

HK AUDIO ELEMENTS SMART BASE

# System Advisory

The Elements system provides plenty of gain before feedback so it may be situated behind musicians, thereby rendering added monitors obsolete.

## DATA

**PRICE** 3.986 € (2 x E110 Sub AS, 2 x E835, 2 x EP2 speaker extension pole)

**FREQUENCY RANGE**  
Sub: 45–150 Hz, mid/high unit: 140–20.000 Hz

**SPEAKERS** Sub: 1 x 10" woofer, mid/high unit: 8 x 3.5" wide-range speakers

**POWER OUTPUT**  
2 x 600 W

**POWER HANDLING**  
Sub: 600 W, mid/high unit: 300 W

**PORTS** Sub: Line In (combo jack), Line Thru (XLR), 2 x Speakon Out, 2 x E-Connect (for mid/high line-source components)

**DIMENSIONS / WEIGHT**  
Sub: 30 x 48 x 46 cm, 18.5 kg; mid/high unit: 11 x 74.5 x 12 cm, 4.5 kg

**INFO** [www.hkaudio.com](http://www.hkaudio.com)

HK Audio's Elements, a flexibly configurable line-source PA, has been making waves for quite some time now. The manufacturer now offers preconfigured systems to make it easier for the buyer to choose. We tested Elements Smart Base in various configurations for you.

**W**ith the Elements Series, HK Audio offers a line-source PA that may be configured as needed. The benefits are plain for all to see: the throw pattern of a line array, a sleek and unobtrusive look and readily portable components.

**What's new about this concept** is that the manufacturer now offers different setups configured for typical applications, the aim being to provide guidance and help when shopping for the right system. This bench-test looks at Smart Base, a stereo line-source PA with one E110 Sub AS subwoofer and one Elements E835 line-source component on each side. The manufacturer also offers extension sets called Add-ons; one is the Top Add-on (two Elements E835s) and the other the Sub Add-on (two passive E110s) for €1,318 and €1,238, respectively. A speaker extension pole system or the contacts on the add-on mid/high unit provide the electrical and mechanical connections between the between two components.

#### ■ Outfit

The Elements E835 mid/high unit is made of a black aluminum column and features a sturdy perforated grille to protect the speakers. A pole adapter installed in the bottom panel serves as the universal coupler for the Elements series. This adapter system lets you mount the unit on top of the Elements E110 Sub AS bass unit, work with a speaker pole, or join it to another component (Top Add-on).

**The electrical connection** is built into this coupler so there is no need to plug in additional cords. This saves time and simplifies setup. The E835's light weight of just 4.5 kilograms also facilitates setup.

**The Elements E110 Sub AS bass** unit is made of sturdy wood and coated in black textured paint. It contains a 10» woofer and all the amp circuitry that drives the subwoofer and mid/high unit. The front was fitted with a stylish slotted grille to provide hardware protection for the subwoofer.

**The designers integrated** a carrying handle on top of the E110 for transport and a coupler for another subwoofer or line-source speakers. A coupler was also installed on the side. It is used when stacking multiple subwoofers on their sides. The Elements bass bin is also easy to carry at a weight of 18.5 kilograms.

#### ■ Hardware

As its type designation would suggest, the passive E835 mid/high unit is equipped with eight 3.5" wide-range speakers arrayed in a line. The E835 power handling's capacity is specified at 300 watts RMS, the nominal impedance is 8 ohms, and its horizontal beam-width angle is 70 degrees. The built-in crossover separates the signal at 140 Hz and frequency response ranges from 140 to 20,000 Hertz.

**The heart of the Smart Base system** is the E110 Sub AS subwoofer that houses a Class-D amplifier with 600 watts output for the sub, 600 watts for the mid/high unit, a limiter, a subsonic filter and

various controls. All ports and controls are located on the subwoofer's clearly ordered rear panel: the mains socket with the standard IEC connector, the signal input in form of a combo jack (XLR/ 1/4»), both balanced), an XLR port that routes out the input signal and two Speakon connectors for connecting another passive subwoofer (Sub Add-on) or mid/high units when a line-source column is placed on a separate stand (EF45).

**Controls include a power switch** and an auto standby switch that when flipped to On powers the amp down to standby, where it remains if it does not receive a signal for 180 minutes. The Sensitivity switch sets the input stage's gain to -10 dB or +4 dB. The Bass Gain knob adjusts the volume of the Elements subwoofer to match that of the mid/high units. Finally, there is a selector switch for a mid/high filter with an LED indicator. It serves to manually configure the filtering for the type of connected mid/high speaker. No adjustment is necessary when you connect a passive subwoofer.

#### ■ Practical application

We first put the standard Elements Smart Base setup to the test. A conventional console was connected for mixing purposes. Initial impressions were gained by playing back various reference CDs. The mixer's EQ settings were linear.



**Mid/high units are equipped with eight 3.5" wide-range speakers. Couplers are also on the sides of the subwoofers so two can be stacked sideways.**

## RATING

**HK AUDIO ELEMENTS  
SMART BASE +  
ADD-ON**  
Column-PA-system

- ⊕ Very compact and lightweight
- ⊕ No cords required within the system
- ⊕ Universally deployable and extensible
- ⊕ Good workmanship
- ⊕ Great sound
- ⊕ Extension options with add-on components

**The results are impressive:** The system sounds transparent and generates a lot of pressure up to its threshold. The built-in limiter does its job. Its intervention is indicated on the rear by a red LED. The tested system renders keyboards and drum sounds as well as electric piano and acoustic guitar with a clear sonic image, and excels at speech and vocals, especially.

**The system was extended** with add-on components for the next auditions. We soon found that these add-ons have a huge impact. With the second line-source component, the Elements PA projects a lot farther with even greater transparency, and the subwoofer delivers a far more assertive low-end punch.

**The standard system covers** a typical event with around 100 people well. Opt for the Sub Add-on when you want the music to rock harder or electronic sounds with a powerful low end; it will help address a somewhat larger audience. The Top Add-on is beneficial when the sound has to be thrown across greater distances. Addressing audiences of up to 300 people should not be a problem with the largest configuration.

### ■ Upshot

If you value lightweight equipment that sets up and tears down quickly and delivers good sound, try Elements Smart Base. It is universally deployable and perfect for entertainers, combos and DJs who always have to carry their own equipment, as well as for small bands, acoustic concerts, schools, town halls, clubs and piano bars. The system can be flexibly extended (hence the add-on concept) to easily cover larger events. Also, the bang-for-buck ratio is right, especially considering that the street price is around €500 lower than the €3,986 manufacturer's suggested list price.

Joachim Kaltenbacher **tw**



The various Elements Smart Base configuration levels: The Top Add-on (two added line modules with eight wide-range speakers each) and the largest configuration with the Sub Add-on (two more passive subwoofers)