



HOW VERSATILE CAN A MONITOR SET BE...

With the current trend in the translation of signal sources, the demand for small, active monitors that can be placed on any desk increases. 'Small' is relative, but suddenly becomes very concrete when the pens in the empty coffee mug stare at you over the top of these monitors.

The SC203 are the smallest speakers in the EVE Audio range, and with a price of just under € 600 per pair expectations are quite high. The set is designed not only for the now familiar goal : playing sources that are often listened to heard with earbuds and other variations on headphones – but the SC203 should also be suitable for critical listening to signals that produce much greater sound dynamics – such as synthesizers, samplers, acoustic sources, mixed and (even worse) unmixed productions. In short, for all those applications in which the limiter has not yet mercilessly been applied the SC203 can be used. At least on paper. Reason to place the set with much curiosity in the studio, in addition to active monitors that cost ten times as much. This is how David must have felt, in the shadow of Goliath.

The commissioning of the set is simple and hassle free. The master / slave system, results in one monitor (master) which controls everything, and a second (slave) that is connected to the little big boss. The small front panel of the master has one rotary encoder which lets you control all functions, including the choice between inputs and volume. In addition, you determine several other issues with this knob, such as the balance between left and right and the ideal set-up in different settings at the desk : on a stand, desktop, or slightly elevated shelf. With two enclosed orange plastic mats you can determine the angle at which the monitor reaches the ear. Because both the mats and bottom of the monitors are slanted, you have three options: 15, 7.5 or 0 degrees, thus flat.



Creator: Roland Stenz

The multi-functionality of the encoder is quite convenient, but requires some dexterity. Initially I had a slight altercation with this button, thanks to the not entirely clear description in the manual. But that was quickly fixed – yes everyone, even myself, can work it out.



To begin the test I listened to D/A converted sources via the two analog cinch inputs. A supplied cable provides the connection to the headphone output of, for example, a smart-phone. The first pleasant surprise : what appears on YouTube to be of dubious quality, sounds on the SC203 equally dubious. And the better the production (everything is debatable ...), the better it is reflected by this set. That seems logical, but many monitors in this segment colour so strongly that all music is reproduced as squashed sausage - in stereo.

My CD player is equipped with a digital optical output and the SC203 of a ditto entrance. All the more reason to research this phenomenon and to listen to the difference between signals which may or may not have been converted by the EVE SC203 A/D.



The analog option already sounds surprisingly good. You will immediately notice the excellent stereo spread, a hallmark of a good monitor, which in hifi applications is not always so self-evident, to say the least. Even Q-sound, the phenomenon of the 90's where the stereo image can be placed outside the speakers is very well reproduced on this set. Also notable is the super tight reproduction of the low-end and no, that's not a vague description to obscure the fact that no real low-end can come out of such a half liter milk carton. The low-end is definitely there and, curiously enough, is better if you put the monitor on the sloping pad. Be careful with the input ! The headroom of the analogue input is good, but not set to deal with an overly enthusiastic level.

And then the difference with the digital inputs. That difference should make two things clear : the quality of the built-in A/D converter and 'rush-to-fame' of the digital gain in this EVE. To start with point one. Yes, you can hear a difference. If you bypass the conversion it sounds better. However, the analog processing is excellent and (much) better than we are used to in comparable desktop monitors.



But the stunning features of the SC203 will only really emerge as the signal is digital and stays digital. For clarity : the Class D amplifiers that EVE uses are from begin to end all digital (Pulse Width Modulation). I listened to CD productions via the digital optical input and studio applications via the USB port directly on the computer : mixed and unmixed ProTools sessions, synthesizers, samples, microphone signals and digitally converted (tube) guitar amps. Nothing but praise here. A surplus of dynamics is at your disposal. What sounds bad, comes out bad. What is good is reliably reproduced. This also applies to sounds I've heard hundreds of times before, and judged on much more expensive systems. Do the EVE SC203 replace the 'real' work? No of course not. That is not a fair comparison. You can't really mix on these monitors. But as a reference, to learn how the 'people at home' hear it, the EVE SC203 gives a more than excellent result in the studio. Add to this that this set really is fantastic on a desk with a computer, smart phone, CD player or synthesizer in your lap and you can not but conclude that for the money the EVE SC203 is a very nice set with frankly astonishing versatility.

EVE Audio SC203 digital compact active monitor. Price: € 599 inc. VAT per pair