



Supernait 3

Naim evolution continues with best-ever integrated



Cut the cord

Sennheiser's wire-free in-ear with hi-res tech



Hi-Fi Choice

PASSION FOR SOUND

Issue No. 456

December 2019

Vinyl maestro

Rega's sensational Planar 10 package with Apheta 3 cartridge

DEALER VISIT

Audio upcycle

Mixing old and new kit for system synergy



38

PRODUCTS ON TEST:

Bowers & Wilkins, Chord, Devialet, Gekko, KEF, Sonos & Spondor

THE KNOWLEDGE

Six next-step turntables and our guide to buying used records



GROUP TEST

Smart stereo

Six wireless speaker setups that deliver true hi-fi sound



Digital harmony

Leema's do-it-all CD and network audio player

9 770955 111120
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US\$15.00
12
£4.99



KEF LSX **£1,000**

Will being the only setup that comes as a pair give KEF's keenly priced cubes a head start?

DETAILS

PRODUCT

KEF LSX

ORIGIN

UK/China

TYPE

Active loudspeaker system with wireless streaming

WEIGHT

3.6kg (master)
3.5kg (slave)

DIMENSIONS

(WxHxD)
155 x 240 x 180mm

FEATURES

- Quoted power output: 2x 100W
- Uni-Q driver array: 19mm aluminium tweeter with 115mm magnesium/aluminium mid/bass driver
- Audio inputs: 1x optical; 1x 3.5mm jack
- Streaming: AirPlay 2; aptX Bluetooth; Spotify Connect and Tidal

DISTRIBUTOR

GP Acoustics Ltd.

TELEPHONE
01622 672261

WEBSITE
uk.kef.com

KEF describes the LSX thus: "The convenience and connectivity of wireless meets the emotion and

detail of true high-resolution stereo from a compact system designed to fit almost anywhere". In this respect, it's right up there with the Devialet Reactors and only a little way behind the tiny B&Ws, all three leaving the larger doubled-up single-box offerings from Sonos, Bluesound and Harman Kardon looking a little clumsy.

AirPlay 2, Spotify Connect and Tidal are all built in and you can stream directly from a NAS drive or computer via DLNA. The LSX can handle hi-res files all the way up to 24-bit/192kHz but the simplest and speediest way to stream is using aptX Bluetooth. KEF's Control app allows you to tweak the system balance according to position, room environment and personal taste using the finely calibrated EQ settings. The speaker's advanced DSP algorithms also ensure accurate time alignment and phase coherence.

Amplification is purely Class D, the 115mm Uni-Q driver treated to 100W all told. This leaves room on the rear of the master speaker for optical Toslink and 3.5mm auxiliary inputs

just above the Ethernet sockets and USB port for firmware updates. There's even an RCA output for roping in a subwoofer if needed.

Sound quality

Mostly, it isn't. While the LSX doesn't have anything like the low-frequency muscle and extension of the Phantom Reactor, it can muster a great deal more weight than the B&W, bests the very capable Bluesound for speed and tunefulness and makes bass a fully integrated part of a very well balanced overall presentation rather than a spotlight feature. The compact KEFs possess an easy breathing precision, presence and punctuality that smacks of well-executed active engineering and seems to ground listening pleasure deeply in the music rather than fixating on hi-fi metrics.

The upshot is that, whether you're listening to a play on BBC iPlayer or streaming the *Righteous* jazz fusion of Stern and Lorber, everything sounds just that bit more natural and lucid. The speaker's ability to conjure a soundstage of almost palpable solidity with believable perspectives is pretty spectacular, too. Here, the timelessly evocative Simply Red track sounds

IN SIGHT

- 1 Optical input
- 2 Subwoofer output
- 3 Ethernet port
- 4 USB port



smooth and rich, Mick Hucknall's organic vocal hanging almost magically just in front of the plane of the speaker while the explosive arrival of the horn section and cymbals splashes fiercely into the room just as it should.

Here's another wireless speaker system that, rather like the Flex and Reactor, seems to have the happy knack of creating its own seductively pitch-perfect sonic universe. In this instance, it's one that majors on musical coherence rather than forensic detail resolution and Richter scale bass. The voicing, with its mildly warmed up balance, is clever and anchored by the solidity, organisation and ring of truth conferred by its active tech ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★

LIKE: Size, style and build; flexibility; terrific sound quality

VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★★

DISLIKE: Nothing of any real note

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★

WE SAY: An active wireless speaker system that looks and sounds special and won't break the bank

FEATURES

★★★★★

OVERALL

★★★★★