medium-sized stages. Preset 2 (floor monitor, loud) boosts the mid-range and is designed for noisy stages. This does cut through the din but does not sound anything like as good as the neutral position; furthermore, one suspects, there is a considerably greater risk of feedback in this mode. Reproduction is accurate and convincing across the entire frequency range. Especially in the crossover region between the 12-inch bass driver and the tweeter the sound is really outstanding and exceptionally homogeneous. This is where the advantages of the coaxial configuration mentioned earlier are most clearly heard. Since the acoustic centre of both drivers is identical, you have what is virtually a point source, so

the sound is interference-free throughout the entire frequency range and the bugbear of comb filter effects is altogether avoided.

**The ninety degree conical dispersion of the monitor is exactly what is required on small or medium-sized stages** and the level is always sufficient—at close, but also at medium, range. What is again remarkable is how sharply the cone is delineated: an imaginary line continuing upwards from the back of the enclosure marks exactly the outermost limit of the high-frequency dispersion. This type of precision is immensely helpful in eliminating the risk of feedback. All you need do is make sure each microphone is positioned outside the dispersion cone of the corresponding monitor. ✕

## SUMMARY

Compact, versatile and great sounding, with two switched-mode power supplies delivering all the SPL you need, and a rock solid cabinet, the AXM 12A is an investment for life. It can take a foot on the front grille; it can hold its own amid the most deafening excesses of the small or even medium-sized stage; and all with equal aplomb. Furthermore, thanks to state-of-the-art FIR filters, this monitor at no time sounds flabby, nor does it ever seem to be straining. The extensive options available for influencing the sound and functionality of the device enhance and never distract. This is a real workhorse. Less than ideal, admittedly, is the mains connection.