



The

Broadcasters' Desktop Resource

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... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

The Cheap Channel

A Great Set of Earbuds For Under \$10



By Dana Puopolo

[July 2012] We continue with another “find” by Dana: a set of great-sounding earbuds that will not break your budget.

Recently ([The BDR: 6/21/12](#)), I reviewed a pair of Monoprice headphones. Frankly, they sounded so good and represent such a good value that I asked myself whether Monoprice might have a similar “jewel in the rough” in the IEM (In-Ear Monitor – or earbud) department.

The answer is yes.

MONOPRICE 8320

I found my answer by Googling “Monoprice earbuds,” and located their [Monoprice 8320 IEMs](#).



The Monoprice 8320

These units sell for around \$9.00, shipped, and boy do they sound good! And when I say good, I mean good compared to *any other* IEMs I have heard.

The 8320s are not perfect, but they are much better than many of the \$50 to \$100 IEMs and much better than any of the other IEMs under \$20. If you want an even better price, get your friends together and [buy in quantity from Monoprice itself](#).

FIRST LOOK

When the 8320s arrived, I noticed they simply came packed in a bag with no instructions and but one size of ear tips.

However, when I put them on, the first thing I noticed was their clarity. They had no deep bass (despite their larger than normal drivers), but from 100 Hz on up they shine.

I have a saying: “Get the midrange right and the rest falls into place.” These get the midrange right - in spades. They are no slouch in the high-end department either.

LOOKING FOR THE BASS

Breaking them in for about 20 hours removes some of their “forwardness” which initially put me off a bit. There still was no great deep bass, but the good news is they take EQ well, so you can equalize some bass back in without changing the other registers.

Additionally, I decided to change the ear tips. A really nice set was [found on Amazon.com](#). I would strongly recommend that if you buy these Monoprice IEMs you replace their ear tips.



These replacement ear tips made the difference

Now there is plenty of good bass.

EVALUATING AUDIO

Once you have tried them, these will be the IEMs that you should/will use to evaluate your audio processing. They are absolutely unforgiving!

For example, with these 8320s you will clearly hear the actions of each band in your multiband processor. And you will hear things in the music that you likely have not heard before (especially when listening to MP3s).

In comparison to my Klipsch S4s (my reference IEMs), the Klipsch has more deep bass and

sounds a lot more “neutral” than the 8320s. There is nothing polite nor neutral about these Monoprice IEMs – they grab you and force you to listen to the all details in the music.

Both IEMs image especially well too.

EVALUATING AUDIO

Which IEM do I prefer? Both. They both have distinctly different characteristics and they both have their positives and negatives.

If you really press me, though, I will admit that I prefer the Monoprice on my tubed headphone amplifier and the Klipsch on my Class A solid-state one. The tubes seem to round off (you might say “mellow”) the edges on the Monoprice. When I run the 8320s with the solid-state amplifier, it begins to sound just a bit too sterile – maybe it was giving a bit too much clarity?

On the other hand, running the Klipschs on the solid state amp livens them up a bit.

The bottom line with the Monoprice 8320s is this: At around \$9 shipped, just buy a pair. If you do not like them, go, give them to a friend – they will most likely love them.

I highly recommend these inexpensive jewels.

Want some help in finding a bargain? Ask Dana Puopolo. The BDR's Chief Bargain Hunter is also the Chief Engineer at WURD in Philadelphia, PA. His email is: dpuopolo@usa.net

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