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AUDIOPHILE SPEAKERS BY AUDIOPHILE ENGINEERS, FOR AUDIO ENGINEERS

Field Test: Lipinski L-505



My new year got off to a great start when FedEx dropped off a pair of Lipinski L-505 speakers for evaluation, polywrapped in their own foam-padded, zippered nylon carrying cases — perfect for going out on remotes and for shipping. The Lipinski product line is a new venture for noted recording engineer Andrew Lipinski and son Lukas. Lipinski's goal is to create high-resolution audio production and mastering equipment that satisfies *him* first.

OUT OF THE BOX

The L-505s (and the larger L-707s) are a passive design in sealed enclosures. Lipinski states that the presence of an internal amplifier creates unacceptable results — up to 15-percent second-harmonic distortion — on its speaker's response curve. Furthermore, a few feet of good heavy-gauge wire won't

Specially designed textured Belgian foam eliminates side reflections, resonances and other anomalies — all designed for the best imaging and flattest frequency response possible. It is suggested that the tweeters should be at head level for the best imaging and the speakers should be placed on a solid, stable surface. Sand or lead shot-filled,

“The level of detail that the L-505s reveal is simply jaw-dropping.”

diminish performance, rendering any “self-powered” issues moot. The beefy connectors certainly won't impair signal flow either.

The heart of the magnetically shielded L-505 speaker point-source design is the 1-inch neodymium ring-radiator tweeter and its placement. Time alignment is accomplished acoustically with depth instead of electronic or crossover-induced delay. The crossover is built with premium-quality parts: foil inductors and oxygen-free copper wiring throughout. The tweeter is center-positioned between the two 5-inch (top and bottom) glass-fiber mid woofers.

heavily anchored supports are recommended, or use Lipinski's L-36 36-inch stands. On the rear, two 1-inch gold-plated brass connectors per post give plenty of surface contact area for spade lugs, 2AGW wire or banana plugs. Although rated to run efficiently on as little as 75 watts RMS, the

L-505s are stated to accept much more power than that; the company's only caveat is to not use them for P.A. work.

Lipinski recommends using a subwoofer with these speakers and makes its own supplementary subs: models L-150 and L-150G. The smooth 70Hz roll-off matches my own sub perfectly; the hand-off is smooth and

coherent. Even with the sub switched off for testing, the L-505s delivered a smooth, solid sound all the way down to 40 Hz.

Mid bass didn't get muddy or sloppy; everything stayed tight down to the subwoofer crossover point. This is a critical area that can be easily missed, with overcompensated bass tracks and kick drums often the result.

STUNNING REFERENCE DETAIL

In my listening tests (A/B'ing them with my trusty KRKs, Tannoy 800s, etc.) using some current works in progress (24/96 studio and location recordings, CDs ready to be mastered, commercial CDs, etc.), the first thing I noticed was the startlingly clear, solid top end. Not overly bright, not sizzling, just *there*. I spent the first two hours eagerly playing everything I could get my hands on, everything I thought I knew well. Eventually, I had to take a break — it was that stunning, exciting and revealing. I didn't get listener fatigue; I was actually getting over-stimulated and couldn't quite believe what I was hearing.

Mono is truly mono, perhaps like you've never heard before. (I certainly hadn't!) When positioned properly and seated in the middle, you'll swear the soloist (or anything panned center) is roughly an inch in front of your face. Close your eyes, and the rest of the music spreads out all around the sound field — nearly three-dimensional. On more than one occasion while testing a DVD

soundtrack in stereo, I was startled into thinking that there was someone behind me.

On location, it's quite an experience to monitor with the L-505s (instead of on headphones). I brought the L-505s out on a multitrack live operatic concert recording (full orchestra, soloists, chorus and audience) for the Academy of Vocal

“While working with these speakers, my mixes sounded more precise and held up solidly — with no surprises — when played on other systems. This is a speaker that will motivate you to get the best mix possible.”

Arts production of Pietro Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz* at the Philadelphia-based Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater, and got superb results. The ability to monitor a live recording onsite accurately and cleanly is a huge help for later mixdown. Hearing the final results on a local NPR broadcast proved to me that the L-505s gave me exactly what I needed to hear in critical tracking, mixing and mastering work.

SOLID, BELIEVABLE MONITORS

Accurate playback and mix transportability are critical for anyone in the mixing and mastering business. “Good” speakers are worthless if they're too sexy or lie to you, creating an inaccurate frame of reference. While working with these speakers, my mixes

sounded more precise and held up solidly — with no surprises — when played on other systems. This is a speaker that will motivate you to get the best mix possible. A friend of mine recently underwent corrective eye surgery and hasn't stopped raving about how fantastic life is now with her new “eyes”: seeing things almost as if for the first time again. I can fully relate now in

aural terms. To experience your own recordings with stunning new details and clarity, you *must* hear these speakers. Your ears will feel brand-new again — without the lasers. Price: \$1,495ea.

Joe Hammigan runs Weston Sound & Video in Philadelphia



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