

sE Munro Egg 150 Monitors | £1,649

When two major players in the world of pro audio join forces to produce a radical new monitor speaker design **Stuart Bruce** gets a little Eggcited...

WHAT IS IT?

A pair of two-way monitor speakers with a dedicated bi-amplification system

CONTACT

Who: Sonic Distribution
Tel: +44 (0)845 5002500
Web: www.seelectronics.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 The sound
- 2 Excellent build quality
- 3 Great pre- and post-purchase customer support

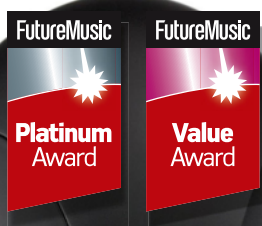
PRICING

Introductory offer until 1st July 2012
Thereafter
£2,061

With a few notable exceptions, monitor speaker design has remained pretty much

constant for a very long time. Be they horn loaded, high efficiency, ported, transmission line, bi-amped, tri-amped, passively or actively crossed over, they all pretty much come in a rectangular box built of wood. More recently we

have seen some more unusual materials come into play – Kevlar bass units and various kinds of metal tweeter diaphragms, cabinets made of aluminium – but the basic cabinet *shape* has remained pretty constant.



When sE asked Andy Munro to work on a loudspeaker design his first thoughts turned to the cabinets themselves and the Egg is the result of a long and complex period of design work.

The system

So what do you get? Firstly the Eggs themselves. These are monocone shells moulded from a special plastic. The drivers are mounted on the flattened frontal plane and there's a bass port that faces downwards below the bass driver. The Eggs sit on special adjustable stands that allow you to tilt them down from the vertical, not up. This is because speakers should always be at ear height or slightly higher, never below. Some users may find this a bit uncompromising but in pro audio this is the law, so go with it! The speakers connect to the amplifier via special cables with Speakon connectors. This amplifier has two sets of inputs: balanced XLRs switchable between +4 and -10dB and a pair of unbalanced RCA phonos for connecting domestic level kit. There are two big volume controls, one for the main XLR

inputs and one for the aux phonos. The reason for this is that you can set the levels and then switch between them for direct comparison between your mix and, say, a CD player; very well thought out and very useful. The other two knobs are for the aforementioned source switching and a three-position EQ switch, labelled Soft, 0 and Hard. This gives you the option of listening flat or with a little midrange cut or boost. The last front panel control is the power switch which is right where it should be and not on the back.

Round the back of the amp are the connectors, the level switch for the XLR inputs and a switch labelled LED on/off. On the front of each speaker just above the tweeter is a recessed blue LED. This is to help you align the speakers accurately to your monitoring position. You simply angle the speakers until this is at its brightest and then switch it off; a really smart little idea that takes the headache



out of aligning them and is another example of the thought that has gone into the design.

The sound

So how do our ovoid friends fare when it comes to the listening test? Well, having installed the system and set it to flat, out came the CDs. My first reaction was surprise at just how far the bass end extends. Initially I thought I'd set them up wrong, put them in the wrong place, or that they simply had too much bottom end. Flicking through many different styles of music I started to get a grip and began to enjoy it. It's not that there's too much low end, it's that it's so detailed and I'm just not used to hearing it like that from what are, ostensibly, a small to medium-sized pair of speakers. Listening to my own mixes, all the detail I expected was there, right across the frequency spectrum. The stereo image is as accurate as anything I've ever heard, transient response is astonishing, and not just in the mid and top but right the

Shape Matters

In the theoretical world, the idea of a spherical cabinet has been around since 1969 and the scientific evidence for why it's ideal is compelling. One of the major problems with the rectangular box is that it causes diffraction of the soundwaves radiating from it, which results in comb filtering and an uneven frequency response. There are also

internal resonances within the cabinet that add to the problems – which is one of the reasons why studio designers try to avoid parallel walls in room designs – and this, coupled with the diffraction, means that the design process always has to accept some compromises which tip over into the electronic design and driver choice. Spherical cabinets don't

have the diffraction problems but do have a resonance (have you ever bounced a beach ball on concrete?) and egg shapes go a long way towards avoiding these issues. So, Mr Munro isn't just trying to catch your eye with this radical new shape, he's simply trying to avoid the problems he's been struggling with for years as a serious speaker designer.

While sE and Munro have taken pains to give you an easy method to find the sweet spot, as you move around the room you don't get the impression that the sound really changes that much. HF dispersion is excellent and even on the sofa at the back of the control room there seemed to be less of a bass rise than usual. That's great when the band

accurate picture of what we're doing, we're very likely to sell ourselves short. The Eggs are a shining example of what can be achieved by thoughtful design and attention to detail. That this level of quality is now available at this price point is likely to be a bit of a wake-up call to quite a few manufacturers and that it comes from sE Munro's first

product can only bode very well for their future in the loudspeaker market. Add to that sE's loan-to-buy scheme and zero downtime warranty

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way down to the very bottom. On tracks where I know I struggled to get the mix of lows just right because I was having trouble hearing them, there they were in all their detail.

Nowhere to hide

There is no flattery. If it sounds wrong on the Eggs then it is. If I was pleased with how some tracks sounded because I knew I'd got them right, I was horrified by the odd one that had always worried me because boy do these buggers show up the defects: they tell you exactly what you're doing. The next thing you notice is just how even they sound wherever you are.

are sitting behind you as you'll get less fretting about the balance and more time to sit in the monitor position and get on with your work. Also handy for those client-pleasing moments, the Eggs go bloody loud without any obvious tonal changes. It's all there whatever level you monitor at, so the odd ear-shattering playback doesn't need to come with any caveats.

Eggs is eggs

What we listen to is probably the most important choice in how we define the sound we create. If our speakers (and our listening environment) is too flattering, or simply doesn't give us an

– check the website – and that price tag starts to look even better. **FM**

FutureMusic VERDICT FT201

BUILD [Progress bar: 10/10]

VALUE [Progress bar: 10/10]

EASE OF USE [Progress bar: 9/10]

VERSATILITY [Progress bar: 9/10]

RESULTS [Progress bar: 10/10]

An excellent product on all fronts, the Eggs let you hear the music not the speakers.

SPECS

- Speakers**
- Volume:** 14 litres
- HF Driver:** 25mm Silk Dome
- Power rating:** 40W RMS 80W music
- Sensitivity:** 95dB 1W/1M
- LF Driver:** 165mm Polypropylene Cone
- Power rating:** 50W RMS, 100W music
- Sensitivity:** 89dB 1W/1M
- Weight**
- 6.5kg**
- Amplifier**
- Electronically balanced input stage
- Analogue active crossover
- Crossover Frequency:** 2.1kHz
- LF Amplifier:** 50W RMS
- HF Amplifier:** 50W RMS
- Rack cheeks supplied:** Size 2U
- Weight**
- 8kg**

ALTERNATIVES

Focal Twin6 Be
£2,832

A big powerful pair of monitors with a well-earned reputation for accuracy. Very popular in professional studios.

www.focalprofessional.com

Genelec 8040A
£1,795

Beautifully engineered and incredibly popular in music and post. Certainly an industry standard.

www.sourcedistribution.co.uk