

# EVE AUDIO SC3010

## STUDIO MONITORS

**Nigel Palmer gets to grips with these truly massive monitors from the German firm.**

Loudspeaker design at any level involves negotiating a set of compromises and Roland Stenz, EVE Audio's founder and chief designer, is skilled at getting the best performance from a given specification while also offering value for money. He's successfully pursued this since the company started in 2011, and for me there were signs of things to come when I reviewed the then flagship SC408 in 2014 (quoted here where features are identical), indicating what could be achieved on a less restricted budget. It was around that time I first heard of plans to release two high-end additions to the top of the range, the SC3010 and SC3012, aimed at mastering suites and larger studios. Although less audio gear than you might think is truly 'mastering grade', EVE's customary avoidance of hype suggested they could deliver on that promise, and I wanted to find out what this designer might do when given a relatively free hand at a higher price point.

### OVERVIEW

Manufactured in the Far East with final assembly and test in Germany, the EVE Audio SC3010 is a three-way main monitor measuring 17.13in (W) x 25.59in (H) x 19.29in (D) and weighing a substantial 37kg/81.6lb, so it's a good idea to have a friend on hand to help with placement. The low frequency driver is a 10in unit with a glass fibre diaphragm, the equivalent being 12in in the larger SC3012, which otherwise has similar components and performance but 4dB more headroom. The SC3010's midrange is handled by a newly developed 5in



## Key Features

- Air Motion Transformer (AMT) tweeter for ultra-low frequencies
- Three amplifiers: 800W (woofer), 250W (mid), 250W (tweeter)
- Both balanced XLR and unbalanced RCA inputs
- Can be set up vertically or horizontally
- DSP engine supported by a Burr-Brown A/D converter

**RRP:** (Per Pair) £5,499 (SC3010); £6,999 (SC3012)

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driver employing glass fibre and foam construction for its diaphragm, and rounding off the transducer complement is an Air Motion Transformer **tweeter** (manufactured by EVE Audio in Berlin) a new unit unique to the EVE main monitors and considerably larger than those the company has previously used. This gives the advantage of being able to work at lower frequencies than before, resulting in an unusually low crossover frequency of 1,800Hz (mid to low is 240Hz) allowing the tweeter to handle more of the ear's most sensitive frequency area.

The mid and high drivers are mounted in a silver-coloured plate that can be rotated 90° by undoing four screws, so the monitor can be set up either vertically or horizontally. Although during the review period I used the vertical option to put the tweeter at ear height, frequency and polar plots supplied by the manufacturer suggest there is little difference in performance when placing the monitor on its side. A feature of the mounting plate is a push-and-turn rotary encoder that performs a number of functions: the default is as a volume control with an 80dB range – level selection being indicated by a series of LEDs around the encoder – and a number of filters are also available. First is a low shelf affecting frequencies below 300Hz in 0.5dB steps, with up to 3dB boost and 5dB attenuation; this is partnered by a 3kHz high shelf, also +3 and -5dB. In addition there is a bell EQ, which behaves differently depending on whether you're cutting or boosting – for the former it acts as a narrow-band filter at 160Hz to mitigate the effect of reflections from consoles or other hard nearby surfaces, and in the latter case it offers a broader lift at 80Hz to 'punch up' the lower

frequencies. At first sight the on-board EQ doesn't appear to offer correction in the midrange, however raising or lowering both shelves together can help in this important area.

A look around the back of the loudspeaker reveals a set of DIP switches to lock volume and EQ settings if required – a sensible feature, especially in a facility with multiple users – and also set the overall operating level. Audio inputs consist of analogue balanced XLR and unbalanced RCA phono connectors. The SC3010 is DSP-controlled and converts incoming signals to digits via a Burr-Brown analogue to digital converter for precision control of the crossovers and EQ, so the omission of AES and/or SPDIF digital inputs is at first a little surprising as their presence could allow the user to effectively remove a layer of signal processing. That said, experience of running speakers both ways tells me there isn't a great deal of difference, so this wasn't a problem in practice.

The loudspeaker has three amplifiers, one per driver: an 800W unit for low frequencies, 250W for the midrange and another 250W for the tweeter – all are Class D, an efficient design generating relatively little heat, in this case protected by a limiter. Across the rear of the cabinet opposite the tweeter is a large reflex port helping to extend the lows, with a rounded edge to reduce port noise. It's worth noting that both the SC3010 and SC3012 are suitable for use either on stands or wall mounted, and in the latter case foam inserts are available to block the port and help optimise the system's low frequency response.

### IN USE

Having been supplied with a pair of SC3010s for review, I mounted them on stands at a distance of about two metres (the closest recommended), and started listening to my usual blend of reference material and work in progress. The best monitor location in my room is fairly close to the rear wall, and although the room's design compensates to an extent for the bass lift you find in such a 'half space', a 3dB cut with the SC3010s' built-in low shelf EQ brought the bass frequencies into correct perspective. I left the high adjustment at the factory

setting – interesting to me as I find many speakers' natural treble response a touch bright for my taste and I don't believe I'm the only one. To my ears the EVE's tweeter had a 'rightness' about it without harshness or splashiness, presenting voices with great clarity and integrating into the whole so recordings were effortlessly revealed with their flaws as well as good points. Examples of this would be the 'forward' sound on the 1977 *Heavy Weather* album by Weather Report, also the (for me) slightly overcooked top end of The

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Mavericks' track *Dance The Night Away*, combined with its well-balanced sub thump.

Ahead of delivery the distributor told me that the presentation of the SC3010 was neutral, so I half-expected the aural equivalent of fluorescent lighting, as heard in an older speaker brand still popular in mastering studios of which a user once said 'I turn the controls until the pain goes away!' However, not a bit of that was present with these EVEs – uncolored and accurate they may be, but they're also immensely involving and musical. Proof of this was shown by a first listening session lasting several hours, and I haven't done that in a while – I felt I wanted to hear as much material as possible via this fresh presentation, and relished the speakers' wide and natural sound. I could hear deeply into anything I played, and discovered noises and musical parts in recordings I know well that I hadn't noticed before, such as the single-note guitar in the side channel during the second verse of Michael Jackson's *The Way You Make Me Feel*; also the sustained bass notes in the Steely Dan song *Cousin Dupree* – low-end resolution and timing of the system are exemplary. One of the things I found

remarkable was the sheer bandwidth and power available with 29Hz to 21kHz -3dB points (25-21 for the SC3012) and no sign of the system running out of steam at any level I would want to work at.

In music with no extreme lows, for example older rock material by bands such as AC/DC (I auditioned *Back In Black*) and ZZ Top (*La Grange*), none were reproduced yet the songs' energy remained fully intact. This may seem obvious, but it's not uncommon to come across large monitors with phantom LF due to design shortcomings. On the other hand, where low bass did exist, as in electronic dance music, the system made it clear when 808-style kick drums and bass synths meshed effectively and when not; and on other material such as Donald Fagen's *Morph The Cat* with its tastefully extended sound mastered by Darcy Proper, the lowest octaves were faithfully and pleasingly conveyed along with the rest of the music. Overall, the audio clarity and effortlessness where mono sources appeared locked in place, stereo imaging was among the best I've heard and there was no evidence of crossover bumps, indicating a smooth phase and frequency response combined with negligible distortion.

### CONCLUSION

I enjoyed my time with the EVE Audio SC3010 listening to a wide range of material, and would go so far as to say that, because at this level of performance we're talking personal preference rather than any relative technical deficiency, the EVE could probably go head-to-head with monitors of double the cost and more. I suggest an early audition whenever the goal is resolution, accurate low frequency extension and listenability, and would find it hard to overstate the serious bang-per-buck this new monitor represents. Highly recommended.

## The Reviewer

**Nigel Palmer** has been a freelance sound engineer and producer for over 20 years. He runs his CD mastering business **Lowland Masters** from rural Essex. [www.lowlandmasters.com](http://www.lowlandmasters.com)