

PRO AUDIO REVIEW

Gear & Software Reviews For The End-User

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BY WILL JAMES

Last year I told you about a remarkable company called Mipro, makers of quality wireless microphones and receivers at inexpensive prices. Now I have in my hands a wireless in-ear monitor system from them, the MI-808.

FEATURES

The MI-808 is a two-channel, frequency agile, true diversity wireless in-ear monitor system comes in three parts: the transmitter (808T), the stereo receiver belt pack (808R) and the ear buds (E8P). Each section comes in an impact proof plastic carrying/transport case.

The 808T transmitter is a half-rackspace steel unit. It is well laid out and user friendly. The front panel features the actual control portion of the unit, with a push on/off button, flanked by a 1/4-inch TRS stereo headphone output and a volume control.

In the center on the receiver is the display containing the channel assignment and frequency, with the navigation keys to its right. The navigation keys allow for access to the varying parameters, which are channel/frequency, limiter control and stereo/mono modes. The rear panel provides location for the antenna connection, two unbalanced 1/4-

Mipro MI-808 Wireless In-Ear Monitor System



inch TS outputs, and two (L and R) XLR connectors for balanced connection to the mixer. The case for the 808T also houses the antenna, the power cable, a couple of steel rack ears and the power supply.

The belt pack, the 808R is simple and to the point, having a channel display in the very center of the front panel, adjacent to the L/R balance thumb wheel control and the dual unbreakable antennae. The receiver features a metal magnesium alloy case. The top of the pack contains the volume control for the ear buds, the 1/8-inch TRS output connector, and two LEDs - one indicating RF signal presence of the appropriate frequency, and the other showing power to the belt pack is on. The back of the pack contains a very sturdy steel clip for belt or pants wearing. The battery door is located on the bottom front, and has a pair of spring loaded latches to secure the closure of the door. The door swings downward to reveal the battery compartment (two AA batteries), the channel assignment button for 16 different frequencies, the limit engagement switch and the mono/stereo selector.

The actual in-ear speakers, or ear buds, are shaped to the industry standard, allowing insertion into your personal ear molds, thus allowing for exacting comfort for extended periods. The kit also offers numerous soft rubber, washable in-ear inserts, if custom molded ear inserts are a little out of the budget.

IN USE

I already had a nice pair of custom fitted in ear molds, courtesy of Michael Santucci and

the nice folks at Sensaphonics. I was able to remove my own ear buds and insert the MI-808 ear buds into my custom molds quite easily, as the Mipro buds are of a standard size and offered no excess protrusion from my ear.

The first use of the Mipro buds came at a concert with Doc Severinsen and the Phoenix Symphony at the Dodge Theatre in downtown Phoenix. I routinely mix mains and monitors from the same console on these gigs (my own Soundcraft Series Five), and although no one on stage was using in ear monitors, having a cue monitor speaker at the mix console is a little impractical, and potentially too loud for adjacent audience members, so ear-worn monitors were just the ticket for volume control and ease of use. I used an open stereo aux on my console to build my own in ear mix, mostly to experience the bandwidth of the Mipro ear buds, and I was pleasantly surprised by the wide spectrum of sound.

The highs were very crisp, the mids very brilliant. We all know that the lows are sometimes a little lacking in ear-worn monitors, but these had what I would consider a reasonable/useable amount of low frequency response. The RF path was totally glitch-free, with no fading, fritzing or drop-out. The noise level, even at full volumes, was pretty much nonexistent.

I must offer this little side bar regarding the safe use of ear worn monitors. These are not meant to be abused, and prolonged exposure to extreme sound pressure levels will result in deafness and loss of frequency response by the user. In-ear monitors should be used with

Fast Facts

■ Applications:

Live sound, broadcast

■ Key features:

UHF system; true diversity; frequency-agile, 16 selectable frequencies ; selectable built-in limiting; standard ear bud size

■ Price:

\$799

■ Contact:

Mipro/Avlex at 877-447-9216, www.avlex.com.

care and moderation in sound levels and period of time actually used. There are limiters available in most ear-worn monitors, and you should consider their use. That being said, I used these Mipro ear-worn monitors at what I would consider moderate levels, without using the built-in limiter circuit, and experienced clear, succinct sound.

I tested the Mipro in-ear monitor system on 12 occasions, most of those times the input to

the transmitter was receiving signal from the cue output of the monitor console. Each time, the Mipro system performed flawlessly, with no adjacent channel reception of signal, showing me that the filtering circuitry is excellent.

SUMMARY

I found the Mipro MI-808 in-ear monitor system to be of excellent quality. The RF path was clean, quiet and interference-free. The

ability of the belt pack to filter out unwanted RF frequencies was superb. The construction of the Mipro system is top-shelf stuff and will offer many miles of trouble free use. If you are in the market for an excellent ear worn monitor system that is easy on the checkbook, I urge you to check out this system.

Will James is owner and chief engineer of Atlantis Audio and Lighting.