

SPL 2Control | £477

SPL provide a new and simple approach to managing your different stereo monitoring needs. **Stuart Bruce** puts it to the test...

WHAT IS IT?
A stereo monitor controller for up to 3 sets of speakers and 2 pairs of headphones

CONTACT
Who: The Audio Pros
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HIGHLIGHTS
1 Excellent sonic quality
2 Switchable sub-woofer control
3 Crossfeed control

SPECS
Frequency range: 10Hz to 200kHz, -3db
THD: 0.002% @ 1kHz, 0dBu input level, unity gain
Signal to noise: -96dB / Headphones -85dB
Dynamic range: 116dB
Inputs: IEC Mains switchable 230V 50Hz, 120V 60Hz; 4 Balanced XLR's, 2 stereo input sources
Outputs: Rear panel: 5 balanced XLRs
Front panel, 2 headphone outputs: stereo 1/4-inch
Dimensions
220 x 245 x 95mm
Weight:
2.1kg

SPL already make a stereo monitor controller, the excellent and popular 2381. Just looking at the 2Control,

you might be tempted to see it as a cut-down version of its bigger brother. In fact, it's designed for a different purpose. Where the 2381 is meant for a studio environment, the 2Control is squarely aimed at the DAW user who needs to switch regularly between headphones and speakers, and who normally only has to deal with one musician at a time.

Ins and outs

So what do you get? Starting at the back of the unit, there's a mains socket, four XLR inputs, five XLR outputs and a couple of switches. The four XLR ins give you two stereo inputs, input one operating at +4 and input 2 being switchable between +4 and -10. This means that if you have a pro-level interface and a bit of domestic-level kit such as an iPod or CD player, you can get the levels pretty much matched without having to remember to turn the volume knob up and down all the time.

The five XLR outs work as follows. There are two stereo speaker outs and

the fifth XLR gives a full-range mono output that you could use to feed a mono speaker set-up to check mono compatibility, or send to a sub-woofer.

Up front

Moving on to the front panel, you find eight switches and four rotary controls. Starting on the left, there are two switches for the sources that can be selected individually or together – really useful if you want to check a part from the demo and play along.

Next comes a mono switch and a dim control. The last three on the left are the speaker selector switches. As with the source buttons, these either work individually or together. If you've used the mono output three to send to a sub-woofer, this means that you can switch it in and out on either of your stereo speaker sets. A very useful feature, particularly if, like me, you only want to be able to hear the sub when you have the music cranked up while playing.

In the middle of the front panel is the large volume control and to the right of that are three other controls. The first of these is labelled crossfeed, which is SPL's innovative circuit that emulates the effect of listening to a

stereo field on loudspeakers in headphones. For those of you who regularly monitor on headphones, this is a great feature as it enables you to more accurately judge stereo imaging and ambience levels by feeding a specially time-delayed amount of the left channel signal to the right and vice-versa – just like your ears hear when listening to speakers. I find this great for playing too, because it just feels so much more natural. The last two knobs on the 2Control deal with level adjustment for the two headphone outs.

Testing the 2Control against my 2381, which I in turn selected after a four-unit blind test, I was highly impressed with the sonic quality. I can't really tell the difference between the two units. With the addition of the excellent crossfeed circuit, two level-controlled headphone outs and the switchable sub-woofer out, I can see this unit finding a home in many set-ups where monitoring needs require not just a simple input set-up, but also a flexible approach to using speakers and headphones, without the fuss of attaching extra amplifiers. **FM**

FutureMusic VERDICT

BUILD	■■■■■■■■■■
VALUE	■■■■■■■■■■
EASE OF USE	■■■■■■■■■■
VERSATILITY	■■■■■■■■■■
RESULTS	■■■■■■■■■■

A sensibly priced and great-sounding solution to most users stereo monitoring needs.

