Mackie HR624mk2 | £649

Mackie studio monitors are popular models for pro and semi-pro studios alike. Can a second incarnation further their appeal? ***Jono Buchanan*** casts an ear…

WHAT IS IT?

A revamp for a popular studio monitor

CONTACT

Who: Loud Technologies
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HIGHLIGHTS

1 Attractive redesign
2 Wider sweet spot
3 Even sound at low volumes

SPECS

Input Type
XLR and quarter-inch TRS
Unbalanced (RCA)

Frequency Response
45Hz – 20kHz

Max Input Level
+20 dBu

Signal Sense Threshold
-74dBu

Acoustic space:
A position (-4dB @ 50Hz)
B position (-2 dB @ 50Hz)
C position (flat)

Dimensions:
219 x 319 x 333mm

Weight:
10.6kg

Mackie's HR624 active studio monitors were originally released in the autumn of 2001. They've remained a cost-effective 'little brother' to the flagship HR824 model but, as everyone knows, six years is a long time in music technology and so it comes as no surprise that Mackie have decided to give both models an overhaul.

What's New?

There are developments both in terms of looks and sound. Even as you plug in the speakers, you're struck by the new, more contemporary design. The speaker body is more moulded and curved in shape, with the overall effect a more industrial-looking beast. The decision to overhaul the unit physically was actually driven by an acoustic consideration, as Mackie decided first and foremost to try to reduce the monitor's edge diffraction, with a view to improving the monitor's imaging. The cabinet's volume has also been subtly increased to enhance response at low frequencies and the amplifiers have also been tweaked so that they maximise the effect of the reworked design. All in all, it's a subtle but useful collection of improvements designed to make a good sound better.

In Use

The most pleasing thing for existing HR624 users considering an upgrade is that the sound of the mk2s isn't radically different. The sound remains transparent and 'unflashy' – there's no attempt to sweeten upper mids to produce a warm, furry sound that fails to cut it when compared to other systems. Instead, it remains the case that you have to work a mix fairly hard to achieve warmth, which is exactly how it should be.

That said, there was a school of thought that described the original HR624s as a touch clinical and, for me, this has now been addressed. The monitors remain capable of window-shattering treble but you have to work a little harder to achieve such a result now, which is all to the good.

Vocals are a joy to work with as the monitors don't over-colour the upper mids. But the biggest change comes at the bottom. The redesign delivers clearer bass both at high and low listening volumes and it pleased me to note that accurate mixing work with these speakers at lower volume is a more viable proposition than with their forebears. The other improvement borne of the redesign, is that the monitor's sweet spot seems a good deal wider. Of course, any off-axis listening will produce a biased result but such bias seems significantly less with the 624 mk2s than with the original model.

Good, better, best

It is immensely to Mackie's credit that the original HR624s have remained popular for over five years. That's an impressive shelf life for any product in this industry and you get the impression that the redesign and re-release now aren't borne of necessity but rather as an opportunity to make a good product even better.

Improvements are subtle but they're welcome nevertheless with reduced top-end brightness, a wider sweet spot and smoother bass extension the principal improvements for me. The price (half that of the original 624s at the time of their release) brings this monitor within reach of semi-pro and serious project studios alike and I'd have no hesitation in recommending this monitor to anyone who takes mixing seriously. FM

FutureMusic VERDICT

BUILD
VALUE
EASE OF USE
VERSATILITY
RESULTS

Mackie prove that a collection of subtle and considered updates equals a winning package.

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