

PreSonus AIR12 2-Way Active Loudspeakers and AIR15s Active Subwoofer.

Bob Thomas takes to the AIR... or does he?

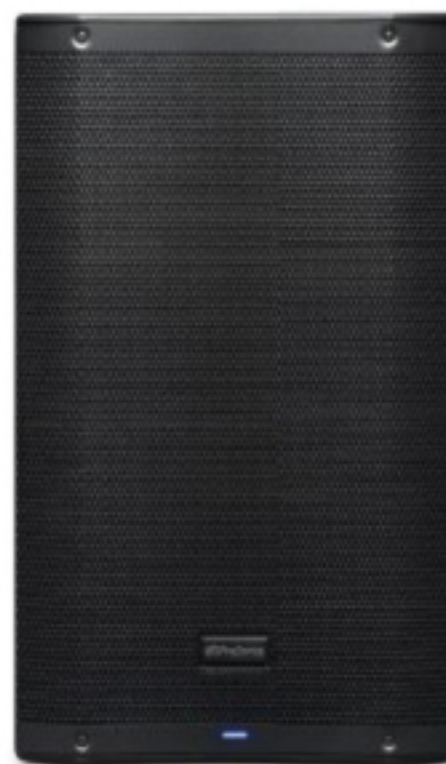
PreSonus is probably far better known for its range of microphone pre-amplifiers, audio interfaces and digital mixers than it is for sound reinforcement products, but the company's commitment to live sound reinforcement has seen them build up an impressive product roster in this area.

The AIR active loudspeaker series is the latest addition to PreSonus's live sound line-up and consists of three active loudspeakers and two active subwoofers. All AIR series loudspeakers are two-way, full-range, bi-amped, active enclosures with identical power ratings whose numbering (10,12,15) reflects the size of the bass driver – 12" in the case of the AIR12 being reviewed here. The AIR subs follow the same path, with the AIR15s under review carrying a 15" driver, whilst its AIR18s stablemate features an 18" unit.

The Boxes

The AIR12's moulded enclosure is a hefty, well damped, multi-angle affair whose steel grille conceals a horn-loaded 1.35" high-frequency compression driver and a 12" low-frequency driver that features a chunky 2.5" voicecoil. Amplification comes courtesy of a "hybrid" combination of a 200W Class A/B amplifier for the treble and a 500W Class D amplifier for the bass. Together, this configuration delivers a frequency response of 51Hz-20kHz and is capable of producing 1,200W of peak dynamic power and a peak SPL of 123dB that in the real world, rather than blowing you into the middle of next week, simply means that fast bass and treble transients are not going to outpace the AIR12's amplification so that you get excellent transient response and articulation from the system.

PRESONUS AIR12 2-WAY



PRESONUS AIR15s



STAR RATING



PROS

Impressive audio performance from hybrid amplification setup » Easy to configure and operate » AIR12 integral selectable 7.5 degree forward tilt is a killer feature » AIR15s cardioid setup facility is a superb feature » 6 year warranty

CONS

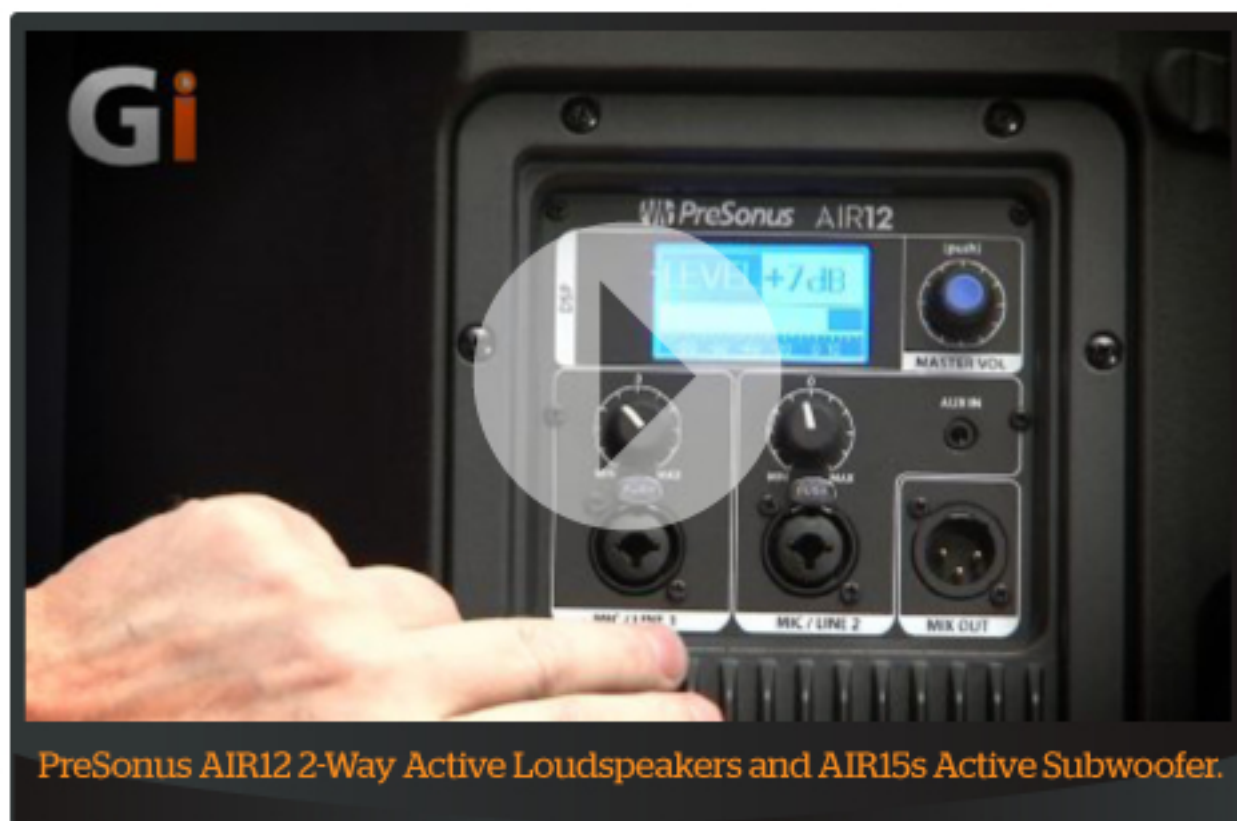
If you have the budget - none »

[...>]

Using a Class A/B-Class D hybrid system gives you the best of both worlds – Class A/B's ability to deliver a clear, highly-detailed midrange and treble and Class D's ability to deliver high levels of bass power without the weight penalties inherent in high-power Class A/B. In their marketing, PreSonus give an explanation of this combination around the impulse response (IR) technology that is used as the basis for digitally tuning any loudspeaker system. IR involves managing phase coherence with digital Infinite Impulse Response (IIR) filters, along with symmetrical and asymmetrical crossover filters. To describe the Air series design, the engineering staff at PreSonus invented the

term "Advanced Impulse Response" (AIR). The term represents the "airy" sound of the high-frequency components, as well as the simplified IR filters needed to voice the loudspeaker system – so now you know.

Audio input comes courtesy of a two-channel on-board mixer that features two combination XLR/TRS jack inputs with individual level controls and a TRS minijack that is summed with the mixer output. The resulting mono sum is used not only to drive the AIR12's internal amplification, but also to feed a balanced mono output for connection to another AIR12 or to a subwoofer such as the AIR15s. Onboard



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