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REVIEW



Wharfedale's folded ribbon AMT tweeter delivers high treble. AMTs sound more detailed than domes

Tomor detailed than domes.

Downside! Edginess.
Found mostly in professional studio monitors, domes throw the lind at you but are not the smoothest sounding drive units on this planet. Reason is the dome "breaks up" — meaning it starts to misbehave — at high volume. I looked into all this some years ago for a loudspeaker design because the sound of a dome midrange appealed to me, but the published spees were unacceptable. Break-up problems were obvious. That was in the past. Wharfeddle use a modern 2in (Somm) soft fabric dome in the EVO 4.3 that you can see in our pics and its suffers no large peaks or dips, our measurements show — important for a smooth sound at high volume.

The other problem of a dome is that it only covers the mid-band; a bass and treble unit are needed to complement; in eaning the speaker must be a three-way design, adding considerably to build cost.

Wharfeddle have opped to use a small folded ribbon tweeter (Air Motion Transformer, or ANT) to extend response smoothly up to the human hearing limit of 20fetz. And for bass there are two Sin (130mm) Keydar cone drivers, loaded by a chamber with slot reflex port in the base.

chamber with slot reflex port in the

hase. In all that's four drive units instead of the usual two common in budget floorsanders. Quite to like up and as you'd expect with a sound different to the common. They are housed in a cabinet standing 875mm high, slightly lower than the usual I metre. Width is 210mm and depth 285mm but with terminals that exend its to 295mm. Bare wires or spade terminals will exceed this no further, but 4mm banana plugs will add to depth as

always. There are sturdy adjustable feet and bi-wire terminals with links for mono wiring.

SOUND QUALITY

Issed our Creek Evolution 100A amplifier connected with Chord Company Sparaure Reference cables to drive the 4.3x. A 48hr run-in prepped them. Sources were an Oppo BDP-205D Universal player to spire CDa swell as process hires from an AstelläKern AK-120 portable player connected by optical cable. Making it fully isolated. Connection of Oppo to Creek was through Chord Company Epic balanced cables. Willy replay came from our Timestep Evo modified Technics Villy replay came from our Timestep Evo modified Technic SL-1210 PH/2 turnable fitted with SME309 arm carrying an Audio Technica WH750 SH (Shibata) moving-mager carridge feeding an Icon Audio PS3 Mt2 valve phono stage. Spanning a rake of high dynamic range (uncompressed) CDs that Irely on to get a basic handle on 'digital' sound quality as most know it, showed the 4.3s gave a result much as my experience with domes and our measurements suggested. John Campbell, singing Down in the Hole, was thrown forward, some words, such as 'Bout (about) being almost lacerative. Reverbs were made obvious, as was their panning across the stage: it was all very wild. After a few tracks had passed by, featuring strong vocale surrounded by featuring strong vocal



The bottom face carries a port

Much the same with the Pink Pandher theme, where the tenor sax intro had a large magnifying glass placed on it, it seemed. Accompanying orchestral brass was sheemy and intensely detailed. Also vivid and gripping, right out in the room. The balance is a bright one, not in terms of high trable but forward midband. The 4.3s make others seem laid back. Strong bass was handled with aplomb. In our large room (6550cu ft) it was dry, light and clean. However, the 4.3s are purposed for smaller rooms where they will exploit room gain to give stronger baas, whilst avoiding bass boom. Much the same with the Pink Panthe



ivers highs.

The AMT tweeters were The AMT tweeters were little obvious unil complex highs appeared, for example from maracas where I got to hear just how sweet and internally detailed they are. The 4.3s have superb treble quality but the done does rather shade them. Studio style insight wasn't always so easy to take. Playing Fleetwood Mac's Rumours in hires (AMSA) Second Hard Mara wasn't always to take Playing

(24/96), Second Hand News was hard in quality: not a relaxing listen Yet the following track Dreams Yet the following track Dreams vas altogether more natural in balance. I got the impression I was hearing far into what is a very old analogue recording and picking up on intrinsic blemishes, as well as those of an intervening analogue-to-digital convertor. So the 4.3s are forensically insightful but this also means they can be rudely revealing rather than really rebuxing. Mid-range domes have wide dispersion and as a result there was a strong sense of air and space around the sound stage. This contributes to their forward nature, adding to the

Dome Alone



The mid-range dome of Wharfedale's 4.3 mini-floorstander stands out bringing unique sound finds Noel Keywood.

REVIEW

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REVIEW

overall milleu.

So on to LP and back to Second Hand News, this time from an original LP and a recent re-master. Both are all-analogue – no digital — and differences to our digital hi-res files were stark. Second Hand News was still a tad muddled as a mix, as I'd expect from a 1976 recording, but there was no hardness. Similarly, Dreams came across as natural and dynamic, and without muddle. Again, no hardness or glare. The aurally prominent mid-range dome was pulling apart the recordings with brusal ability and again I got to better understand with they are used in studios. This does make the Wharfedales more critical of recording quality than most. Give 'em something good and they tell you so; give 'em something bad and your crige.

Running through our collection

give 'em someu....g cringe. Running through our collectic of high quality review LPs was all but a different experience from playing CD or hi-res. With no digital anywhere in, for example. Neil Young's After the Goldrush is master, nor in the amazing Big Bi nor in the amazing Big Band cular LP that is a recently



Lawrence Orchestra, the Evo 4.3's mid-band revelational abilities made for a riveting listen. Nell Young's plaintive vocal at the start of After the Goldrush was set out in a nicely poen space before me, vivid beyond any previous experience. No sign of hardness, because no dodg-volgital in the way. But the close-milked guitar strings had no sharp edge, the AMT towester providing an easy rendition. With the Syd Lawrence orchestra playing Sing Sing saxophones and trumpets pushed forward, whilst the fast drum runs were well defined but in dry balance rather than prominent, something a smaller room would strengthen. Spinning 21.5 glorious LP of Mozart violin concertos, played by the Trondheim soloists, almost chalged

Marianne I norsen backed by the Trondheim solbists, almost changed it all again. Thorsen's wonderful bow work was thrown at me and there was more shimmer than from our Martin Logan ESL-X reference electrostatic loudspeakers, but at the same time the sense of insight

and revelation locked me onto her wonderful ability. With this LP I also got to better appreciate the AMT tweeter. Whiles strings were strongly lit and forward, there was no sharpness in their rasp. Intense high frequency detail was there, exquisitely wrought but easy on the

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION
Wharfedales Evo 4.3s are very
distinctive in presentational method.
Their strongly projective midrange
dome has a dominating presence
that makes for immediate drama in
terms of high intelligibility. Vocalists
are thrown at you, saxophones seem
2ft away (OK, 609,6 mm then).
Together with a spacious sound
stage, this makes for aural drama.
Dodgy recordings have faults brutally
revealed and this intix always so
pleasant. However, fed high quality
source material the 4.3s will bring
music at you life few others and by
doing so are literally "impressive".
Worth hearing for a sound that few
others offer.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

MEASURED PERFORMANU
Out Thid-ceture analysis of pin noise
shows a broadly flat characteristic from
the EVO 4.3, albeit with small plateau lift
of the doen orinizing unit flat works
from 1.3kHz to 4.3kHz Wharfedleis state
- seen in our impedance analysis as
dips at the crossover points. The doen
midrange output will be subjectively
obvious as a forward and detailed sound
with projection. However, upon troble
from the AMT folded ribbon toverter
falls wavry grethy. 2 28B at 16kHz as
there will be none of the sharpness that
remplassise thip throle imparts.
Bellow 800Hz this analysis, and
continue using aged sine wave impulses,
show output falling avery grathy to
compensate for ner wall enhancement.

a typical overdampod response.

compensate for rear wall nemocrature — a typical over-damped response. The EVO 4.3 is designed to be used against a rear wall in small to medium room (18t log max) where lower bass will be enhanced by from gain' (resonant room modes). Low bass is supplemented by the floor port that peaks at 22th (red trace) to give deep hease errors her?

Watts or more vouid suit for high volume in a medium sued room. Impedence measured 6.6 Others with pink noise, and the impedence curve clearly shoves sharp port uning (acoustid damping) as a marve de at 22Hz with residual peaks celture side. Baised upper mitheant output will give a bright and forward sound. Bass has been tailword or our close to a rear wall, in a medium sized room. Then the over damper dropmers will deliver light bass in good overall balance. NK

FREQUENCY RESPONSE





WHARFEDALE EVO 4.3 £999 OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT Dramatic studio monitor sound that throws the mus out – warts 'an all. Worth hearing; unique sound.

AGAINST - mild treble - glare with bad digital