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Silver 5L Nearfield Monitors & BH Sub-woofers

by Paul White

The tiny Silver SL nearfield monitor is unusual in appearance, in that it has two bass/mid units and its cabinet is fully sealed, not ported. The aim of the speaker is to produce a relatively accurate mixing reference while giving an overall sound and balance typical of domestic listening equipment. Apparently, the inclusion of two bass/mid drivers is to counteract the 6dB discontinuity in the frequency response curve caused by the physical size of the front baffle relative to the wavelengths of the lower frequencies being reproduced; this implies that one of the drivers is fed an equalised signal via the internal passive crossover to provide a reciprocal response to the natural shelf of the baffle.



The drivers themselves have synthetic cones suspended in a roll rubber surround. The nominal driver diameter is 100mm, while the fabric-domed, neodymium tweeter is mounted on a stepped baffle to time-align it with the bass/mid drivers. Few technical details regarding the frequency response of the BLs is provided, though it is suggested that an amp rated at between 30W and 50W per channel would be suitable. No driver protection is included, but providing they are used sensibly, I see no reason why these speakers should be unduly vulnerable to damage; in my tests, the sound became obviously strained at levels well below those that would cause physical damage.

My tests were carried out in a typical small studio using a Yamaha 75W stereo power amp and a selection of CDs, DAT tapes and electronic instruments. Though I wouldn't say the speakers were unusually efficient, they produce a surprisingly high level of subjectively clean sound before they start to show signs of strain. As expected with small monitors, the bass end rolls off fairly early, though there's still enough left at 50Hz or 60Hz to produce an impressive, if slightly coloured, kick. The mid and top end are very clean and detailed, yet without excessive harshness. They aren't quite as smooth as some top-end monitors, and I feel that high frequencies are slightly overemphasised, but their performance in this area is certainly nothing to be ashamed of. At very high monitoring levels, the sound starts to become a little ragged and the bass end loses its tightness, but at sensible near-field levels, the sound is perfectly clean and workable.

Silver's optional bass augmentation system is a pair of BH subwoofers, which would certainly be useful for those who need more bottom end but haven't the room to position conventional monitors. They're relatively featureless near-cuboids finished in the same hammer-effect gloss as the 5Ls, connection being via a parallel pair of banana sockets. Three spikes are provided to couple the cabinet with the floor and as the units are passive, they may be run from the same amp as the 5Ls. Adding the subwoofers produces about another octave of bass, but the contribution of the subbass is kept in proportion and doesn't overwhelm or confuse the sound.

While any small loudspeaker is the result of difficult design decisions and compromises, I feel that the Silver 5Ls provide a clear, detailed monitoring reference capable of producing mixes that will sound good out of the studio as well as in. Their imaging is good, as might be expected from their small geometry, and though their bass end is obviously limited when used alone, they are by no means weak in this department.

Further Information

Silver SL £454.73; Silver BH £460.60 (per pair, inc VAT).

Silver Productions Ltd, ([Contact Details](#)).



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