

GENELEC

Genelec 8030A

Genelec's new 8000 series promises stunning performance.

Paul Pettengale gives his hard-edged opinion.

8030A

Manufacturer **Genelec**

Price **£740 per pair**

Contact **SCV London**

020 8418 0778

www.genelec.com

The new 8000 series of active monitors from Genelec – comprising the large 8050As, the mid-sized 8040As, and the kid-brother pair as reviewed here – have been a long time coming. Their creators make no bones of the fact that this monitoring solution represents the culmination of the technical experience it's gained since the launch of its S30 monitors back in 1978.

The 8030As and their brethren are about as sci-fi as monitors get. They're enclosed in a die-cast aluminium casing designed for minimum diffraction (hence the pod-like design of the things), they utilise the latest version of Genelec's Directivity Control Waveguide (DCW) technology, and they employ new, low-distortion drivers with 'sophisticated filtering technology'. So, does all the science sound good on the ear?

Sitting comfortably?

Of course, monitoring isn't about good-sounding speakers. Save that for the world of hi-fi. No, monitoring means neutral, open and – above all – honest reproduction of the music you're mixing or mastering. Careful positioning is essential, and your ear has to be at the right height in relation to the speaker. You also have to ensure that you're in the middle of the stereo pair (or 5.1 assembly). This is especially true when using the 8030As. Despite the use of Genelec's DCW technology – which is designed to give good off-axis frequency response – we found that the best results were achieved when listening dead centre, with the monitors toed-in so that they pointed directly at you. Common sense, as far as we're concerned, but ensure this setup is possible in your studio, should you choose to go one stage beyond this review and audition the 8030As for yourself.

Let's get the tech specs over and done with: each 8030A monitor features two 40-watt amplifiers, powering a 5-inch bass/midrange driver and a 3/4-inch metal dome

tweeter. Frequency response is extremely flat across the monitor's range, which kicks off at 58Hz at the lower end and tops out at 20kHz. The monitors peak at 108dB (SPL at 1 metre), so they go fairly loud for something that has a footprint of 180x180mm. As you'd expect for a monitor of this quality (and price), the 8030A has a range of DIP switches that enables you to alter their finer settings such as treble tilt, bass tilt and bass rolloff. The 8030A also features a volume control on the front – a feature unique to this model within the series.

Once positioned, the 8030As seem to merge in with the studio background; these monitors are almost chameleon-like in their ability to make themselves look scarce. Power them up, feed them some tunes and it's not long before you're nodding your head. Their openness is captivating... A big, broad soundstage with a slightly up-front presentation is what you get, with stereo imaging so precise you'd be hard pressed to beat it, at any cost.

The showdown

We did some A/B switching with the Behringer monitors we tested last issue (the 3020As were closely modelled on the Genelec range that the 8000 series supersedes), and although the Behringers are good, the 8030As totally outclass their cheaper competition. There's a cohesive quality to their output you'd rightfully expect from a monitor this size.

If you're working on music for video or if you produce a lot of dance music and hip hop, then the 58Hz bottom end may not be enough for you – in which case you've got two options: go for the bigger 8050As (which have a lower frequency limit of 35Hz); or use the 8030As with a subwoofer (such as the Genelec 7050A, which boasts a bass floor of



38Hz). But if you're producing lighter styles of music, then the 8030As should prove just the ticket, especially in smaller studios and where your environment enables you to sit in the monitors' sweet spot. It's a cliché, but we sure as hell don't want to give them back. **MTM**

SUMMARY

KEY FEATURES

- 5-inch bass/midrange driver
- 0.75-inch metal dome tweeter
- Magnetically shielded, anodised, cast aluminium enclosures
- XLR inputs and outputs
- 2x40W amplification with active crossover
- 58Hz–20kHz frequency range
- Max SPL: 108dB at 1 metre

WHY BUY

- Excellent sound
- Solid construction with cast aluminium enclosure
- Comes with Iso-Pod as standard
- Small footprint for a speaker of this quality

WALK ON BY

- Need careful placement
- Pricey – though ultimately worth it
- Odd, organic looks

VERDICT

Not cheap, for sure, but these monitors ooze class and have such a refined sound that it's easy to forget the price tag. If you've got the money, you should definitely audition.



RELATED TECHNOLOGY

Stand by me

Placing monitors directly on your desk along with all of your other gear is a bad idea. Vibrations go straight up into the monitor, and that does all sorts of horrible things to the sound they kick out. The Genelec 8000 series comes bundled with a solution: each monitor is equipped with an Iso-Pod – a rubber standmount device that not only isolates the speaker from whatever it's placed on top of, but enables you to swivel the monitor up and down so you can ensure they're firing directly at your head.