



SETTING THE BAR EVEN HIGHER p.20

# Audio Physic's "Big" Classic

+++ Rund 90 Alben von Künstlern +++ Alicia Keys+++Travis +++Tom Odell +++ Claudio Abbado +++ Jay-Z

# A Sound Wolf in Designer Dress

An affordable high-end loudspeaker or an expensive design piece? When it comes to Audio Physic's new "Classic 30", it's hard to say in which category it belongs, which is no surprise given that something like this doesn't come along very often.

When first confronted with this loudspeaker, it's fair enough to wonder whether things will really turn out well. After all, misunderstandings seem to be virtually inevitable where Audio Physic's new Classic 30 model is concerned. My hi-fi infected contemporaries often entertain sweeping reservations about components that are designed to provide the best possible appearance. These parts, which seem to be yet another case of more style than substance, arouse suspicion among my colleagues right from the word go when it comes to their quality standards. Those who place high value on purchasing great-looking products, on the other hand, normally take less of an audiophile approach and are certainly not used to dealing with ambitious price ranges.

This is, incidentally, also the reason why the concept of offering high-quality hi-fi products in exclusive furniture stores often fails to take off. 5000 Euros for a sofa from the "ligne roset" brand? No problem at all. But then comes the question "that's a nice loudspeaker; how much does it cost?" and when the same price is mentioned, the customer buries their head in their hands and declares "you've got to be kidding!" in utter disbelief.

This area of conflict is now home to Audio Physic's Classic 30 model, which (warning: design trap!) the manufacturer offers in a wide variety of different coloured designs including loud tones such as "Fluo Green" that even come in the form of sheets of glass attached to the loudspeaker's MDF cabinet.

Alongside a selection of four wooden veneer finishes (costing 3590 Euros), the Classic 30 is also available with a black or white glass finish for a price of 3890 Euros per pair. Users can additionally opt for one of eight special glass finishes ranging from discreet shades through to loud and bold colours (as shown on the right), which will set them back a total of 4190 Euros.



This slim loudspeaker, which is around 106 centimetres high, is the newest member of the Classic family alongside the "Classic 10" and "Classic 20" models (as presented in STEREO 1/13), which are also available in a number of bright colours. These two loudspeakers received an excellent response but, at a price of 1590 or 2190 Euros per pair, cost a lot less than their big sister, which carries a price tag starting at 3590 Euros for a veneer finish. Buyers wanting a flawless glass-covered design, on the other hand, are looking at a price of at least 3890 Euros.

Without giving away too much too soon, I can indeed confirm that these prices are actually excellent value for a loudspeaker boasting the quality of the Classic 30. In absolute terms, however, they certainly do involve a great deal of money. This rings particularly true when you consider the fact that, at first glance, the Classic 30 is the spitting image of the smaller Classic 10. When viewed from the front, the two models look exactly the same with their three drivers from the specialist company Wavecor: two 4.3" woofer/midrange drivers, the higher of which is fitted with a phase plug, and one 1.4" dome tweeter lined with a star-shaped foam ring that has been cut to size for higher frequencies.

The Classic 30 is, however, 17.5 centimetres deeper than the Classic 10. Nevertheless, even true connoisseurs will struggle to discover the true added value of the Classic 30 without exploring it further. The main benefit of this member of the Classic family can be found in the form of a unit containing two woofers mounted next to each other inside the loudspeaker near its base.

The woofers of the Classic 30 are able to work directly towards the loudspeaker's downward-facing reflex ports (see sketch) as well as using some of the loudspeaker's volume to do so and while we're focusing on this concept, it's well worth mentioning that Manfred Diestertich, the Chief

**KEYWORD**

**Phase Plug:**

The blunt 'nose' of the upper woofer/midrange driver is designed to reliably prevent the effacement of sound via the diaphragm.

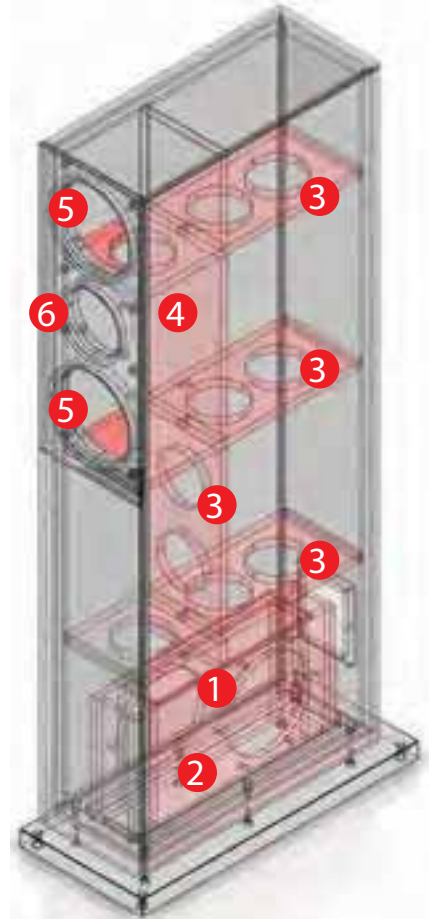
Designer at Audio Physic, which is based in the town of Brilon in the Sauerland region of Germany, has used it to achieve a true masterpiece. The bass range of the Classic 30 is as substantial as it is delicate, as dry as it is fast and as full of tonality as it is wiry. On top of

this, our measurements also show that it reaches astoundingly deep into the lower frequencies for a loudspeaker of this size. Diestertich has not only managed to achieve such a wide and diverse bass range, but has also successfully ensured that the Classic 30 maintains a high level of sensitivity. Such an achievement should certainly not be taken as read given that small cabinets that are able to produce deep bass responses normally do so at the expense of efficiency. Diestertich therefore definitely deserves a round of applause!

**Hidden Technology**

This solution is a true aesthetic treat in every respect, especially for listeners who want to see as little technology as possible. Such listeners will definitely also replace the frame containing holes for the drivers that is attached to the loudspeaker as standard with the grille cloth that is also included in the box. Technology freaks, on the other hand, would regret not being able to see the woofers, just like Porsche Boxster drivers complain that they virtually never get the chance to catch a glimpse of their vehicle's mid-engine.

While the hands-on approach and impressively refreshing yet bold sounds produced by the Classic 10 have already succeeded in winning us over, the Classic 30 goes one step further, completely bowling us over and carrying us away. The Classic 30 not only sounds much more grown-up and more mature than the flatter starter model in the Classic range, which works without a bass unit; it also boasts a completely different format



**The diagram above provides a clear overview of the Classic 30's complex construction: The woofer unit (1) in the base of the Classic 30 works both directly towards the downward-facing reflex port (2) and into the loudspeaker's internal volume. The cabinet contains internal reinforcement elements (3) with holes that enable the sound pressure to disperse throughout the loudspeaker. The pressure is, however, kept away from the chamber (4) containing the woofer/midrange drivers (5) and the dome tweeter (6). This combination of elements enables the new Audio Physic model to use a complex 3.5-way construction.**

thanks to its extraordinarily natural and homogenous midrange frequencies and its completely relaxed, flexible and extensive spectrum.

We have never heard a loudspeaker in this price range produce such a holistic, shimmering and vivid reproduction of "Deed I Do" from the 45rpm vinyl recordings of Diana Krall's "Live in Paris" concert with such perfect facets as the Classic 30, in which the "next-gen" jacks made by WBT, which are, based on our experience, clearly superior to normal connectors, certainly contribute towards the sound produced and the loudspeaker's overall success. Audio Physic's



**The image on the left shows the woofer unit, which is closed at the top, when removed from the loudspeaker cabinet. The woofers are positioned next to each other in the compact unit and are covered by the base panel of the loudspeaker when installed in the cabinet. Removing this base panel provides an insight into the woofers' direct sound outlet and the reflex ports on both sides (as shown below).**





new model is right at home when it comes to delighting listeners' ears with an actively vibrant, coherent and extensive sound spectrum and when doing so, it is somewhat reminiscent of DALI's excellent 9000-Euro "Epicon 6" loudspeaker, which seems to have been a major inspiration behind the development of the Classic 30.

When playing "Jacob's Ladder" from the MFSL reissue of the old Rush album "Permanent Waves", for example, the Classic 30, in which, unlike in the Classic 10 model, the woofer/midrange drivers do not have to deal with the actual bass thanks to

the woofers, thus leading to a high level of detail and laid-back sound, excels with succulent pulses that do not, however, sound puffy or swollen. By doing so, it is able to reproduce the desired threatening mood of the piece, giving the electric guitars full and heavy beats that enabled us to truly rock out to the hard-rock anthem.

The Classic 30 not only allows listeners to turn up the volume, but actually inspires them to do so. It doesn't have to exert itself and is able to remain unstrained and smooth, almost bordering on debonair, even at very high volumes. This quality is joined by the punchy character of the loudspeaker's relatively large dome, which reproduces the explosive sound of clashing cymbals with full-bodied conciseness. Listeners will also constantly be surprised at the smoothness with which this Audio Physic model deals with the lower frequencies and flexible manner in which it can

respond to all kinds of music in the bass range.

All of these features not only stood out when combined with our reference amplifier from Accoustic Arts, but also when used with mid-range integrated amplifiers. We tested the Classic 30 with amps such as Trigon's 2550-Euro "Energy" model and, of course, the new RG14 from Symphonic Line, which will set buyers back 3500 Euros, and can report back that the attractive Audio Physic loudspeaker not only cut a fine figure with these partners, but also with the Musical Fidelity m3i, available for a price of 1150 Euros.

The Classic 30 found its true love in the form of Clearaudio's "PerformanceDC" turntable combined with Pro-Ject's "Phono BoxRS" on the 301OS2 integrated amplifier from Exposure (costing 2850, 840 and 1800 Euros respectively) and using a pair of LS16mk2 cables from Silent Wire. This system boasts punch, plasticity and a truly impressive sound reproduction ability that get you hooked and that money simply cannot buy.

**For Friends of Design and Sound**

Given that the Classic 30 reproduces high frequencies at a relatively tight angle, it should be angled towards the listening position in such a manner that its sound is aimed at a 'target' located just past your shoulder and you can still see a bit of the inner side of the cabinet. The Audio Physic loudspeaker is by no means too full when it comes to reproducing lower frequencies and we were therefore actually able to, and, indeed, had to, push the Classic 30 a bit closer to the back wall than other loudspeakers in order to achieve the correct bass volume.

This is just one of the highlights of the new model for buyers who also like to listen with their eyes and don't want, or are not allowed, to stand their loudspeakers in a completely free position away from the wall. On top of this, listeners can also wholeheartedly agree to their better half's burning desire to purchase a Classic 30 with a special glass finish in the shade "Blue Lagoon", which may well look stunning alongside the wall unit in the living room, without having to endure a long debate.

After all, this distinctive new Audio Physic model is not only a design piece, but also a loudspeaker with true high-end flair that simply cannot be mistaken for anything else!

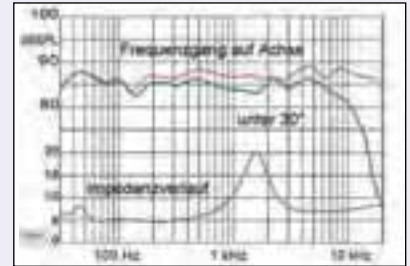
*Matthias Böde*

**AUDIO PHYSIC CLASSIC 30**

from € 3590 per pair (veneer version)  
 Dim.: 17.5x105x41.5cm (WxHxD)  
 Warranty: 10 years  
 Contact: Audio Physic  
 Tel.: +49 2961 96170  
 www.audiophysic.de

The future looks good for design and sound freaks: the Classic 30 is a high-class all-rounder boasting exceptional audiophile qualities that come from a universe far beyond this price range.

**MEASUREMENT RESULTS**



Nominal Impedance	4 Ω
Minimum Impedance	4.7 Ω at 230 Hertz
Maximum Impedance	20 Ω at 1600 Hertz
Average Sensitivity (2.83 V/1 m)	87.4 dB SPL
Efficiency at 94 dB (1 m)	10 W
Lower Crossover Frequency (-3 dB)	32 Hertz
Distortion Factor at 63/3k/10kHz	1.2 / 0.1 / 0.14%

**LABORATORY REPORT**

The Classic 30 boasts a very balanced frequency response that reaches astoundingly deep into the bass frequencies (red line) with only light ripples. A steep tweeter drop below an angle of 30 degrees (blue line) shows that the loudspeaker needs to be angled towards the listening position. The model also features a well-tempered impedance response that barely drops below the five-ohm mark, as well as a precise step response, despite its internal drivers. The bass only lags slightly but this is nevertheless concealed by the quick woofer/midrange driver that extends down to very deep frequencies.

**STEREO-TEST**

**SOUND PERFORMANCE 78%**

**PRICE/PERFORMANCE**



**EXCELLENT**

\* STEREO Club subscribers can access additional data and diagrams at [www.stereo.de](http://www.stereo.de)



The terminal lists some of the loudspeaker's technical details and features "next-gen" cable connectors made by WBT.

The perforated panel that surrounds the drivers can be replaced with a grille cloth (as shown on the right). A set of "VCF" feet, which facilitate the production of a better sound image in comparison to normal spikes, is available for an extra charge of 240 Euros (see below).

