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AUDIO-Chefredakteur

Peter's Ear has The Last Word

When we test hi-fi components, we look for a conversation with the sales team, the manufacturer or with the Developer. It is extremely helpful to learn what the thought was when developing or tuning a component. It is especially nice when the developer can attend a listening test. Unfortunately, this is not always possible, because the distances are often long.

Nevertheless, Peter Comeau from IAG set off to present us with his latest work, Wharfedale Elysian 4. Peter Comeau is Director of Acoustic Design for the brands Audiolab, Castle, Mission, Wharfedale and Quad. We had a whole day to talk about loudspeaker development and listening tests.

I found his creed particularly interest-

-ing, in that he makes the final vote with his ears. Of course there is measurement. But he says that measurement graphs are one thing, good sound is something else. During our listening session, he gave the tip to push the heavy Elysians a little towards the wall, because he always tunes the speakers so that they sound good near the wall. Reason: Hardly anyone has so much space in their living room that they could set up the speakers as freely as in our listening room.

We experiment with the position of each box, but I liked this realistic approach. We moved and moved until the perfect position was finally found. How the Wharfedale Elysian 4 played and how well Peter Comeau's coordination with the ears works can be read in our detailed test starting on page 24.



A. Eichelsdörfer

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MEHR KLANGFASZINATION

HEROIC SAGA

Check out these pictures and expect high-end. Wrong: The Wharfedale Elysian 4 is affordable and enchanting.

The big surprise.

■ Von Andreas Günther

A young man approaches a stone with a sword in it. Nobody can pull it out, only he, the chosen one. Who can that be? The most powerful knights have tried, no one could pull the sword from the stone. There comes such a youngster and he succeeds as if it were the simplest thing in the world.

This is exactly how Wharfedale solved the big riddle: How to bring the magic of high-end into an even more affordable price range? Elysian is the magic word.

Mastermind Peter Comeau

brought this loudspeaker to us personally. He is what you call an “old hand”. Already over 60 but not gaining a pound. An ascetic who could still run a marathon today and a charismatic personality. The air in our conference room changed immediately as this professional spoke about the secrets of good sound. These were not empty words.

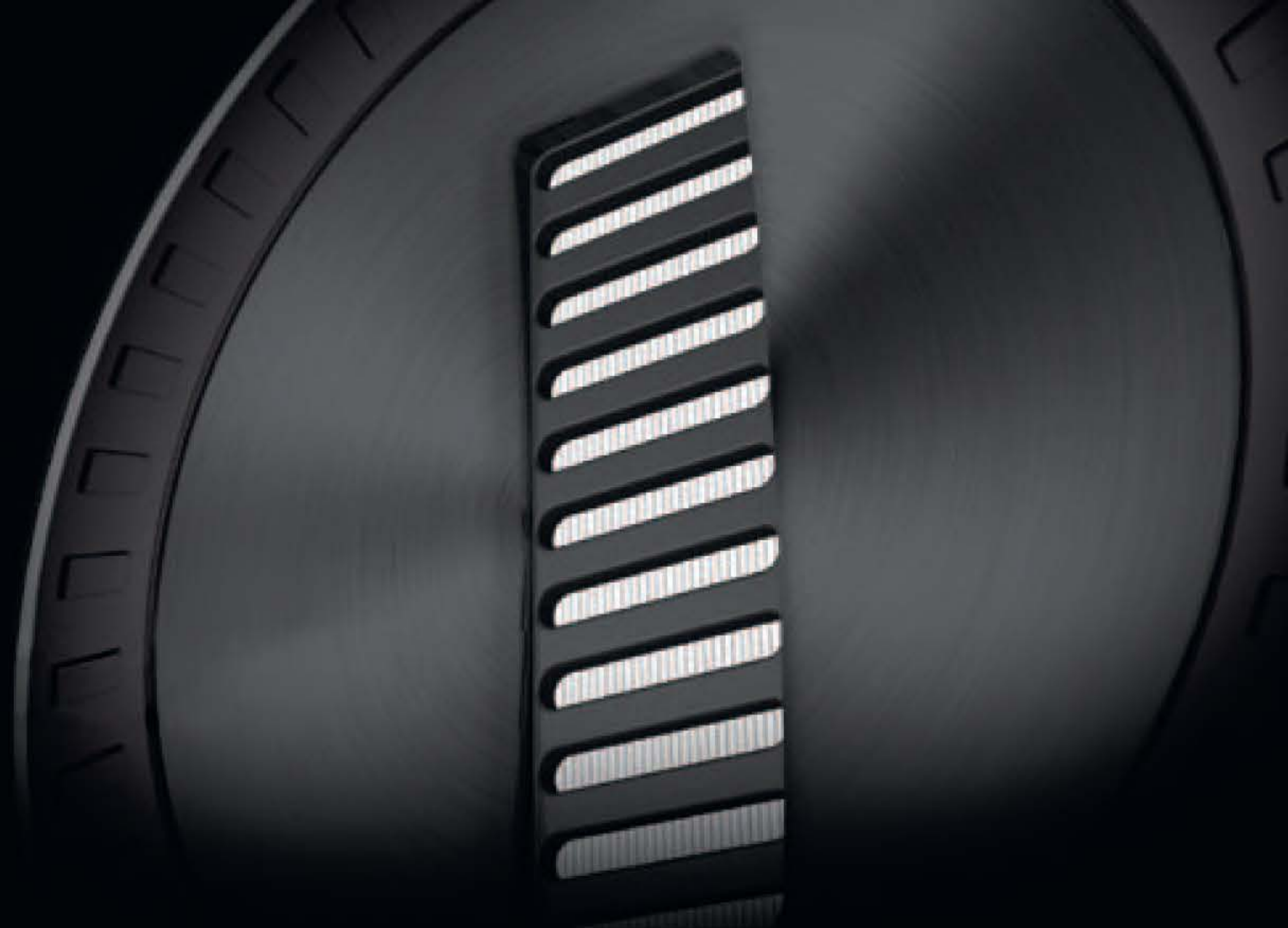
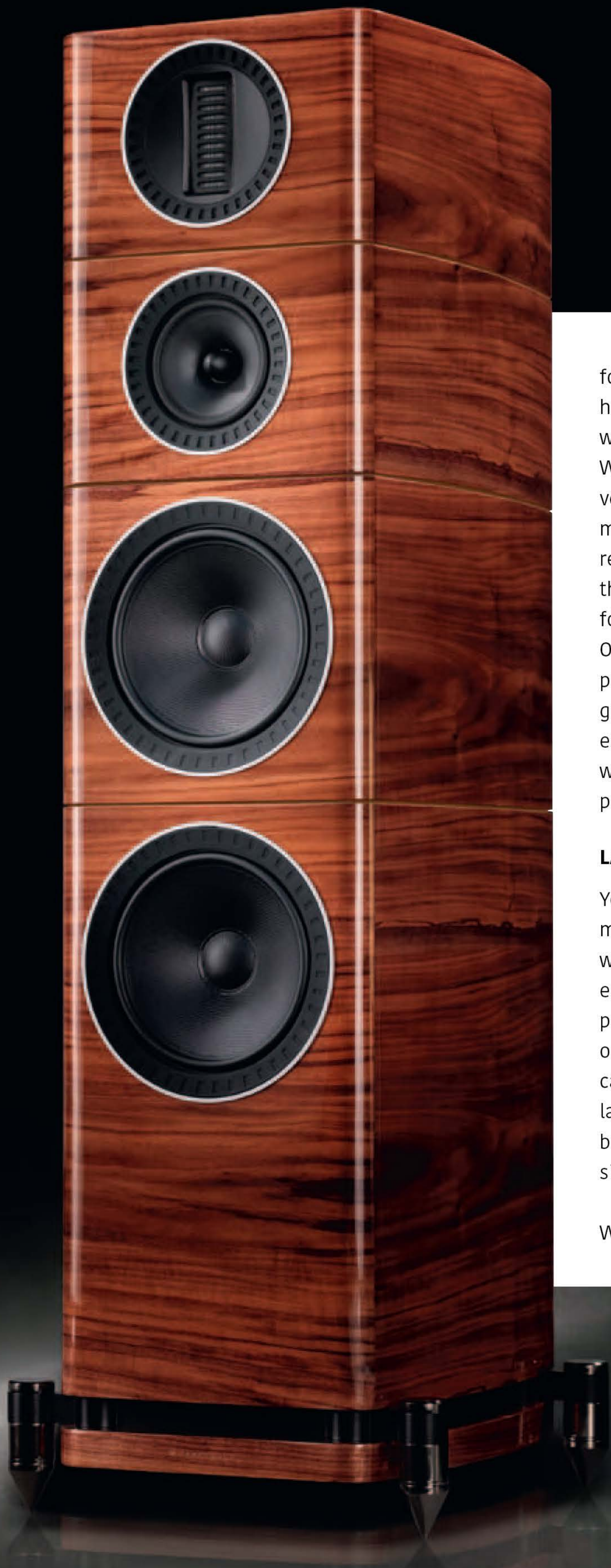
THE PRICE QUESTION

Comeau had also brought emissaries with him - two copies of the floorstanding speaker Elysian 4 that he has developed. But something is wrong here. Nothing too severe. The price does not work at all on the European market, it is calculated too low. Well, that's a running gag - we often wonder about the price-performance ratio.

Now being very naive: you can see the photos on these pages and have been AUDIO readers



AIR: the bass reflex energy flows through a defined slot on the cabinet bottom.



for many years. That makes us happy. So, with your expertise: what could these speakers cost? We are looking at a fine walnut veneer, lacquered six times. Plus massive spikes towards the ground, really hefty bi-wiring terminals. At the top, a real Air Motion Transformer according to the practice of Oskar Heil. Underneath a phase plug fitted to the midrange, two glass fiber cones for the bass. Honestly: most interested parties would jump up and think "too expensive for me".

LACQUERED SIX TIMES

You would be wrong: completely misguided. This loudspeaker, weighing 56 kilograms, costs 7,500 euros. Not for one piece, but for the pair. Sure, the rules of the game in our society state that we cannot call it cheap. But compared to the large, competing floor-standing boxes, this is surprisingly inexpensive.

What role does Peter Comeau play

in this? He is not the young King Arthur, but rather Merlin, who accompanies the hero as a white magician. Everything originated in his brain. Comeau spends half a year in England, the other in China in the gardens of IAG - an amazingly potent force in the high-end world.

Two brothers, twins actually, run the company. In the area around Shenzhen, near Hong Kong, but in the motherland of China, they created a magical grove: a park, a lake, a hotel, apartments, sauna and swimming pool. Peter Comeau makes his rounds here. A luxury life that the Wharfedale bosses like to encourage, because Comeau designs not only for Wharfedale. He has the entire IAG network in his vista, including Castle, Mission, Quad and Audiolab.

AS WE LIKE IT:

If you want to emphasize the highlights, you can remove the front grilles individually



STECKBRIEF**WHARFEFALE**
ELYSIAN 4

Vertrieb	IAD GmbH Tel. 02161 61783-0
www.	wharfedale-deutschland.de
Listenpreis	7500 Euro
Garanzzeit	5 Jahre
Maße B x H x T	40,2 x 118,8 x 43,2 cm
Gewicht	55,8 kg
Furnier/Folie/Lack	• / - / •
Farben	Schwarz, Weiß, Walnuss
Arbeitsprinzipien	Dreiwege, Bassreflex
Raumanpassung	-
Besonderheiten	Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**WHAT A
PICTURE -
WHAT DRIVE!**

These are big players on the world market. The IAG Group found them all and bought them up - including circuit diagrams, names and clever minds. Peter Comeau is the mastermind, something like "Q" in the James Bond world. Or let's stay with King Arthur: he is Merlin, the magician who knows everything and gathers great power around him in the background.

A SUCCESSFUL BALANCING ACT

Without him, the Elysian series would not have existed. He wanted the ultimate, but it should still remain affordable. A balancing act that he succeeded in achieving. We listened for a long time, we caressed the cabinet for hours - there is nothing to be said against entering this speaker into the Olympic Games. There are no miracles in the facts. This is a classic floor-standing, 3-way box, the bass reflex energy is channeled to the floor. Which is

**TIGHT AND ELEGANT:**

The spikes of the Elysian are extremely bulky. Everything is precisely adjustable for ease of use.

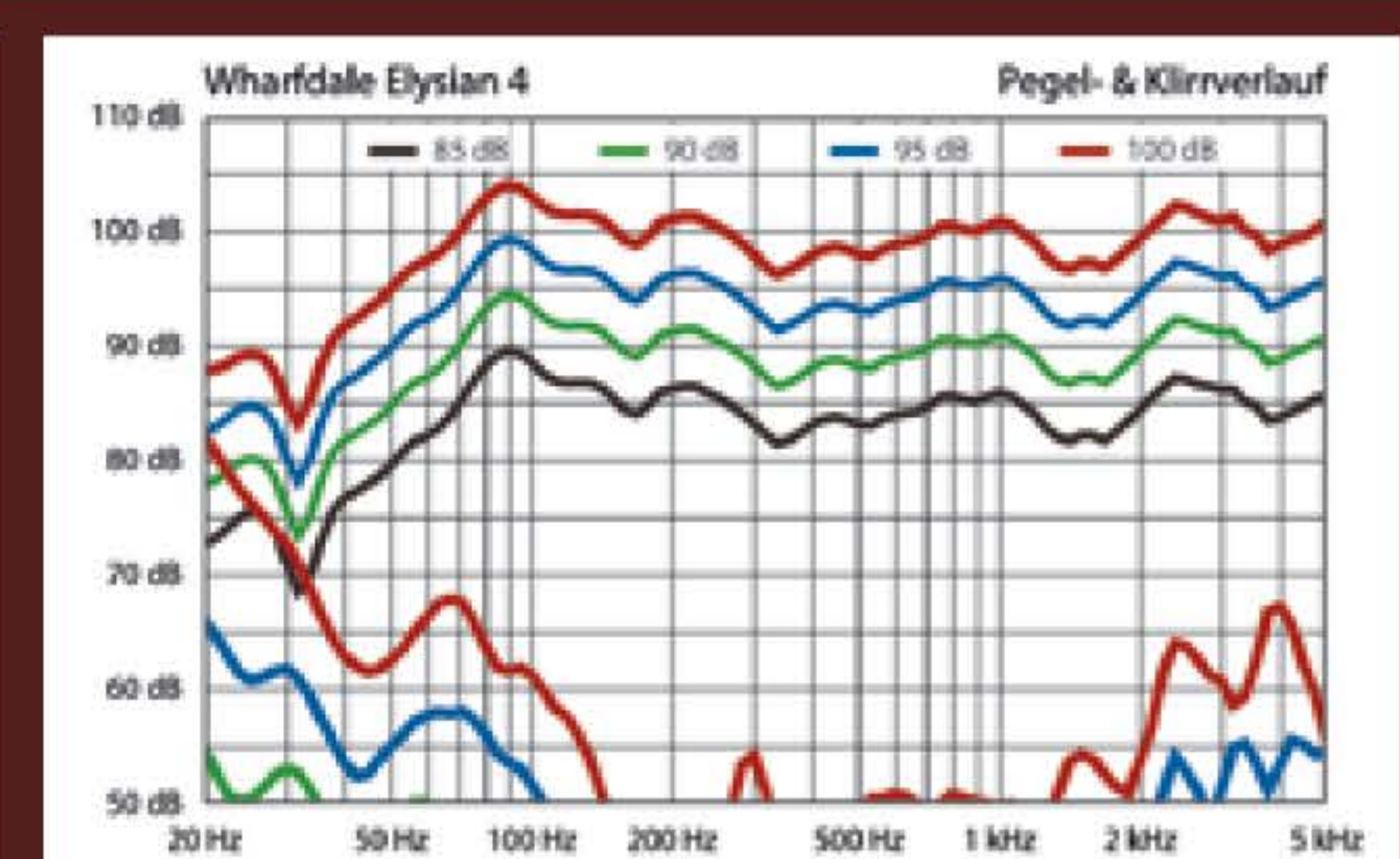
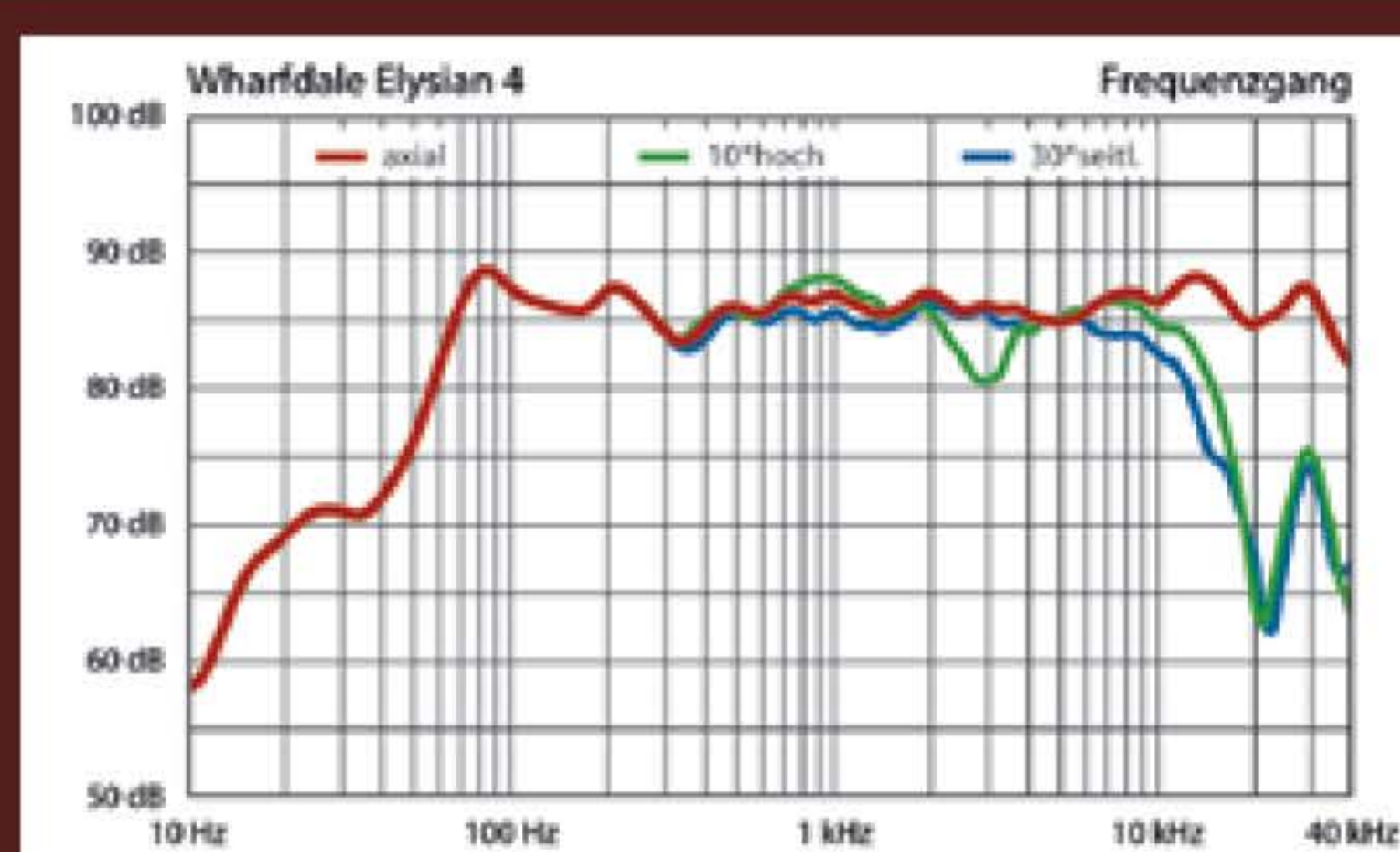
practical - we can actually play ball with this speaker right in front of us or against the back wall. The game is worth it, should it even be absolutely necessary - depending on the setup, the bass presence can be tuned precisely to personal ideals.

Let's ignore the bass drivers. These are lacquered glass fiber membranes, perfect, but not unique. What most surprises us: in fact, overnight, Wharfedale committed to a tweeter based on the Air Motion Transformer principle. Great. We are amazed, because only a few manufacturers in the world have mastered this design. Above all, of course, ELAC in Kiel: here, folding and soldering is still strictly done by hand. Nobody fools the Northern Lights. But Wharfedale doubles the size of the diaphragm - and everything is made in the company's own production lines in Shenzhen. IAG has potential that most European manufacturers cannot or do not want to imagine. Great things can happen here for manageable cost. So the Elysian 4 not only fascinated us, but pressed us firmly back into the listening sofa.

What an image, what drive, what passion! We know the market's super speakers. The Elysian immediately

MEASURING LAB

The Elysian 4 reveals a homogeneous radiation and linear frequency response, with a slight emphasis in the upper bass (approx. 2 dB). This AMT tweeter can easily play up to the 40 kHz mark. Thanks to its high efficiency (86 dB / 2V/m, **AUDIO code number 57**), the box also matches well to less potent amplifiers. There's a high maximum output level of 108dB, but little deep bass (cut-off frequency 57 Hz / -6 dB).



AUDIOGRAMM

AUDIO 04/2020

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Accuracy (2x)	101	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Localisation	100	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Spatiality	103	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Micro-dynamics	103	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Maximum Level	100	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Bass Quality	100	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Bass Depth	100	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Verdict	superb	

AUDIO SOUND SCORE 101 POINTS
PRICE/PERFORMANCE SUPERB

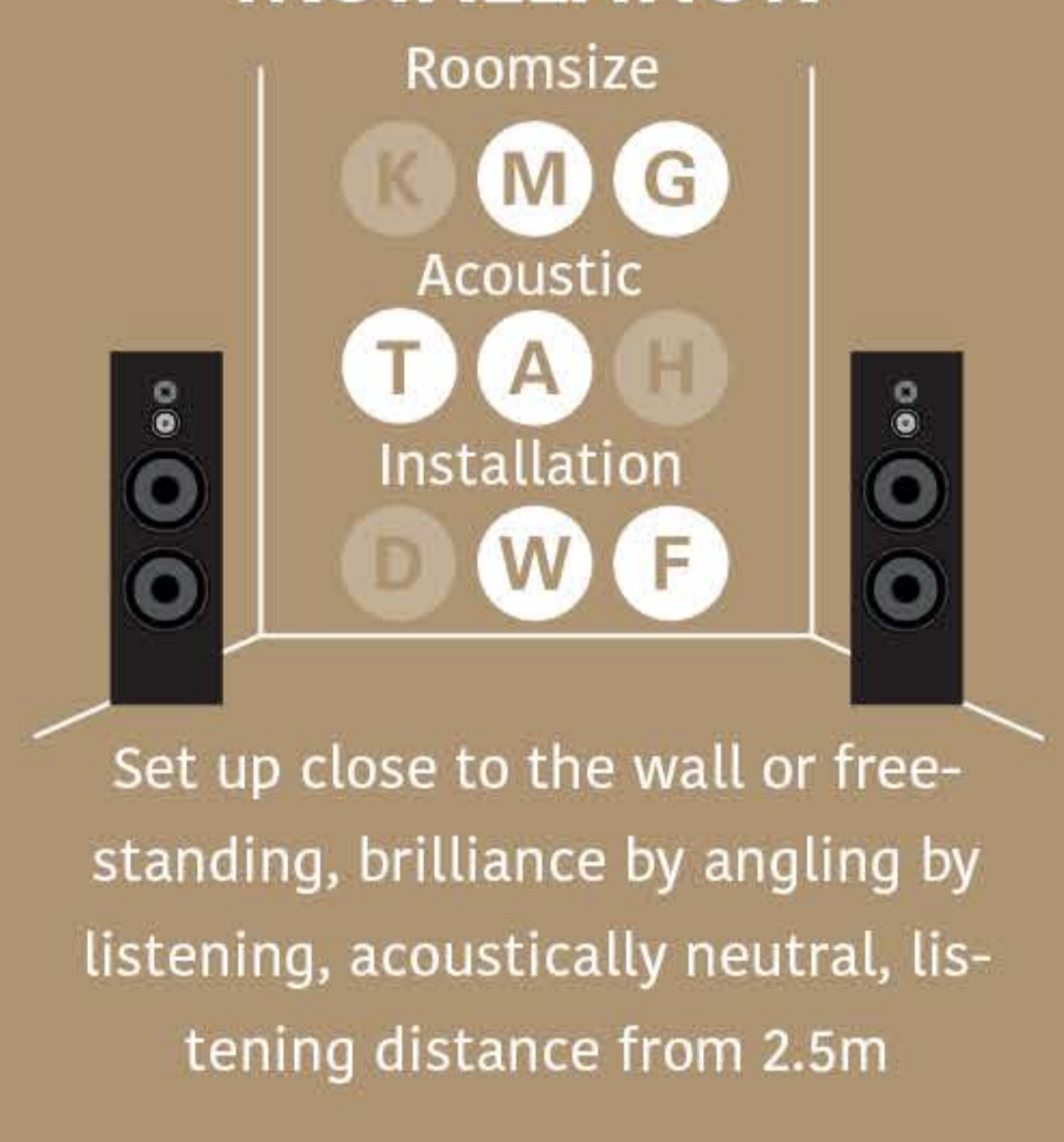
showed that they wanted to play in this league. Even with the superheroes, we sometimes hear what energy the tweeter or bass driver brings. The Elysian, on the other hand, played the opposite hand - the harmony between the membranes was terrific, like a single surface of sound, perfect, beautifully balanced.

UP IN THE RANKING

As much as we felt comfortable in the sweet spot, it quickly became clear to us that there was a conflict here: How to sensibly add this dream box to our list of best products, if the price is not quite right? We could lie, but we basically don't. We could be tactful, but tactical politicians have short legs. So the truth has to come out: the Wharfedale is the most affordable speaker in our reference class. It ranks very high up.

Couldn't we somehow put it into

SPACE AND INSTALLATION



BEAUTY IN SMALL DETAILS: the bi-wiring terminals are supplied with precisely fitting bridging cables

perspective? Futile. Just for an example, we chose some very tough fodder. What our hearts depend on, where the musicians created legends -

“Come Together” by the Beatles. We recently championed the new mix, the new mastering of this track.

At Abbey Road Studios, experiments were carried out in the late 1960s. Paul McCartney's smooth bass should play a special role in this song. How to record him? Up until this recording they put a microphone in front of the bass amps, but here the bass was plugged straight into the mixing console. Hence this pop, this force, this powerful presence. The Wharfedale literally wallowed in this complex world. The inner harmony is great, the subtle pressure of the bass is tempting. Again: a lot of accuracy, at the highest level, plus great fun and excellent musicianship. It is worth saving for or, for the youngest among us, passing your hat around within the family.



IT'S SMALLER:

At the same time, Wharfedale launches the Elysian 2, a compact box with its own stand.



CONCLUSION



Andreas Günther
AUDIO-Mitarbeiter

Once again, Wharfedale's pricing amazes us.

The British-Chinese conglomerate is aiming straight at the wallet. We dip our heads in ice cold water - and Wharfedale still holds the price. The Elysian 4 is a speaker of the highest order - a place in the reference list leaderboard is its reward.