

Blue Sky SAT 12, Sub 15 2.1 Monitoring System

Beefy, Smooth and Highly Detailed Midfield Studio Speakers

You don't often associate the word "muscular" with audio systems, but it's an appropriate term for Blue Sky's latest: a 2,000-watt, 300-plus-pound 2.1 midfield monitor system. Each SAT 12 cabinet weighs in at a hefty 92 pounds—be careful moving these around! A thick, solid support surface is recommended for sonic accuracy and overall safety.

The tri-amped, three-way system's panel that houses the MF and HF drivers is rotatable for vertical or horizontal use, making it suitable for a variety of setups. Dual 200W amps (into 4-ohm loads) drive the LF and MF speakers, while a 100W amp (also into 4 ohms) drives the 1-inch HF, with dual-concentric "bullet-style" diaphragm and integral wave guide. The 125-pound, 1,000W Sub 15 tested here (RMS into 4 ohms) handles the low end, with a 15-inch forward-firing driver in a sealed box enclosure. The 2.5-inch dual voice coil and massive 36-pound driver kicks out a total of 2.6-inch, peak-to-peak excursion.

VARIETY ON TOP AND BELOW

On the rear of the main speakers, the smartly designed layout provides a variety of connection and system-alignment options. Separate full-range and crossover XLR inputs allow dual configuration of the system for easy A/B comparisons, with and without the subwoofer. There's also a master gain trim pot and seven dip switches, providing flexibility for proper setup and calibration, including a -10dB and 0dB dip setting and a switch to electronically facilitate the previously mentioned baffle adjustment. In addition, there is a four-position EQ dip switch for each driver: HF, MF and LF, respectively.

As for the sub, a variety of highly useful features allow precise tailoring of bass management to your room and power requirements. Six XLR jacks include right in, right out, left in, left out, and sub in/out—all for easy use of the sub in any situation, with or without the various Blue Sky systems. Below that is the real heart of the system, which includes a Universal vs. Blue Sky switchable crossover, left and right variable frequency cut-off controls for difficult rooms, and an overall sub amp gain control



pot. Three more toggle switches provide LF extension (for larger rooms), a phase switch and auto-power for idling/muting the amp when no signal is present for 15 minutes.

I HEAR YOU!

Setup was a breeze: The well-written owner's manual has a highly useful calibration and subwoofer placement guide for proper setup and alignment, along with downloadable zipped test files available at the company's Website. As large as this system is, you'll need some space to create a comfortable working environment; my preference was 5 to 6 feet out from the center, with the suggested 60-percent arc working best for my space(s).

Working on a variety of recent projects with these as my alternate "reality-check" second system, I did not experience any ear fatigue or harshness. A live concert taped in December for a public radio broadcast featuring New Orleans blues singer/guitarist Corey Harris with pianist/singer Henry Butler was mixed on the complete 2.1 system, as well as some final mastering of a classical organ concert by Cherry Rodes—all from the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia. The sheer muscle and endless low end available from the Sub 15 made it all the more enjoyable. There were no wild or odd resonances with the system. It exhibited smooth low end with a minimal amount of tweaking in each of the three rooms where I used the system.

I use subwoofers in all aspects of my work and found the A/B input options quite

useful. To have the option to work quickly with and without the sub (without changing or patching cables) was very handy. The SAT 12s are quite useful without the sub, but as a stickler for low-end info, it was important to be able to toggle between the two for that final low-end decision-making.

NOTHIN' BUT BLUE SKYS

Alone or as part of the complete 2.1 system, these units are serious sonic tools. My first impressions were of effortless power and superb sonic imaging with detailed mids and silky highs. Everything I auditioned sounded as it should have—jazz, rock, classical, blues and vocal—with no surprises or anomalies. Not surprisingly, these speakers immediately reveal the difference between MP3 and WAV file versions of the same material. (Note: The first thing to go is a solid center image; the SAT 12s create a solid, believable center image.)

If you're looking to hear something new—and clean, and powerful—in the world of 2.1 powered systems, the Blue Sky SAT 12s and Sub 15 are an absolute must for your 2007 shopping list. For power, detail and long periods of fatigue-free listening, these units are just the ticket.

Prices \$7,500 for a 2.1 system (\$2,500 for each SAT 12; \$2,500 for the Sub 15).

Blue Sky, 516/249-1399, www.abluesky.com. ■

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