

KRK VXT 4 | £478

Compact monitors are big business these days. *Jon Musgrave* finds out whether KRK's new VXT4 sounds as beautiful as it looks

WHAT IS IT?
Bi-amplified studio monitor for nearfield monitoring in small spaces

CONTACT
Who: Focusrite
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Web: krksys.com

HIGHLIGHTS
1 Robust construction
2 Accurate and detailed sound
3 Handy bonus features

EXTRAS
Optional protection grill
£20 per pair

SPECS
Drivers: 1" Silk Dome Tweeter, 4" Kevlar Woofer
Input: XLR – 1/4" TRS combo socket
Amplification: HF: 15 Watts, LF: 30 Watts
Frequency Response: 56Hz to 22kHz +/- 2dB
Max Peak SPL: 107dB
Input trim: +6dB to -30dB fully variable
Features: Clip indicator, auto mute, ground lift
Dimensions: 186 x 177 x 256mm
Weight: 6.35kg

Whether it's space constraints or financial ones, small nearfields are more popular than ever. KRK's latest bi-amped baby, the VXT4, is the junior of their VXT range, and as you might expect is built around a 4" woofer. Designed to replace their V4 Series 2 monitors, the VXTs sport the yellow Kevlar cones we've come to expect from KRK. However, you'll notice that the cabinets have a much softer profile, and this has clearly been influenced by their flagship Exposé E8B monitor.

Hard hat area
Out of the box, the VXT4 is seriously weighty, and at over six kilos is not only heavier than its predecessor, but also feels more slick. Even so, a quick look at the spec reveals plenty of common ground with the V4 Series 2. As mentioned, the cabinet is completely new, and the ABS

structural foam walls and rubberised underside are both reworked designs from the E8B. So the cabinet is not only strong without being unnecessarily thick, it also has no parallel internal walls so cabinet colouration is reduced. As you would expect, all connections, switches and controls are round the back, leaving a tidy front panel with the illuminated KRK badge and LED indicators to the left. If you feel the need to physically protect the drivers, an optional metal front grill is available, though this will set you back an additional £20 per pair.

While we're on the subject of protection, other features you need to know about include the back-panel selectors: three-position clip indicator, the auto mute circuit and ground lift option. The auto mute option switches the amps to standby after 20 minutes idle, which is handy. But the more significant feature is the clip indicator, and with this engaged the red

front-panel LED indicates when amplifier clipping occurs. Move the toggle switch over further and it engages the limiter circuit. This adds an extra line of defence should you unexpectedly encounter something very loud, and you'll know it's engaged when the green LED is on. Ultimately though, if you see too much green you should trim the input gain accordingly.

Krystal klear
KRK monitors have a reputation for combining up-front mid-range accuracy with the punchy sort of bass you associate with front-ported designs. The VXT4 certainly delivers with the former, and this aspect of the sound is particularly beneficial if you do a lot of mixing. Even so, although I didn't find the VXTs as top-end bright as I'd expected, the mid-range tonality can prove quite tiring over long spells, even at moderate listening levels.

The bass end is also quite interesting. Although there's a reasonable amount of bass given their size, you don't get the direct punch associated with bigger drivers. It's an inherent problem with more compact monitors, and not specific to the VXT4s. This shouldn't detract from the fact that their overall balance is good, it's just there's always a niggling sense that you might be missing something in the low-frequency area. One of KRK's subwoofers would be an obvious add-on solution, but could affect the frequency balance as the VXT isn't calibrated for a 2.1 system.

KRK has produced a good, compact monitor with the VXT4. It looks good and sounds great, and isn't as hampered by its diminutive size as you might imagine. But if space and cost aren't an issue for you and your studio, it might be an idea for you to audition the next size up. They might be more suited to what you're looking for. **FM**



FutureMusic VERDICT

BUILD ██████████

VALUE ██████████

EASE OF USE ██████████

VERSATILITY ██████████

RESULTS ██████████

The VXT4 is a very well made monitor delivering good results given its size.