

Who Discovered How Monitoring Affects Your Mixes? See Page 72!

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VOL. THIRTY-ONE
NUMBER TWO
NOVEMBER 2017
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Trick Out YOUR STUDIO

GIK Impression Series Acoustic Panels

*\$55–\$175 depending on thickness/size/quantity;
available in bundles at www.gikacoustics.com*

By Paul Vnuk Jr.

*Back in our November 2011 issue, I wrote a *Fade Out* called “Hey! Treat Your Room, Stupid!”, where I discussed the benefits of room treatment and how it is equally if not more important than gear purchases, although admittedly not as fun.*

I professionally treated my room seven years ago and rather than going the DIY route, I wisely chose to use the products and services of Atlanta’s GIK Acoustics. I say ‘wisely’ since after I spec’d out the price of materials, the learning curve, and the time and sweat involved (i.e. I have zero construction skills), the GIK panels were a bargain. Besides, I got the hand-holding and expert advice of GIK’s owners, the husband and wife team of Glenn Kuras and Shelly Williams.

In my 12’ 6” x 18’ 2” x 7’ 7” converted office space I went with six of the company’s 242 Acoustic panels and seven of their 244 Bass traps. Long story short, the sonic results of the GIK panels in my room resulted in more accurate imaging, a dryer focused sound, and a tighter controlled low end... yielding a mix space I could trust.

I also make use of one of the company’s PIB Portable Isolation Booths (reviewed November 2016) as a full-size absorber/isolation panel when cutting vocals, acoustic guitar, sax and strings, and I use it in folded-gobo mode when tracking drums and electric guitars to control boom and tighten bleed. I mention the PIB because the panels on review this month are a logical outgrowth and marriage of the PIB and GIK’s 242 Panels.

Impressionism

The new Impression panels are, at their core, 242 Acoustic Panels. Each panel consists of Knauf ECOSE ridged fiberglass inside a wood frame and covered head to toe, front and rear, in tight stretched fabric. Added to that on the front is a thin wood veneer, which is what is similar to that of the PIB. The



new Impression panel design isn’t just for looks; it combines two acoustic treatments—absorption and diffusion—into one product.

Visually the Impression Panels are available in one of nine standard GIK fabrics (with custom colors also available for an upcharge) and the front panel is available in one of six Art Deco inspired patterns: Bubble, Checkerboard, Digiwave, 3-D Cubes, Gatsby Arches, and Mod Geometric. There are also five veneer choices of Blonde, Black, White, Gray Elm, and Mahogany. See the GIK website for details. The panels are also available in three sizes/shapes—Square (23 x 23 inches), Narrow (11.5 x 45.5), or Rectangle (23 x 45.5)—and three thicknesses: 2", 4", or 6".

I was sent a pair of the rectangular panels in Blonde Mod-Geometric with red fabric. At Glenn’s suggestion I placed them at the front of my room, behind monitors in my mix position in place of two of my 244 bass traps. To not lose the control of the bass trapping, I placed those panels along the bottom of my wall in a horizontal position.

The effect? My room was brighter... visually, that is, since all of my other panels are coffee brown. The new panels looked great, especially since red and wood are the accent colors in my room. (Props to my wife, who’s an interior decorator.)

Sonically I was not expecting a huge change, since my room has been GIK treated already, but I was pleasantly surprised to hear a subtle but significant difference. Up until now, all of my panels were essentially of the absorption variety. The Impressions’ veneer fascia helped to liven up my mix position ever so slightly and add more life and definition to the high end—not so much a brightness as a gentle controlled liveliness.

Bottom line, I plan on adding two more of these panels in the not-so-distant future to my first reflection points, and then repurposing my older 242 panels into a ceiling cloud. All of this will be with Glenn and GIK’s advice, which is a great place to remind you that before you blindly start buying and tossing up treatments, you should contact the folks at GIK. Give them some room dimensions, email them some pics, and get their advice on product choice and placement.

Before you buy your next new compressor or EQ, do yourself a favor and “Treat your room!” If not, buying all that gear and not being able to hear the results properly will be kind of, well... stupid. ➡