

## TIME TO DEAL WITH YOUR MONITORING SETUP

by Craig Anderton

No matter what you do in the studio, you need to hear it properly—and this month's selection of gadgets is intended to give you a better monitoring environment.



### IK Multimedia ARC

Don't believe that equalization can fix room acoustics? Neither do I. Acoustical treatment is the solution. But I'm going to have to revise my thinking, because the ARC (Advanced Room Correction) system really can help compensate effectively for room problems.

The package (\$899 retail) includes a calibrated measurement mic, measurement software (ASIO Windows, Core Audio Mac), and a VST/RTAS/AU correction plug-in. You sample your room at multiple places, the measurement software figures out what's going on, and generates a compensation curve to load into the correction plug-in—which inserts in your DAW's stereo master bus (no surround yet).

It sounds like a gimmick, yet after testing it extensively I have to say it works very well. You set mic around within the area you measure, and the sound doesn't change. If you're concerned about the frequency response of the first sound, you can set up for an omnidirectional microphone.



### Primacoustic Recoil Stabilizers

And speaking of skeptical . . . Primacoustic sent me an email claiming their Recoil Stabilizer pads (\$99 each retail) for near-field monitors made a dramatic improvement in the sound. Sure. Did it come with a green felt tip pen you could run around the rim of a CD to improve the sound, too?

Apparently resigned to people not believing them, Primacoustic sent out prototypes to a bunch of high-profile engineers and reviewers—including yours truly—and asked for comments. None of us compared notes, but we all noticed the same thing: more consistent bass, superior imaging, and a tighter sound. How can a stupid foam pad do this?

It turns out the "secret" is the thick metal plate on top of the pad. When sitting on a standard foam pad and pushing air, a speaker sways back and forth ever so slightly. The plate stabilizes the speaker, which is supposedly the reason for the improved sound and imaging. Whatever; it works.

Primacoustic set up an A/B demo at AES of the same speakers on the Recoil Stabilizers and regular foam pads, and I heard the same difference I heard in my studio—as did other showgoers. We're not talking a subtle difference, but one you can pick out with your eyes closed. Bottom line: Before you replace your monitors, give the Recoil Stabilizers a shot—they could be the most cost-effective upgrade you can make to your monitoring setup. [www.primacoustic.com](http://www.primacoustic.com). **EA**



### ModTrap Acoustical Absorber

The ModTrap panel is a 2" thick broadband absorber wrapped in fire-rated acoustical fabric, and available in two sizes: 16"x24" (reviewed here; \$99 retail) and 24"x30" (\$129). The "special sauce" is that they attach to a bracket that can swivel about the center of the panel, and fit on a mic stand. Thus, it's easy to put the panel where you want: between a mic and wall, to isolate a guitar amp, serve as a divider between drums, reduce cymbal splash, and so on.

I tried placing it between a mic positioned about 5' away from a fairly reflective wall, and could hear there were less reflections coming back. So I tried putting two in a corner, to check if they could reduce the bass bump noticed when I was testing out the ARC. Sure enough, there was a slight reduction in low "thumps" at about 120Hz and 80Hz, but no effect at the higher or higher frequencies. I would agree that the ModTrap is a good absorber, but I don't think it's the best.