

Genelec 8020A ACTIVE MONITORS



The smooth edges and curves of the 8020As lend these active mini monitors a look that wouldn't be out of place on the set of Kubrick's *Space Odyssey*. Huw Price gens up.

KEY FEATURES

- Frequency range: 66Hz–20kHz
- Bass driver: 105mm cone
- Tweeter: 19mm metal dome
- Weight: 3.7kg
- Dimensions: 151 x 242 x 142mm
- Power: 2 x 20 watts per side

MEASURING UP

These Genelecs seriously undercut most of the competition, such as the Dynaudio BM5A (£440 each) and the Mackie HR624 (£449 each). The Tannoy Reveal 5As (£149 each) are a cheaper option, while the Tannoy Reveal 6Ds (£250 each) provide extra frequency control for similar money with super tweeter technology.

8020A ACTIVE MONITORS

Manufacturer **Genelec**

Price **£235 each**

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It's not all about image, because the shape of the 8020As is a direct result of Genelec's Minimum Diffraction Enclosure (MDE) design. The rounded edges of the cast aluminium enclosures are designed to minimise edge diffraction and optimise directional characteristics. The enclosures themselves are extremely rigid, which minimises box resonance, and the walls are much thinner to minimise weight while maximising internal volume. So, like Dr Who's Tardis, they are bigger on the inside than they appear from the outside.

A long, curved reflex tube is designed to extend the low-frequency response and power handling of the newly designed 4-inch woofer and it terminates in a rear port. The tweeter is also new, and the updated driver technology and crossover design promises reduced distortion and fatigue-free listening.

One of our favourite features is the special Iso-Pod speaker stand. Actually, it's more like four rubber feet that isolate and decouple the 8020s from the mounting surface for maximum efficiency and the tightest

possible bass. This also enables you to adjust the speaker on the horizontal axis to point directly at the listener.

The Directivity Control Waveguide is designed to match the frequency response and directional characteristics of the drive units for an improved response on- and off-axis. Most interestingly – particularly for those working in rooms without acoustic treatment – is that this reduces reflected sound at the listening position. As well as improving imaging and increasing sensitivity by +6dB, Genelec claims that this reduces susceptibility to room acoustics, which – coupled with their lightweight compact design – makes the 8020As suitable for location work.

Mains and XLR input/link connections are all located on the horizontal back panel. Although this makes things a little fiddly, it does mean that the 8020As can be positioned close to a wall. If you are forced into that situation, you'll be pleased to learn that Genelec provides four stages of Bass Tilt as well as –2dB Treble Tilt. But the best design feature by far is the baffle-mounted volume control/standby switch.

Defying expectations

We all know what to expect from mini monitors: not much bass, a pinched midrange and a generally 'small' sound. Although it's an unfair comparison (the Ediroles cost just

£119/pair), the difference between these Genelecs and the similarly sized Ediro MA-15Ds (reviewed on page 75) is startling. The Genelecs sound smooth and refined, with a sense of scale that belies their tiny dimensions, and the sound stage appears far wider and deeper than we expected. Above all, there seems to be very little colouration and certainly no box resonance. Consequently, vocals sound extremely natural and high frequencies are very easy-going, despite the presence of metal dome tweeters, which can occasionally sound edgy.

Full-on bottom

The bottom-end response is absolutely outstanding for such small speakers. Notoriously difficult instruments like double bass came across with energy and punchy clarity. Bass drums are full-bodied and robust, while even the deepest bass notes seem to be barely attenuated. There's definitely some mojo at work here, but we're not complaining.

Every monitoring system falls short of the mark in one respect or another, and if there is something that detracts from the 8020As it has to be a slight lack of depth in the sound stage. Genelecs usually present an up-front sound, and the 8020As are no exception. What's more, the transients do not quite match up to the lightning-fast response of a top-quality ribbon tweeter.

The 8020As are less impressive in the mid and far fields, but they are more than loud enough for a small room when used as nearfield monitors – which, after all, is exactly the job they were designed for. If you work in a large or heavily damped room, you might want to investigate some of the other monitors in Genelec's 8000 range – especially if they sound as good as these. **MTM**

SUMMARY

WHY BUY

- Huge sound from small boxes
- Volume/standby switch on front
- Smooth presentation
- Surprisingly deep bass
- Practical frequency adjustment
- Adjustable rubber isolation stands

WALK ON BY

- Lack the power to adequately fill a large room
- No digital input
- XLR connections only
- Slight lack of depth in the sound stage

VERDICT

The refinement, frequency range and imaging of the Genelec 8020As are remarkable for such small enclosures.

