

Akai AMX10

Akai are much better known for their samplers and hard disk recorders. So what are they doing making a powered mixer? Bill Helidoniotis finds out.

Akai have entered the powered mixer market with the release of the AMX10 (and AMX6) Ultra Light series. This powered mixer is compact, and, unlike some other powered mixers of this kind, very light, weighing in at 7.6kg. Among its other features, this unit is contained within a plastic casing, has colour coded controls, graphic equaliser, stereo inputs and a built-in digital effects unit.



When the front protective cover of the unit is released, we see that Akai has gone to considerable lengths to make sure this unit is user friendly. Channels one through to six have two vertical columns of colour coded control knobs found in each channel – three bands of EQ (centred at 12kHz, 1.2kHz and 80Hz respectively), a level control, a post fade effects send, monitor send and pan pot. There's separate mic/line inputs with +48v phantom power available through a separate On/Off switch. Also the mic/line inputs (XLR and 6.5mm jack) can be used simultaneously on the one channel, meaning you can connect a microphone and an instrument to the one channel – although with only the one level control between them, I'm not sure how useful that would be.

Channels 7/8 and 9/10 are line input channels with no dedicated EQ available or pan control, otherwise they're identical to channels one through six. By setting the Mode switch to 'Main To Amp 1/Monitor To Amp2' you're able to send the left channel to the main speakers and the right channel to the monitors. When the setting is in Stereo then the output signals are also in stereo.

Above the stereo channels you'll find the internal digital effects control panel. There are 16 different effects selections ranging from 'Long Delay' to 'Small Hall' with a green LED demonstrating that the effects are firing on all

cylinders. If you have a favourite outboard effects box then you can bypass the internal unit and use the AMX's aux out.

Elsewhere you'll find Tape In (CD line, RCA jack), Tape Out (RCA jack) I/O with a level control for the input. You may use the main graphic EQ on the Tape In/Out or alternatively you can assign the controls of Channels 7/8 or 9/10 to the Tape In.

There are two graphic equalisers on offer. This first shapes the front of house sound, while the second is intended for use with the monitors. Both are seven-band (125Hz, 250Hz, 500Hz, 1kHz, 2kHz, 4kHz and 8kHz) with 12dB of cut/boost, and have peak level indicators.

The rear of the unit contains the power switch and the connections for the speakers (on phone jack). There are a variety of ways in which the speaker system can be set up depending on your situation. You can go for the stereo or mono FOH options, or the mono FOH/monitor combination. There's a bridge mode on the two amps to give you more oomph if you're only in need of a mono FOH set-up.

The Akai AMX10 is priced and marketed at the solo artist/small band working in smaller sized rooms – and the amplification power on offer is more than adequate in this context. Equally the AMX10 would be just as at home installed in a hall, conference room, or as a neat portable solution to a school's PA needs.

The audio design isn't flawless and at this price you wouldn't expect it to be. There are signal to noise, and crosstalk issues that you may not encounter on pricier units. A Channel On/Off or Mute switch would have alleviated some of the noise problems and probably should have been considered. I love the weight of the AMX10, it's light enough to be a one arm lift for even the frailest of performers. Furthermore, there's certainly enough flexibility and features to make the AMX10 an all-round performer in any small installation. Overall, the AMX10 is a solid unit, both in its construction and performance and, indeed, a solid first effort for Akai into the live equipment arena.



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Price

• AMX10: \$1499; AMX6: \$1249