

Xvive T9/U4T9 IEM system

BUILDING on the success of its U4 In-Ear Monitor Wireless System, Xvive launches its own in-ear monitors. The T9 In-Ear Monitors have been designed by top IEM engineers in the USA to offer customers pro-level audio quality — previously only available from custom in-ears. Bundled with Xvive’s U4, the new U4T9 set includes the U4, T9 in-ears, and a CU4 carry case for unbeatable monitoring value for live performance and studio applications. Nick Jennison reviews.

The days of loud backlines and unprotected ears on stage are past. While some may lament this and pine for the days when Marshall stacks and tinnitus were omnipresent, I most certainly don’t. In the last few years, I’ve had the dubious pleasure of “civi-

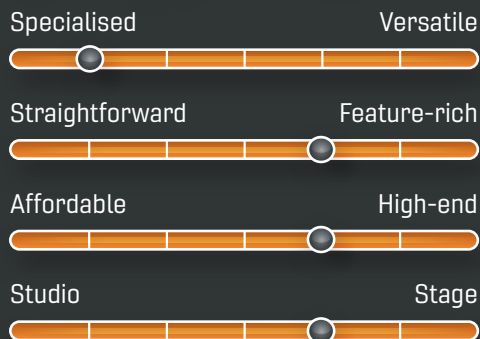
lising” a loud heavy metal band. By this, I mean converting them from indecently loud 5150s, having to watch for inaudible hi-hat counts and only a dim awareness of what was happening on the other side of the stage, to the clarity, precision and convenience of IEMs. After we got over the initial shock of how “loose” we were playing, we quickly became a tighter, more powerful-sounding live unit, with the added benefit that we were no longer beholden to wedge monitors and hired backline that may or may not work.

There are three components to a good IEM setup. The first is the mix. In many cases, this will be out of your control, but assuming this is good, the next two elements are the earpieces themselves and the device you use to deliver the mix to them - usually a ▶



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The Breakdown



For fans of

- » Hearing yourself
- » Hearing your bandmates
- » Hearing into old age

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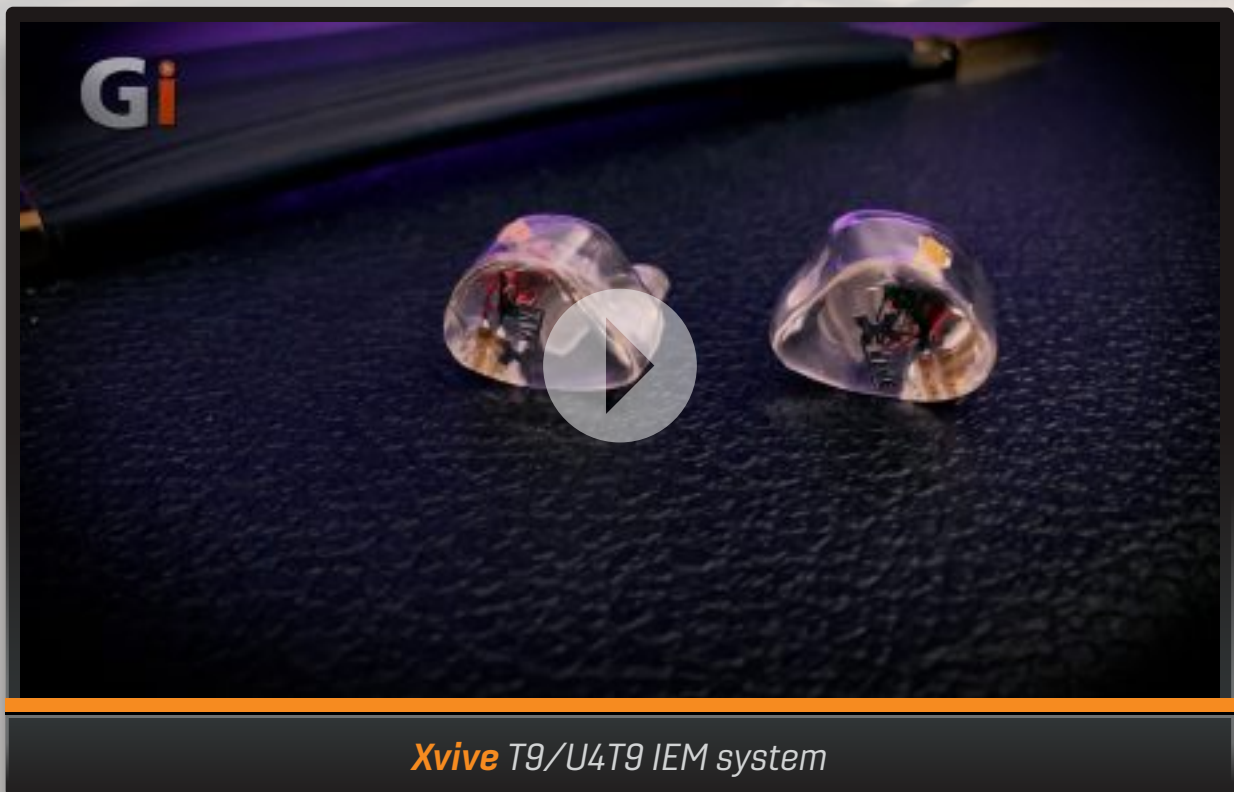
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wireless system of some kind. I've been a fan of Xvive's U4 system for some time now, thanks to its simplicity, ruggedness, and reliability. This system is now available as a bundle that includes their new T9 earbuds.

When worn, these universal-fit earbuds look very much like a custom moulded set, with clear plastic housings showing the inner workings and a long "nozzle" that places the replaceable tip deep within the ear canal - noticeably longer than the ones found on universal-fit designs from

the big brands. This not only improves isolation, meaning you don't have to crank the volume as loud to hear yourself, but it also reduces the likelihood that the buds will slip out of your ear mid-performance. This is an inconvenience for a guitar player, but if it happens to a drummer who's listening to a click track, it can derail an entire performance. It's also something that Matt (the drummer in the aforementioned heavy metal band) wrestles with, and he was understandably overjoyed at how securely the T9 buds stayed in his ears.





Sonically, the T9 earbuds are leagues ahead of the most common universal-fit IEMs (which are, quite frankly, dreadful). They employ a dual driver design with a massive (for an IEM) woofer that produces rich and extended bass frequencies that “feel” powerful, and the micro-tweeter handles the high-end extension for crisp vocals, airy cymbals and clear articulation on guitars - particularly with ambient effects like reverb and delay, which are noticeably easier to pick out in a mix when compared to the “industry standard” buds.

The U4 system is very compact and elegant, with a “bug” style transmitter that connects directly to your mixer and a small bodypack receiver. Both are extremely rugged and have controls for volume channel selection, and that’s it - and frankly, that’s all you need! Both are rechargeable via USB, meaning there’s no need to keep buying batteries, and XVive has even included a handy USB splitter cable, meaning you can charge both units from a single port. ▶



Both the T9 and U4 come with very robust hard cases that will protect them in transit, and there's plenty of room in the U4 case to store a set of T9 IEMs if you'd like to condense your setup further. In fact, it's potentially the most compact complete IEM system I've ever come across - short of just carrying everything loose (NB: do not do this - you'll break them, and you'll be sad).

IEMs are a must for any modern musician, and the Xvive U4T9 bundle is the perfect package for getting into the world of IEMs without breaking the bank or having to deal with complex setup and configuration. The T9 buds sound fantastic, and the whole system just works - and who could ask for more than that?

