

M-Audio BX3 and BX4 from £85

Need some compact monitors for your set up? **Jon Musgrave** sizes up two new offerings from M-Audio

CONTACT WHO: M-Audio **WEB:** m-audio.com **KEY FEATURES** BX3: 3.5" Kevlar LF, 1" silk dome HF, 120-Watt total peak power **FREQUENCY RESPONSE:** 80Hz–22kHz **DIMENSIONS:** 140 x 145 x 208mm **BX4:** 4.5" Kevlar LF, 1" silk dome HF, 120-Watt total peak power **FREQUENCY RESPONSE:** 69Hz – 22kHz **DIMENSIONS:** 156 x 175 x 225mm **PRICING:** BX3 £85, BX4 £100





M-Audio's long established BX powered monitor range is aimed at project and home users, and the latest designs are their most compact yet. Built around 3.5" (BX3) and 4.5" (BX4) Kevlar LF drivers and the same 1" silk dome tweeter, the BX3 and BX4 have identical features and very similar prices (£85 and £100) so whichever one you go for will probably boil down to size considerations as much as anything else.

The monitors are powered (2 x 25 Watt RMS) but audio inputs and mains power are supplied to one active speaker, with the second passive speaker connected via the included 3.5mm TS interconnect cable. Both balanced and unbalanced inputs are provided (a pair of TRS jacks and RCAs respectively).

In practice the BXs are very easy to set up and with only one power connection and stereo inputs, cabling is tidy. You can also specify left/right on the active monitor, so you can position the active speaker to whichever side suits.

The BX3 and BX4 are rear ported so work best with some space behind them. That said there's both high and

low frequency EQ (+/-6dB for each) providing quite a bit of tweaking. And of course with all controls on the active unit, you only need to make one set of adjustments. Admittedly this also restricts the option to apply different EQ to each side, but I wouldn't expect that sort of flexibility at this price.

The global control theme follows through to the front panel, where you'll find the global level control (this also doubles as an on/off switch), headphone output and auxiliary input. The auxiliary is very handy if you want to quickly plug up your tablet or phone, and it will automatically override the main input. It also follows the active monitor left/right setting, so stereo channels are consistent whatever your source.

The rear-ported design successfully extends the bass delivery and further low end can be added from the bass EQ, although go too far and you'll mask the low mids. Meanwhile the high frequency EQ sounds quite sweet and I found a bit of boost worked well in a less lively space. In summary the overall sound of the BXs is pretty good albeit slightly sweetened. The stereo image is also good and the tweeter waveguide delivers a nice broad sweet

spot. Between the two models inevitably I prefer the BX4s as they deliver bigger scale. That said, I was surprised by how workable the BX3s were, and both sizes can go surprisingly loud.

Convenience is very much the name of the game with these BX monitors, and they are clearly aimed at a much broader market than their larger nearfield studio monitors, but I like the flexibility they offer and they sound reasonable as well. So whether you're working to a tight budget or if you simply want a decent flexible compact monitor set up for your production, podcasting or multimedia needs, these new BX monitors can offer you great value. **FM**

FM VERDICT

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Compact and convenient, M-Audio's new BX monitors expand the appeal of this established range and do so at an incredible price

THE PROS & CONS



Compact, stylish design

Space-efficient, active plus passive monitor configuration

Auxiliary input

Headphone output

Ported design provides useful bass extension



Lack the scale of larger nearfield monitors