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# DYNAUDIO

## ACOUSTICS

### BM 6A mk II Active Monitors

BY LORENZ RYCHNER

Danish speaker manufacturer Dynaudio Acoustics is distributed worldwide by fellow Danes TC Electronic. Dynaudio is no newcomer to the field, and the tagline in its logo that says “If It’s There, You’ll Know It” reflects the ambition to deliver monitors that tell the sonic truth. Two years ago (July 2005) we reviewed the smallest in its lineup of active studio monitors, the BM 5A.

The BM 6A mk II under review was presented at the recent NAMM show as a “tweak on the previous BM 6A”, in the words of Mr Uffe Kjems Hansen, VP of Product Management. Not having heard the previous, let’s take a fresh look at the new BM 6A mk II.

#### The box

It stands 13.2" tall, 8" wide, and almost 13" deep, weighs 23 lbs, and comes in a discrete matte black with graphite-grey rings around the two speaker elements. Front and center, at the bottom, is the discreet logo and a green power-on LED next to a dual-function LED that turns orange just before signal clipping, and red if the amp overheats and is shut down for protection.

The tech specs tell us that the 6.5" one-piece thermoformed polypropylene woofer has a 3" pure aluminum voice coil. There is no grille. The 1.1" soft-dome tweeter sits behind Dynaudio’s signature protective three-wire element.

The vertical front edges are slightly and unevenly slanted, resulting in an optical illusion of the box not being entirely rectangular—a neat effect.

Around back is a substantial heat sink that takes up the entire left half of the rear. In the other half, from the bottom up, are the IEC 3-prong socket for the detachable power cord (with a fuse behind a screw-off plate), the on-off switch, and the audio input socket—a balanced (analog) XLR with pin 2 hot.

#### Audio controls

Above the XLR input on the rear there are five switches:

- A highpass switch has three positions, enabling a match with a subwoofer: Flat (no sub), 60 Hz, 80 Hz.

*Improvements to a well-liked design yield a great listening experience*

- A level trim switch has three positions: +4 (adds 4 dB for use with low-output sources), zero, and -10 (attenuates by 10 dB for use with high-output sources).

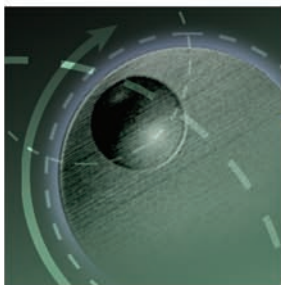
- LF for bass control with 3 choices of shelf-type eq settings: +2 dB, 0 dB, -2 dB. Aside from adjustments for reasons of personal taste, use of these settings is recommended to correct for problematic placement of the box. When it has to be located close to a wall or corner, the -2 dB setting is recommended; when located far from walls or corner, the 0 or +2 dB settings are recommended.

- MF for midrange attenuation (no boost option), to compensate for any acoustic effect of a console that could result in a boost of low-mids. To quote the manual: “The MF switch activates a bell-shaped notch filter, which can compensate. Use either the -2 or the -4 dB setting.”

- HF allows 1 dB of boost or attenuation of (non-specified) highs, or eq bypass at a setting of 0 dB.

That’s it for user controls.

So, you ask, where is the volume knob? There is none. And having seen too many speakers lately with volume knobs lacking reliable calibration markings and precise (if any) detents, where the matching of volumes between two speakers was just about impossible unless the knob was fully at either max or at minimum, I don’t miss a volume knob on the BM 6A mk II. Might as well adjust the sensitivity for a basic match, then control the volume from the source. Eliminate the middleman.



### What's different

Since we didn't get to hear the predecessor BM 6A, we can only list a few tech specs that have changed and are likely to have influenced any change in sound. Readers interested in more comparison details can go to the company website—as of this writing, the BM 6A is still listed with all its data, as is the new BM 6A mkII, of course.

Probably the most significant change would be the redesign of the crossover: the BM 6A has the crossover frequency at 2.2 kHz with a 24 dB/octave slope, while the new mkII has the crossover frequency set at 1.5 kHz with a 6 dB/octave slope. The resonant cabinet frequency has come down from 49 Hz to 37 Hz. The BM 6A has two 100-Watt amps listed

for both tweeter and woofer, the BM 6A mkII lists the amps as 50/100 W. The internal cabinet volume has gone up from 9.5 to 11.7 liters despite near-identical outside measurements.

### In use

Ideal positioning is the usual equilateral triangle configuration with the listener's head. Set on narrow speaker stands in the center of my fairly large room, a good 6 feet from the side walls, the speakers called for no boost or cut of frequencies. With all switches at zero and the level trim set to match the source, I listened to the usual eclectic mix of sounds of my own and from my CD collection. And I was delighted.

The first impression was that of smooth flat mids and upper mids. These monitors do not emphasize the voice, you have to listen *for* it in order to listen to it. It's not that the BM 6A mkII is shy in the midrange, it just doesn't brag about it.

I quickly switched out a number of vocal tracks and CDs to verify that the voice was there when required, and it was, without needing help. But voices were never pushed forward, they sat just where they belonged. I don't mind speakers that move the singer a step or two closer to the footlights and hand me the vocals on a platter, so to speak—working with them is like anything else—getting used to them is key, and it can even make for somewhat easier editing when the voice is a bit in your face (think JBL or Event, among others). The BM 6A mkII is not of that ilk.

Does that mean that guitars won't shred or snares won't crack? Fear not, they sound just the way you'd want them to. And because the BM 6A mkII sounds so very flat, you will mix these instruments so that they won't be shy on the next playback system if it is a smiley-face hi-fi system, either.

The highs extend smoothly up, up and away, without any shrillness or hyping, making well-recorded cymbals and strings sound very natural. I put up some SACD material (*Alison Krauss + Union Station Live*, and the *Wiener Philharmoniker's New Year's Concert 2002*), and marvelled at the cohesive stereo imaging, the fine detail, and—most impressive—the ability of these speakers to convey a sense of depth, not just left and right, but back to front.

Low down, all is well, very much so. With the LF switch at zero I heard all the bass I needed, with excellent clarity and firmness, on materials from chamber music to timpani-heavy orchestral to DJ-ready dance tracks.

That is not necessarily a given—I have noticed over time that 6.5 inches is a woofer size that can be pushing the limit of a close-field monitor in a small room, delivering more bass volume than many a small home studio can handle before the room becomes the speaker box. When coupled with the fact that some 6.5 (or larger) systems don't really speak well unless reaching a certain volume that may already be too much for the listening position, a 5" woofer can be a better solution, with a sub for those times when you (or the client) need to feel the earth move.

But the design of the BM 6A mkII shows no such disadvantage from having a 6.5" woofer. On the contrary, it produces tight and well-defined bass *at modest volume levels*, so much so that I would forego a sub unless working on music that absolutely demands it.

### All in all

With the strong and true and tight bass, and with commensurate accuracy and truth-in-sound throughout the audio range from the BM 6A mkII, extended hours of detailed audio work produce no fatigue and allow for continued acuity of the operator's ears—while these monitors can deliver the truth at high SPLs, they don't need to be loud to be truthful. Highly recommended. ☺

**Price:** \$1745/pair

**More from:** Dynaudio Acoustics, [www.dynaudioacoustics.com](http://www.dynaudioacoustics.com).

