

Pivitec Personal Monitor Mixing System

By Mark Desloges

As technology continues to develop, artists' demands and expectations when it comes to their monitoring mixes have expanded to a level previously thought impossible. Whereas once these musicians were strictly subject to the mix that the monitor engineer, or even the FOH engineer, would provide for them, now, performers can take on the role of monitor engineer themselves, choosing the channels and levels they want in their mix from a screen in front of them as opposed to having to navigate a console.

Presently, there are a few personal monitoring products on the market. Many are analog, most need hard wiring, and all require proprietary control surface hardware. Enter the line of personal monitoring system components manufactured by Pivitec. Like other personal monitoring systems, there is a certain amount of hardware that you will need to wire onstage, though unlike most other solutions, it is controlled wirelessly via any Apple iOS-enabled device through the use of Pivitec's V2 Mix Pro control app, which is remarkably simple to set up and use. Musicians are now able to take the reins of their own mix on a familiar platform.

Here's a quick rundown of the series of hardware that I tested: the e16i input module is a 1 RU module that accepts up to 16 analog inputs and hooks into the console direct outs. It is used in conjunction with the e10SW-P 10-port managed GbE PoE switch, which is connected to an everyday WiFi router and can send audio and power to up to eight e32 Personal Mixers via Cat-5 cable. Then, via the V2 Mix app, it can be connected wirelessly to an e32 to offer control of your own individual monitor mix and can be outputted to the built-in headphone amplifier in balanced stereo for in-ear monitors, a classic wedge speaker, or both. The app has 32 faders on two pages, allowing the use of two e16s and yielding a fairly complicated mix.



The e32 boasts a 3.5 mm input for inputting external tracks or click tracks locally to the mix. There's also a 22-port switch available for bigger systems, expanding the number of individual mixes to hundreds.

The most important component of this system that I want to highlight is how simple it is to operate – quite literally plug-and-play. Through the simple connection of a few units over Cat-5 cable and basic management of one wireless network on an iOS device, you are up and running.

This must have been no simple task on the company's end, and is reportedly the product of years of research and development. Realistically, this system doesn't require a detailed understanding of electronics or analog audio components, just a basic understanding of interconnections and gain structure. If you can set up a wireless network using a simple router, you can connect, configure, and operate the Pivitec monitoring system. Speaking from experience, it has the sophistication and sound quality to appease seasoned audio professionals, but can be utilized to its potential by the vast majority of weekend warrior musicians – a great balance.

The software is as easy to digest and user-intuitive as the hardware pieces. The layout is extremely straightforward, with only the crucial components at your fingertips. Users have the ability to easily manage the levels on each channel, as well as the pan with the option to mute. There is also a master volume for your personal mixer, as well as a limiter which I pleasantly found to be more of a compressor that will act as a limiter when the threshold is pushed

to the extreme. I enjoy how the software platform isn't congested with useless or obscure features that would render it cumbersome; however, the audio geek in me looks forward to what might lie ahead in future updates to the app.

The last thing I want to point out is the high quality of the analog audio components used in this series of products. These are not toys. They are serious workhorses with serious parts to back them up. I consider myself to be quite the audiophile and am quite picky when it comes to how equipment actually sounds beyond a fancy feature set. That being said, I was very pleased with how warm and crisp the audio delivered from the Pivitec system was. Obviously what you put on the backend of the system will determine its final acoustic characteristics; however, I will say that I referenced it on speakers that I know well and use often and was impressed. This system is worth a listen.

If you are looking for a creative new approach to personal monitor mixing, I would highly suggest looking at this product. As a colleague of mine recently stated, "Before you know it, everyone's just going to be mixing shows from iPads and laptops." This is where the role of the engineer changes slightly to match the requirements of modern sound.

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