



## KRK VXT Series

By Dan Israel

progress. Having personally witnessed the foray of nearfield monitoring into the studio, the evolution of powered monitors brought a welcome quality to this practice. Ironic because the ritual of nearfield monitoring was mostly about how mixes would translate to lower fidelity speakers. But full quality sound being reproduced from smaller and smaller boxes is enabling studios and control rooms to forgo main monitors. Enter the new KRK Systems VXT series.

The series has three models, VXT4, VXT6 and VXT8, each corresponding to their low frequency driver sizes of 4, 6 and 8 inches. According to KRK the curved design and improved structural integrity are responsible for extending the low end while decreasing the port turbulence.

The monitor input is a Neutrik combo connector that accepts XLR, 1/4" TRS, and 1/4" TS connections. Customizing controls include a continuously variable potentiometer for signal input (-30dB attenuation to +6dB gain). A ground lift switch is useful for those without grounding schemes or custom made cabling. The Audio Mute feature

limiting circuits completely. The limiting circuit is not transparent enough for use in critical mixing or mastering environments (though the indicator only mode might prove useful). In contrast, the limiting mode would be a great asset in use for on-air control rooms where durability supersedes minute mixing decisions.

The VXT6s and VXT8s also have two shelving controls that the VXT4s do not. The HF adjustment provides the ability to add or subtract 1dB above 2kHz. The LF adjustment is designed to compensate for any low frequency coupling due to monitor placement. The manual describes each of these settings and has some typical setup diagrams for placement.

The bottom panel is coated with a neoprene rubber that provides enough grip on slippery surfaces to prevent vibration from walking the speakers around unbeknownst to the listener. For control rooms short on counter space, the bottom also accepts standard Omnimount hardware.

## Performance at a glance

Extended low frequency reproduction

Bypassable limiting protection circuit

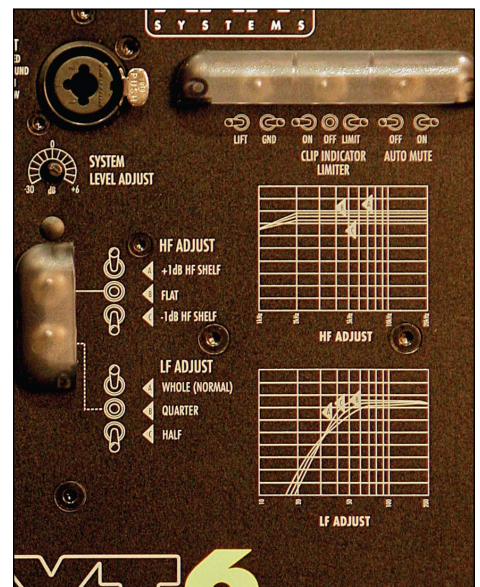
Omnimount ready

1" silk dome tweeter

Woven Kevlar woofer

would be more appropriately named Sleep Mode. According to the manual, the switch engages a timing circuit that senses a lack of audio over a period of time and then places the monitor's power supply in an energy saving standby state.

The Clip Indicator/Limiter switch allows the user to select one of three modes. In the left position, the front LED illuminating red indicates potential driver damage – no audio is affected. The right position engages an actual circuit that limits the audio and prevents possible damage. Varying degrees of compression are indicated by the intensity of the front panel LED illuminating green. The middle position disengages the indicator and



The rear panel of the VXT6.

## In use

So how do they sound? For this review, I received a pair of VXT6 monitors. To my ear, the monitors seem to be relatively flat, although this may not be what you desire or have become accustomed to. In my testing, I ended up setting the HF adjustment for the 1dB boost while leaving the LF adjustment at the default of whole. **The most impressive part of the new cabinet design is the clarity of audio in the**

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**low-mids (100Hz to 800Hz). The reproduction in this range is very good. The mids are smooth and the overall imaging is well defined.**

My first listen was Flim and the BB's, *This Is A Recording* (George Massenburg). The piano was clear and true. The woodwind was almost silky. In Dishwalla's *Opaline*, the extended low end was noticeable, without feeling woofy. When listening to pop and synth genre, I felt the high frequency energy was somewhat diffused. This seemed to be more than my unfamiliarity to a new response curve. The overall excitement of the mixes just seemed to be more subdued on the VXTs. I also felt some room ambience from Barenboim's *Brahms Symphony No. 3* was missing. Although with classical recordings,

as well as audibly clipped while soloing individual drum tracks. If you track without main monitors and like to feel the music, the VXTs may fall short. I would highly recommend you check into the VXT8s for this purpose as they have a larger amplifier.

Finally, I used the VXTs during some network production for the NFL. For this I engaged the limiter function. Strangely, my dissatisfaction with sung vocals wasn't prevalent in voice-over work. Both male and female voice-overs were smooth and distinct. The VXTs were easy to listen to for long periods, their output volume was more than enough for production and the limiting function is transparent enough to make the speakers almost indestructible to rogue audio.

As with microphones, a monitor's sonic beauty is best judged by the ear of the beholder. For KRK groupies, these are a home run. Their brand ancestry is definitely audible. The company has retained the good from their previous mid-level lines, while improving other facets of their design. **For broadcasters these boxes pack a lot of punch for a modest price. And the limiting circuit and ready-to-mount abilities make them good candidates for the control or production room.**



Model		VXT4	VXT6	VXT8
Freq. Response		56Hz to 22kHz	49Hz to 22kHz	37Hz to 22kHz
Power	HF	15W	30W	60W
	LF	30W	60W	120
Max SPL		104dB	108dB	111dB

the imaging of the orchestra was notable.

Next, I substituted Pro Tools HD for the CD player. The low-end clarity was again immediately apparent. Kick drums and percussion sounded tight and punchy. The bass guitar was round and full of bottom end. Personally I feel the acoustic piano is one of the most demanding tests in pro-audio. The transients in these raw tracks have a way of subtly distorting microphones and high frequency drivers. But the VXTs seemed up to the task. For soloing vocals, I wanted to reach for some EQ. These tracks just felt lacking in air.

Another caveat when using these monitors for tracking and mixing music was headroom. In my control room the nearfields are approximately four feet away from the listening position. At that distance, the VXT6s delivered 86dB SPL before clipping. While this is adequate volume for listening to final product, both speakers indicated overload

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