

KALMAN RUBINSON

DEQX PreMate

D/A PROCESSOR/DIGITAL EQUALIZER



A decade or two ago, I stumbled on a surprising demo room at an audio show. I don't recall most of the equipment, but I do remember a pair of Paradigm Studio 20 speakers at one end, their crossover entrails dangling free, connected to the rest of the system by a multiplicity of wires. At the other end, among the usual electronics, was a PC whose screen was a crazy quilt of graphs and menus that constantly twinkled in response to the ministrations of DEQX's Kim Ryrie. He

seemed totally absorbed, but looked up and proudly offered to show me what he was doing. When I told him that I was familiar with the Paradigms, he played some music that sounded just fine. Then he clicked his mouse. The sound was transformed from the familiar to the fabulous. I was dumbfounded. "What have you done?"

Ryrie had switched from a normal preamp-amp-speaker circuit to DEQX's crossover/speaker processing in an active biamp setup that bypassed the speaker's own crossover.

SPECIFICATIONS

Description Stereo control preamplifier with DSP-based speaker/room correction and 24-bit A/D & 32-bit D/A conversion. Inputs: 2 analog at +17dBu (XLR, RCA), 5 digital (TosLink, S/PDIF RCA, S/PDIF BNC, AES/EBU XLR, USB), 1 XLR microphone with 48V phantom power. Outputs: 4 analog (L/R Main XLR & RCA, L/R Woofer XLR & RCA), 1 full-range digital (BNC), RS-232 port and USB port for computer

control. DSP: Dual Analog Devices SHARC 32-bit floating point. System latency: typically 15ms with speaker correction. Crossover slopes: 6-300dB/octave. Analog input impedance: 50k ohms. Balanced output level: 4.4V RMS default, 2.0V RMS minimum, 8.8V RMS maximum. Unbalanced output level: 2.2V RMS default, 1.0V RMS minimum, 4.4V RMS maximum. THD: 0.0005%, analog- analog.

Dimensions 17.8" (430mm) W by 3.8" (97mm) H by 12.8" (325mm) D. Weight: 14 lbs (6.35kg).

Serial number of unit reviewed HDP-P/M-12052013-07.

Price \$4995 with USB input and calibrated Dayton measurement microphone. DEQX calibration by online DEQXpert service or by dealer takes one to two hours at \$99/hour. Onsite installation, including DEQX-

pert calibration, costs \$399. Approximate number of dealers: 6, plus sold on-line. Warranty: 2 years, transferable if purchased from authorized dealer.

Manufacturer DEQX Production, 4/18 Lexington Drive, Bella Vista, NSW, 2153, Australia. Tel: (61) 2-9905-6277. Fax: (61) 2-9905-8066. Web: <http://www.deqx.com>

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Conclusions

I am unequivocal about my enthusiasm for the speaker-calibration capabilities of the DEQX PreMate. It made my very good speakers undeniably better, smoother and cleaner, and endowed them with a bigger soundstage. It made dense, complicated music easier to resolve, and all music more of a joy to hear. Add to that the PreMate's DAC, whose outstanding performance was clearly revealed by feeding it a diet of standard and high-definition (up to 24-bit/192kHz) digital sources via its S/PDIF and USB inputs. The user must be prepared to spend time and pay close attention to learning how to apply DEQX, but the rewards will amply justify those efforts. A paradigm for future stereo systems should be the one I put together, with source selection, processing, control, DSP, and DAC all contained in a single remote-controlled component: the DEQX PreMate. I can't imagine what more one could ask for. ■

2 See www.stereophile.com/content/music-round-62. Tekst

3 See www.stereophile.com/content/music-round-66