

Concentrated Energy

Even before this loudspeaker has arrived at the editorial office, a colleague of mine is standing in front of my desk with his eyes wide open: "I've heard you're going to be reviewing a small Audio Physic model. Can I have it when you're done with it?" These loudspeakers from the German town of Brilon certainly seem to have some charm ...

Shortly after this premature ambush by my colleague at the publishing house, during which I did not, of course, reveal anything (he'll eventually find out somehow anyway), Stefan Dreischärf came to pay me a visit. The Audio Physic salesman, who was, as always, in the best of moods, had come to deliver a pair of loudspeakers to the editorial office. The model in question is the Sitara 25, the smallest floor-standing loudspeaker in the refined and upgraded high-end "25" range produced by Audio Physic to celebrate its 25th company anniversary. Just like its big sister, the Scorpio 25, it's now time for the Sitara 25 to form the focus of a world-exclusive review in LP magazine. When I asked him whether he intended to take back the Scorpio 25, which we often like to consult in our day-to-day testing, Stefan rejected the suggestion with a friendly smile, just the way I like it. We then spoke about the similarities and differences between these two models, with the former seeming far more prominent given that both loudspeakers look like they could be twins. "The Sitara 25 isn't just a smaller Scorpio 25 without any side-mounted woofers", added Stefan. "It's an individual product with its own philosophy, namely to transport the Audio Physic sound into smaller rooms with a more complex acoustic situation." And that, as I must now unfortunately admit from experience, is a darn good argument.

Although I am still relatively new to the world of HiFi products, I can nevertheless already look back on an abundance of private and commercial sound presentations and I can, no, I must, unfortunately confirm that only a handful of the products demonstrated really produced truly excellent room acoustics. Now and then this was due to a simple stroke of luck where the properties of the room were concerned, mostly combined with countless classic HiFi products chaotically dispersed around the room and providing the required sound diffusion and absorption. In other cases, the demonstration was given by someone with experience, who was able to use their brainpower to extract the best possible result from the room without simply plastering all free surfaces with absorbers and diffusers. The remaining rooms stayed well away from achieving the possible and acted like a veil placed

over the HiFi system, absorbing its sound in a way that cannot be solved by any fluids, pucks or cables. After all, how could it, when the desperate HiFi enthusiast is barking up the wrong tree with such solutions? So what can be done? The average living room is home to short people, tall people and even animals. It is used for celebrations, watching TV and enjoying day-to-day life. To put it bluntly, with all due respect, it simply doesn't offer the room needed for high-fidelity optimisation, at least not enough that loudspeakers can be placed in an optimal position, namely far enough away from the back and side walls and symmetrically around the listening position, and that acoustic elements are located in important areas of the room. True HiFi enthusiasts do, of course, dream of this ultimate listening experience, but when they wake up, they are well aware that 'certain other members' of the household would immediately give them a clip around the ear if they were to transform the living room into such an area. HiFi purists should therefore also be able to ask the question as to how far a loudspeaker owner has to stretch to suit the requirements of his/her product and whether it may not well be a better, and indeed more practical, solution for a loudspeaker to adapt to the needs of its owner. This is where the Sitara 25 comes into play, a loudspeaker that strives to provide this exact solution: bringing the sound of a high-end Audio Physic model to even the smallest room in the land!

A dream partnership with a two-and-a-half way system: Audio Physic has breathed new life into the cone tweeter that was thought to be dead and has produced an excellent result, with the perfectly damped aluminium cones combining gentleness with precision.



Protagonists

Turntable:

- Acoustic Solid Machine with SME M2-12 and Clearaudio Goldfinger

Phono-preamplifier:

- Malvalve preamp three phono

Preamplifier:

- Accuphase C-2810

Amplifier:

- Accuphase A-65

Accessories:

- Power bar: HMS
- Power cord 2502: Silent Wire
- LF cable: Silent Wire
- Phono cable: Van den Hul
- LS cable: Intertechnik
- Racks: SSC
- Record cleaning machine: Hannl
- Power conditioner: Accuphase PS-1210

Antagonists

- Audio Physic Scorpio 25
- K+T Nada
- Manager Zerobox 109

Nirvana – MTV unplugged



Music Played

Nirvana
MTV unplugged

Kari Bremnes
Ly

Lightspeed Champion
Life Is Sweet! Nice to Meet You

Aglaia Camphausen und die
Schmonzetten
Alone

Percussion Direct

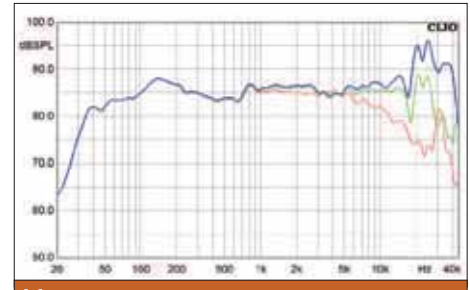
Black Eyed Peas
The E.N.D.

The fact that the front of the loudspeaker slants backwards means that the sound-producing levels of the drivers are positioned on top of each other, resulting in an ideal time response.



Yet more innovations: The terminal, which is mechanically decoupled to provide the best possible sound, and top-quality connecting terminals for all cable configurations.

This solution is provided by the use of the same high/midrange driver setup as the Scorpio 25, consisting of two 6" woofers and a specially developed cone tweeter. In this loudspeaker, high-tech features are everywhere to be found, for example the woofers with their double basket made of die-cast aluminium and plastic for mutual damping and decoupling and for optimal heat dissipation, aluminium cones that are pre-tightened by a rubber ring and solid phase plugs. Slightly different magnets make the upper driver ideal for the perfect midrange reproduction, while a crossover is used to gently fade out the lower driver in the case of frequencies above 500Hz. With its significantly more precise diaphragm control, the cone tweeter reaches far beyond the audible range and impresses with its excellent sound precision accompanied by a reproduction of details that is almost unspectacular due to its practically self-denying detail. The fact that the baffle tilts backwards additionally provides an ideal time response among the drivers, while the dimensions of the loudspeakers, which are just under one metre high and less than 15cm wide, mean that they can fit into an attractive position in even the most cramped of rooms. Height-adjustable spikes for the four metallic feet are included in the delivery. If you prefer to gently rest the loudspeakers on the floor rather than using hard spikes, you can order a set of four VCF feet, which have a damping effect, for 120 Euros. The external surface of the Sitara 25 is either covered with a variety of veneers (cherry, black ash, walnut, maple or Macassar ebony) or coated with high-gloss lacquer (black or white), with the last three options adding an extra charge of 300 Euros to the loud-



Measurements

Measurement Technology Report

Where its bass and woofers are concerned, the frequency response of the Sitara 25 holds itself back, which is beneficial for the room in which it is placed. The projection at 150Hz provides bass pressure, while the midrange reproduction is extremely balanced at all angles from 800Hz upwards and provides an extremely harmonic radiation. The increase in high frequencies that was measured is optically deceiving because it actually only occurs beyond 20kHz and cannot be heard. The cone tweeter delivers full volumes up to a frequency of 40kHz. The distortion caused from the bass range upwards is possibly record-breakingly small, even at 95dB. The impedance of the Sitara 25 only fluctuates very slightly and has clear-cut minimum values of exactly 4.0 ohms, meaning that the loudspeaker is also suitable for a large number of tube amplifiers. Last but not least, the two high-midrange drivers also achieve top grades where their sustain characteristics are concerned.

speaker pair's basic price of 2690 Euros. Audio Physic recommends that the Sitara 25 is used with amplifiers with a performance of between 20 and 120 watts. Based on my experience, I can support this recommendation, although I must also state that the Sitara 25 does not provide electrical problems for any amplifier. A much more important factor is its ability to produce an increasingly linear response alongside the sound quality of the associated chain. Where the sound performance of the loudspeaker is concerned, you definitely should not underestimate the three harmless-looking drivers in their attractive wooden casing. These drivers hit the nail on the head when it comes to differentiating between the fine sound details of every single component. As a result, when connected to the Accuphase amplifiers in our listening room, the loudspeakers provided a top-quality sound reproduction right from the very first bars of music.

The Sitara 25 has clearly inherited its huge delight in reproducing sound and its outstanding vibrancy from its big sister. In fact, its tonal quality is even a touch more balanced and it provides its listeners with an even more intensive concentration of energy, producing an incredibly compact sound image with a rather powerful punch in the midrange and high frequencies. While I was testing the Sitara 25, colleagues of mine who had coincidentally popped into the listening room were somewhat puzzled, asking me why on earth I was testing the Scorpio 25 yet again. As this shows, nobody expected the Sitara 25 to deliver such full and powerful sound.



The height-adjustable spikes (on the right) are included in the delivery. The decoupling VCF feet can be purchased as an optional extra.



Audio Physic Sitara 25

- Price from 2.690 Euro per pair
- Distribution Audio Physic, Brilon, Germ.
- Telephone +49 (0)2961 96170
- Internet www.audiophysic.de
- Weight 17 kg
- Warranty 10 years
- Drivers
 - 1 x 150mm woofers
 - 1 x 150mm bass/midrange drivers
 - 1 x 39mm cone tweeters
- W x H x D 147 x 980 x 220mm

When it comes to the bottom line ...

... the Sitara 25 is exactly what Audio Physic wants it to be: It provides the highly precise, extremely open and positively joyful sound of the high-end range of loudspeakers in a manner that is suitable for problematic living rooms and therefore enables fans with a limited amount of space to live out their dreams of great Audio-Physic sound.



Where bass reproduction is concerned, this Audio Physic loudspeaker by no means makes an ascetic impression, but is instead an absolutely full-fledged speaker that provides a well-rounded sound reproduction and is surprisingly also well ahead of the competition in terms of its maximum level. Sure enough, the Sitara 25 does indeed reach its limits before the Scorpio, but let's not forget, the quartet of 6" drivers in the Scorpio are supported by eight (!) 7" drivers capable of producing powerful basses. The extreme lack of distortion tempted me to turn up the volume yet again, but even here, the loudspeaker from the Brilon-based company always kept track of everything and wasn't even thrown by the powerful bass beats. When it comes to voice reproduction, however, the vocals are always relaxed, meaning that even live levels can be enjoyed in a comfortable and calm manner. In fact, another virtue of this Audio Physic loudspeaker also comes to light in this area: its large and extremely airy spatial image, which extends far past that of any compact loudspeaker and far past the size of this petite floor-standing model, filling the room with a magical sound that simply couldn't be more appealing, especially in combination with the loudspeaker's above-mentioned delight in doing its job.

Christian Gather