

Hot House Active Reference Monitor 265

Right out of the box, these speakers just sounded right. I didn't want to change anything about them! With their beautiful oak-grain cabinets, they looked great as well.

Features

The Hot House ARM 265 is a large, bi-amplified, midfield monitor with two 6.5" port-



ed poly woofers and a 1" soft dome tweeter. The woofers are aligned one over the other with the tweeter in between them, nestled in a small waveguide. The cabinet edges are rounded to reduce diffraction and smooth the response.

Several toggle switches on the back let you adjust response and gain:

- Ultra high-frequency compensation: Boost or flat above 12 kHz.
- Low-frequency compensation: Half space (+0 dB), quarter space (-4 dB LF shelf) and free space (+2 dB).
- Gain: +4/-10.

I liked how easy it was to adjust the response using the toggle switches. I think that low-frequency adjustment is essential in a studio monitor to compensate for the proximity of nearby surfaces.

Also on the back are the ports, an XLR/TRS input connector (balanced or unbalanced), power on/off switch, and an IEC inlet. A power-on LED is located on the front baffle. Cabinet dimensions are 14" wide, 25" high and 12" deep. Each speaker weighs 52 lb. Black, red or golden oak veneer are the standard finishes available, but any custom finish can be special ordered.

Each power amp is 250 W/driver. Claimed SPL per pair is 126 dB peak and 120 dB continuous. Frequency response is said to be 30 Hz to 20 kHz +/-1.75 dB for the speaker, and flat up to 150 kHz for the power amps. Signal to noise ratio is rated at 102 dB.

Hot House produces a line of studio monitors and subwoofers, audiophile-grade control-room amplifiers, signal processors and electronic crossovers, as well as custom monitors, system design, studio consulting, and OEM manufacturing services.

In use

I auditioned the Hot House ARM 265 both in a closefield and midfield setup. In the closefield arrangement, I placed the speakers 4' apart and 4' away, on stands behind the mixer, about 8" from a wall behind them, toed in, with the HF switch set to flat and the LF switch set to quarter-space (-4). The midfield setup had the

speakers 7' away and 7' apart on stands, set flat.

Here's how the ARM 265s sounded to me playing various instruments:

- Bass: Full, deep, tight, weighty. Uniform loudness of notes.
- Piano: Clear and natural. Acoustic guitar: Delicate, not tizzy.
- Electric guitar: Plenty of bite, good amount of body.
- Vocals: Natural, not overly sibilant.
- Drums: Natural snap and impact.
- Cymbals: Crisp, smooth, extended highs, detailed, clear decay, not excessively loud.
- Percussion: Crisp and sweet.
- Sax: Fine balance between warmth and breathy edge.

Overall, the Hot House ARM 265 sounds smooth, pleasant and accurate. It is tonally well balanced from lows to mids to highs. The ARM 265 can play outrageously loud and is quite sensitive. Its imaging is very good. The bass goes deeper in the ARM 265 than in smaller closefield speakers.

Summary

There's a lot to like about the Hot House Active Reference Monitor 265. It is easy to adjust for different environments. Sound quality is excellent, thanks to an unusually flat and wide-range response. Distortion is quite low. Although the speaker is expensive, it should satisfy those who want only the best.

Bruce Bartlett, regular Pro Audio Review contributor, is a senior microphone design engineer and technical writer for Crown International.

Product Points

Hot House ARM 265

Plus

- Very wide range, smooth response
- Low distortion, low fatigue
- Adjustable response

Minus

- Expensive
- Slightly forward timbres with orchestra
- No clip LED

The Score

A great sounding set of monitors well worth the price.

At a Glance

Applications:

Studio

Key Features:

Ultra high-frequency compensation: boost or flat above 12 kHz; low-frequency compensation: half space (+0 dB), quarter space (-4 dB LF shelf) and free space (+2dB LF shelf)

Price:

\$6,499/pair

Contact:

Hot House 914-691-6077.

On The Bench

Hot House ARM 265 Bench Measurement

I tested the Hot House ARM 265 with a Goldline TEF analyzer. The mic was 1 meter away, on-axis with the tweeter; and the tone controls were set to flat (free field). Anechoic frequency response is shown in **Figure 1**. All I can say is, Wow! It is the flattest, widest-range speaker I've measured to date: 33 Hz to 20 kHz +/-3 dB. I tested the other speaker of the pair, and its response was nearly identical. At 30 degrees off-axis (not shown), the response was down 1.5 dB from 600 to 6,000 Hz, down 6.5 dB at 10 kHz, and down 9 dB at 15 kHz. The dispersion is not quite as wide as most closefield speakers, but this isn't actually a problem. In midfield use, the speakers are several feet from the listeners, so people seated off-center are not very far off axis. **Figure 2** shows the range of the tone controls. This graph is the response of the room and speaker. Note that the ultrahigh-frequency compensation works only above 12 kHz.

The Energy Time Curve is displayed in **Figure 3**. It is very good but not the best I've measured. Finally, **Figure 4** shows the Total Harmonic Distortion at 90 dB SPL, 1 meter. THD is well below audibility from 40 Hz up, which is better performance than small closefield monitors can deliver.

—Bruce Bartlett

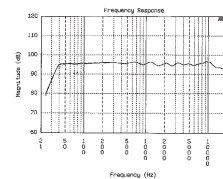


Figure 1: Anechoic frequency response, one-third octave smoothed

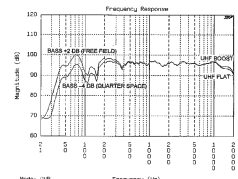


Figure 2: Range of tone controls, room/speaker response

