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## Amphion One15 and Two15

by Paul Vnuk Jr.

In March 2015 we took our first look at speakers from the Finnish manufacturer Amphion. While the company had been crafting home hi-fi speakers since 1998, in 2015 Amphion made the jump to the pro studio world. To say these monitors have taken the recording community by storm is a colossal understatement; for proof, check out the Amphion thread on GearsLutz, 150 pages long and still growing, where many users are downright evangelical in their zeal for this new line.

I will admit that I'm a fan. After my initial One18 review, I purchased a pair, along with Amphion's Amp100 power amp, and have been mixing on them for over a year now. In March 2016 I compared and contrasted the larger flagship Two18, and in July, Mike Metlay got his hands and ears on a pair of the One12 speakers, the baby of the line. His summation was that he was "hearing music and not the speakers!" Now it's time to wrap up our look at the current Amphion studio line (not counting the sets), as we check out both the One15 and the Two15.

### Amphion by the numbers

The numbers in the names of Amphion speakers refer to the woofer size in centimeters. The One12 features a 4.5" aluminum woofer in a 10.2" x 5.2" x 8.7" cabinet. On the other end of the scale, the One18 has a 6.5" woofer in a 15" x 7.5" x 12.4" enclosure. In between those is the One15, with a 5.25" aluminum woofer in a 12.44" x 6.30" x 10.33" cabinet. All models in the line share the same 1" Titanium tweeter.



The Amphion speakers' MDF cabinets have no bass ports or venting holes for air to escape. Instead, they use an aluminum passive radiator located on the rear of the cabinet for low-end dispersion. This radiator is the same diameter as, and looks similar to, the low-frequency driver on the front. It is located on the same plane as the driver and moves perfectly in tandem to disperse and control low end.

The tweeter is set back into a large white Corian waveguide, and I mean "set back" literally. It is recessed well back into the cabinet, so it's on the same plane as the bass driver. This yields tight time alignment between the two drivers, whose sounds will hit your ear at the same time as if from a single point source. This leads to increased accuracy and focus, producing a tight phantom center image. The large white waveguide also yields a very wide sweet spot.

All of the models in the line feature a mechanical crossover—as opposed to an electronic or digital DSP crossover—with a frequency setting of 1600 Hz. The One15 has a frequency range of 49 Hz to 20 kHz.

Like all Amphion models, the One15 is passive; you must purchase an external power amp and traditional speaker cables. Amphion offers three models of its own, well matched to the speakers. The Amp100 and Amp500, both stereo rack units, were reviewed in March 2015 and March 2016 respectively. There is also an Amp100 mono block amp, reviewed July 2016, which will work with models up to the One18. Note that both Two series models, which we will look at below, need the extra power of the Amp500.

Amphion also offers its own speaker cables, made from the same wiring used inside the speakers. While the One18 and up make use of Argento 3-way binding post connectors, the One15, like the One12, uses more traditional binding posts.

### One15 in use

Since Mike Metlay stole the One12 review from me [*Aw. Too bad, so sad—MM*] and I never saw how "big" those were in person, my first thought for the One15 was, "Aren't these little guys cute!" They are significantly smaller than the One18. The tweeter and waveguide are the same size in the One15 and One18; as a result, there is less open front-face surface area on the One15, which contributes to its natural focus. (See the comparison photo.)

The One15 largely retains the clear, honest sound of the highs and upper mids as the One18, but the bass is tighter and punchier. I think the bass kicks a bit more on the One15 over its big brother, which is fuller and more diffuse in comparison.

These speakers also retain the deceptive sound-stage width of the One18. It's not quite as wide as the One18, but if you sit in the sweet spot, close your eyes, hold out your arms to try and point at where you think the monitors are, and then open your eyes, you will most likely be pointing at much wider angles than where the speakers really are!

As was the case with the One12, the One15 proves handily that size does not matter where great audio is concerned.



## Two15

The Amphion Two15, like the Two18, is exactly the same width and depth as the corresponding One model, but taller. It sports a second bass driver with matching rear radiator on the top. The Two18 is 21.65" tall and the Two15 is 20.08" tall. Everything else described above remains the same in regard to construction, crossover point, the waveguide, and radiator design. As mentioned above, the Two15 needs a 500 watt amp minimum, such as Amphion's Amp500. Its frequency response is 44 Hz to 20 kHz.

Sonically the Two15 is again very tight in the lows, and of course fuller than the One15 and One18 for the obvious reason that it has two drivers. The low end of the Two15 is laser focused and thumps you square in the chest like a fist.

While its highs are almost an exact match to all of the other models in the line, the Two15 comes across as more even and balanced across the board, even a tad thicker. In my estimation, this is due to the fact that usually we have the tweeters of our monitors at ear height and it's what we focus on. Since there are two mid/bass drivers at equal distances above and below the tweeter on the Two15, that low/mid push hits your ears in a more balanced way and sounds more coherent and connected.

Acoustically the overall sound gels together quite nicely.

As with the other Amphions, there is nothing fatiguing in the highs, and the Two15 is full and pleasant in a nice unhyped way. In use it is slightly more punchy than the One18, with a farther-reaching bass presence. Also note that the upper bass/low mids sound fantastic and full on sources like toms and upright bass. This punch and tightness is also attributable to the Amp500 vs. the more dimensional high end of the Amp100 on the One18.

### Which one do I choose?

Now that I have reviewed both 15 models and both 18 models, the question is: which is a better choice? Let me try to put the differences into practical terms...

Simply put, the One15 is a smaller, tighter version of the One18. It is perfect for smaller spaces and up-close mixing, with great depth and punch that is retained even at low listening levels. In contrast, the One18 / Amp100 combo is the more airy, 3D, "you are there" sound of the line.

From there, it's an easy descriptive step to the Two18. I would describe it as having double the goodness of the One18, but with more upper mid weight, volume, and power.

To my ears, the Two15 may be the dark-horse sleeper of the Amphion line.

Without question, it is the most unique-sounding of the family. It is more grounded, forward, and centered, with a punchy palpable weight. I am glad that I heard and settled on the One18 first; otherwise I would be having a decisionmaking crisis, choosing between the One18 and the Two15!

In my control room's two-monitor setup, next to my Focal Trio6 Be monitors (which are huge, sublike, and can really rattle the room), I like having the One18 and its natural dimensionality as a balance; it's a very good choice for me as a second monitor for mixing. If I was going to go with a single set of monitors for my room, I am pretty sure I would go with a pair of Two15 speakers and an Amp500.

Hopefully these general guidelines can help you start to narrow down the wealth of choices offered by the Amphion line. I found the One15 and Two15 intriguing alternatives to their larger cousins, and all four speakers share the delightfully detailed realism that is the hallmark of Amphion speakers. Choose a pair based on your room and your needs, and you'll be glad you did. ☺

**Prices:** One15, \$2000/pair; Two15, \$4000/pair

**More from:** Amphion, [www.amphion.fi](http://www.amphion.fi)