

COMING ATTRACTIONS

"Coming Attractions" are previews of new products that haven't arrived in the marketplace. These aren't product reviews, but are designed to bring you up-to-the-minute information on the next generation of cool recording tools.

Blue Sky MediaDesk

Big sound, little package

by Mitch Gallagher

What is it? A micro-sized full-range 2.1 or 5.1 powered monitoring system

Who needs it? Anyone who needs a compact full-range stereo or surround monitoring rig designed for extremely close-field listening.

Why is it a big deal? MediaDesk is a professional studio monitoring system in a compact package. It is designed to be used for very close (less than one meter) monitoring distances, making it ideal for placement near a computer monitor. The 2.1 version is expandable to full 5.1 surround capability.

Shipping: June 2004

Retail Price: MediaDesk 2.1, \$599, MediaDesk 5.1, \$1,198.

MediaDesk 2.1 to MediaDesk 5.1 upgrade, \$599

Contact: www.abluesky.com

AS our studio lives become centered more and more around our computers, many of us have found an increasing need for compact monitors that can be positioned close to our computer screens. Unfortunately, the vast majority of what is available is either too large, or is aimed at MPEG-playing consumers and video gamers — not what an audio engineer or producer would consider "reference" speaker systems. If you've been searching for an ultra-compact, full-range, studio-quality monitor system that can sit on your desk, the latest from Blue Sky International will be of interest to you.

The Blue Sky MediaDesk is a full-range "micro-nearfield" monitoring system aimed at audio professionals. There will be two versions:

The MediaDesk 2.1, which consists of two 2-way satellites equipped with 4" woofers and 1" soft-dome tweeters, and a subwoofer with an 8" driver. The subwoofer contains bass-management circuitry, as well as three 60-watt amplifiers, one for each satellite and one for the sub.

The second version will be the MediaDesk 5.1 — a 6-channel surround system featuring five satellites and the sub. The MediaDesk 2.1 can also be upgraded to a full 5.1 system later. The upgrade will include three additional satellite speakers, an upgrade card for the sub providing an additional three channels of 60-watt amplification, a +10/0dB LFE gain switch (for video and post mixing applications), 5.1 bass management, and a wired remote control with channel adjustments for all speakers.

The MediaDesk systems are said to be optimized for very close-range monitoring — distances of one meter (39") or less. Both XLR and RCA inputs are provided. A full range of audio levels are supported as the RCAs operate at -10dBv, while the XLRs can be switched from 150mV to +4dBu. All speaker-level connections are via gold-plated binding posts, and all required speaker cables are included with the system.

The MediaDesk satellites are magnetically shielded and can be placed adjacent to CRT monitors without fear of distorting the picture (this isn't an issue with LCD monitors).

Their compact size, complement of features, and ultra-close monitoring designs should make the MediaDesk systems ideal for situations where small editing systems are required, for space-limited home and project studios, and as a compact full-range alternate reference system for studios with large main speakers and/or "traditional" nearfield monitoring.

The *EQ* staff was treated to a closed-door sneak preview of MediaDesk at NAMM, and was genuinely impressed with the clarity and punch coming from such a diminutive rig. From top to bottom, the stylish little system performed well beyond its weight class. Admittedly it was only a few songs in a hotel suite, but our first impression had us smiling. Stay tuned for a full *EQ* review in a future issue. **EQ**

