

BLUE SKY Sky System One

The Sky System One is a 200W-per-channel, 2.1, active nearfield monitoring system.

Dan Duffell finds out whether you can get that big sound in a small room...

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SKY SYSTEM ONE NEARFIELD MONITORS

Manufacturer **Blue Sky**

Contact

Sonic Distribution
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Price **£1,399**

www.abluesky.com

There are some very impressive nearfield monitors on the market at the moment, but few provide the kind of low-frequency definition achieved by three-way wall-mounted systems. The Sky System One promises 'big-rig' performance from a relatively small system – but does it deliver?

Go configure...

The System One is an active 2.1 setup. Two self-powered, two-way nearfield satellite units are enhanced by a single self-powered sub-bass unit. Cables from the sound source are taken to the sub and from there to the two satellite speakers, which are magnetically shielded. All audio connections are via balanced XLRs, with power supplied via a standard IEC plug and all three units including electrical fuses and thermal protection.

A switch is provided to invert the phase of the sub, if required, and all three units have large, well-marked

controls for adjusting input sensitivity and balancing bass levels with the rest of the frequency spectrum.

Room inside?

Positioning the satellites should be carried out according to standard 'equilateral triangle' procedure, with the sub (ideally) placed between and behind the two satellites. This presented us with something of a dilemma in the review studio, where the nearfield monitors are usually placed on a pair of stands about 18 inches out from a wall. This arrangement meant that we had to position the sub between, rather than behind, the smaller units.

The system performed very well in this less-than-ideal setup (definitely better than standard stereo nearfields); however, the improvement in low-frequency imaging was definitely improved when we moved the whole affair to a temporary location where optimum positions could be achieved.

This stage of the test also highlighted another factor: room size. The system requires a minimum 10-foot throw for bass frequencies to form themselves correctly. If your studio space is smaller than this you may not get the full benefit from a 2.1 system of this kind.

Some 2.1 monitoring solutions utilising 'stereo nearfields plus sub-bass' configurations actually add an optional sub-bass unit to a pair of full-range nearfield monitors. System One, however, was conceived as a complete package: the satellites are not available without the sub. This has enabled Blue Sky to use a crossover in the sub unit to split the signal so that the satellites don't receive frequencies below 80Hz and are free to devote themselves to reproducing mid- and high-end frequencies.

Feel the width

As you would expect at this price, System One provides an accurate, dependable and versatile listening environment. Throughout the frequency spectrum there's a highly

reassuring sense of space and superb definition to everything you hear. Indeed, the speakers seem almost smug in their knowledge that they can accurately reproduce the most complex material you can throw at them – and do it with ease. Dispersal is also excellent and there's a defined, broad sweet spot.

The 2.1 format gives System One a distinct edge over smaller stereo systems in several ways, and their ability to articulate very low frequencies is particularly impressive – so much so that the system revealed the sub-bass chaos found on a number of apparently successful recordings.

Although by no means a low-budget monitoring system it is, unequivocally, a professional one. And for the price you pay you'll receive a level of performance which belies the system's size. **mm**

SUMMARY

KEY FEATURES

Sat 6.5

- Frequency response 80Hz–20kHz, +/-3dB
- Sensitivity 90dB @ 1W/1m
- THD 0.015%
- Low frequency amp 100W RMS
- High frequency amp 100W RMS
- Crossover 1.5kHz (4th order)
- Dimensions 8" x 12" x 10"
- Weight 12kg

Sub 12

- Frequency response 30Hz–200kHz +/-3dB
- Sensitivity 90dB @ 1W/1m
- THD 0.015%
- Amp 200W RMS
- Dimensions 16" x 18" x 20"
- Weight 28kg

WHY BUY

- Exemplary sonic reproduction
- Accurate, even at high SPLs
- Great value

WALK ON BY

- Requires a medium-sized room
- Requires a sound-proof environment

VERDICT

An impressive, accurate, dependable system that delivers performance well beyond its price tag.



System One offers a remarkable listening experience that belies its size.