

CERWIN VEGA CMX SERIES SPEAKER REVIEW AND THE CVHF-A18S SUBWOOFER

BASS ANYONE?

CERWIN-VEGA BASS THAT IS.

I have been a huge Cerwin-Vega fan from the 80's when I bought my first pair of VS-150 speakers. The first thing I noticed back then when I listen to these VS-150 speakers for the first time was the bigger, louder, more refined bass. You can imagine that I was very excited to see that Cerwin-Vega had released a few new lines of speakers. I was very curious to get my hands on the new CMX series speakers. I heard some really good things about these and wanted to hear them for myself. The day had come and the speakers arrived at my office. All speakers were packed in double boxes. The inside was nicely packed with foam to further protect the speakers during shipment. Now let the fun begin.

REVIEW NOTES AND TESTING EQUIPMENT

I have received the following speakers for this review.

1. CMX-210 Powered Tower Speakers

- *Dual 10" side firing 4-way
- *250 Watts
- *Tweeter-1" High Resolution Soft Dome
- *Midrange-Single 6.5" Accent Drivers
- *Woofers-Dual 6.5" Magnum Drivers
- *Subwoofer-Dual 10" Magnum Drivers



2. CMX-212 Powered Tower Speakers

- *Dual 12" side firing 4-way
- *250 Watts
- *Tweeter-1" High Resolution Soft Dome
- *Midrange-Dual 6.5" Accent Drivers
- *Woofers-Dual 8" Magnum Drivers
- *Subwoofer-Dual 12" Magnum Drivers

3. CMX-25c Center Channel Speaker

- *Dual 5" 2-way speaker
- *Tweeter-1" High Resolution Soft Dome
- *Woofers-Dual 5" Accent Drivers

4. CMX-12s Powered Subwoofer

- *12" Magnum Driver
- *300W

5. CVHF-A18S Powered Subwoofer

- *18" Active Subwoofer
- *700W

Testing Equipment:

1. Marantz SR-7005 Receiver
2. Marantz UD-5005 Multi Player

MUSIC LISTENING REVIEW

Personally I'm a big fan of the rock music genre especially the music from the 70's and 80's so I was anxious to hear how these speakers stack up with my still pretty good rock capable VS-150 speakers. The CMX speakers have a press board black housing which is pretty appealing for any room. I'm sure that some of you will have to clear the purchase with your wife first so the esthetics should not stand in your way. All the powered CMX speaker also have a Cerwin-Vega speaker logo which lights up white when the speakers are active and dims down to red when the speakers are in standby mode. For this review I wanted to keep it very simple. No fancy gadgets or measuring tools. Just my ears and some good old music I know very well. First off I started just with the CMX-210 speakers and listened to some known rock music. Immediately I had to turn down the bass settings on my receiver about half way as these CMX-210 speakers put out quite a punch. The built in amps are doing a great job driving these speakers so you don't have to worry if your amp has enough power to drive these towers. I then listened to multiple CDs from my collection. First I loaded the latest John Waite CD and listened to the second song "Devil" as it has a great bass. The speakers provided me with a great listening experience. Not only was the bass nice and defined but also John's voice was very clear and right in front of you. I continued listening to other CDs from my collection and the sound was always very nice, clear, and very crisp which is what you can expect from speakers with this many drivers. I particularly enjoyed hearing the drums in any of the music selected as I could clearly hear each of the drums being engaged. I also recognized that I was hearing sounds from these familiar songs that I have never noticed before. When comparing these speakers to my old VS-150 speakers, the CMX-210 clearly provided more refined and much clearer, crisper sound.



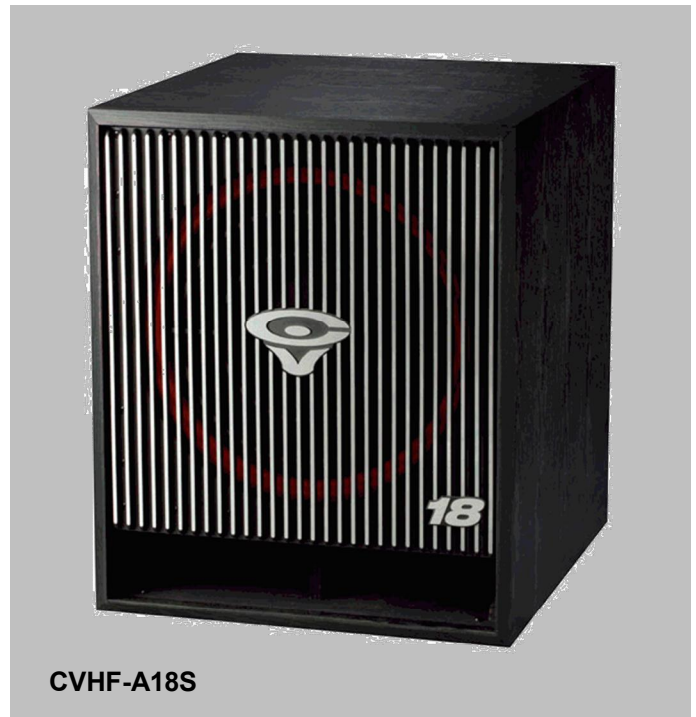


CMX12S

MOVIES LISTENING REVIEW

I then connected the CMX-6c Center Channel and CMX-12s Sub and started listening to some movie clips. All the movies sounded very clear, with very dynamic bass response. The soundstage was very wide, engaging, and very clear. I never had trouble understanding the dialog. Overall I was very pleased with the performance. I then swapped the CXM-210 speakers for the CMX-212 speakers which have two midrange 6.5" drivers and two 8" woofer drivers. The CMX- 212 also has 12" subwoofers vs. 10" in the CMX-210. Therefore the CMX-212 put out little more punch but the overall sound was very similar to the CMX-210. The CMX-212 is a very large speaker so I think these are more suited for a very spacious room or for an installation where you can hide these in the wall for example. The CMX-210 is much more appealing for a normal home theater application and sounds truly great. The last piece of puzzle was to add the CVHF-A18s instead of the CMX-12s and see what difference this would make to the overall experience.

The CVHF-A18s adds some extra punch and makes it absolutely certain that your chairs will shake. But again this is a very large sub so unless you can hide it in the wall or you have a very spacious room I think that the CMX-12s sub is more than sufficient for an average home theater room. However the CVHF-A18s sub offers some additional features and connection options that you might find useful. Another note I'd like to add is that even though the CMX-210 and the CMX-212 towers are powered they don't have any LFE input. You only have the option of connecting the speaker wires to these towers. The built-in amp will do its job automatically. The only two knobs on the back of these towers are 1. Turn on-off-or auto, and 2. Three different base settings: 0, +3, and Vega Bass. The Vega Bass Rocks!



CVHF-A18S

CONCLUSION

So far my favorite setup is the CMX-210, CXM-12s, and the CMX-25c. I compared this setup to much more expensive speakers like Polk Audio, Atlantic Technology, Definitive technology and others, and could not really hear much of a difference to justify buying these more expensive speakers from other brands. These CMX speakers make big, rocking, but refined and focused sound that was consistently thrilling, involving, and best of all, lots of fun for music and movies. The bipolar approach has resulted in nothing less than the best speaker I've heard yet from Cerwin-Vega! If you have a dedicated home theater room and have the space, I would definitely recommend going with the CMX-212, CMX-45c, and the CVHF-A18c sub for your setup. But for a regular home theater setup where also the esthetics matter because of the size of the larger CMX-212 and the CVHF-A18s, I'm sure you will be completely happy with my favorite CMX-210, CXM-12s, and the CMX-25c setup.

