

Snapshot Product Reviews

COLEMAN AUDIO M3PH
CONTROL ROOM
MONITOR MODULE

Today, you can record, overdub, process, mix and master entirely from a computer screen. Yet, as we move away from the traditional console concept, we still need monitoring control for playback volume, muting mono checking, switching between several sets of reference speakers and selecting from various playback sources.

One possible solution to this situation comes in the form of the Coleman Audio M3PH. Housed in a single-rackspace chassis, the M3PH offers four stereo inputs, three alternate speaker outs, a main volume attenuator, a mono sum to check phase, left/right mute switches, and front panel headphone output with independent level control. All connections on the rear are balanced XLR's, and the AC cord is an attached 2-prong type.

The main point behind the M3PH is signal purity. The signal path is almost entirely passive-- no VCA's here ! All switching is passive. The volume is controlled by a 10K stepped, four ganged attenuator that tracks with an accuracy of 0.05db. The only active circuits are the headphone amplifier and a necessary summing amp used to combine the left/right sides for mono listening. Other than those exceptions, it's nearly as close to a straight wire as it gets, and the audio performance is impeccable.

My only complaint with the M3PH is a lack of a power switch and a pilot light to let you know it's powered up. Also, because the unit is passive and designed for balanced I/Os, if you're powering an unbalanced amp (or active monitors), then you can't use the usual "connect pin 3 to ground" adapter-- you'll need a cable that lifts the low side of the output and

leaves it floating; otherwise, you'll run into phasing problems.

In a DAW-based audio room (or video/post suite), the Coleman Audio M3PH provides a pro solution to monitoring hassles. Retail is \$995.00

The company also offers a selection of other monitoring accessories, including outboard stereo and quad VU meters, an active surround level controller with individual mutes on the 5.1 channels and more. Check'em out !

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Manufacturers Comments:

Since this article was written Coleman Audio has updated the M3PH DAW monitor with a 3 prong AC cord and a power switch.