

## STEREO Test 10/2006: Loudspeakers

### **Small, noble and loud**

**The WLM DIVA MONITOR speakers from Austria did impress us during the HighEnd 06 that much that we invited them for a test. And again we experienced its energetic-direct and musical nature.**

From Tom Frantzen

The DIVA MONITOR is in every respect a very straight forward proposition. Take an all-out noble wooden case, equip it with a modified American 25cm-coax-driver of the Eminence-range and add an appropriate filter; the outcome is a compact sensation.

It isn't all that simple, after all. A lot of fine tuning and motivational drive has been invested in this project by the three WLM masterminds: Hannes FRICK (Management + Production), Martin SCHÜTZENAUER (Development + Electronic Production) and Thomas GRÖFLER (Production).

The results are well worth the efforts; the writers of this magazine were that much impressed of this year's HighEnd presentation of the Austrians that they immediately ordered these immensely musical boxes for a test.

The very hard hung coax (coaxial concept) driver having a high efficiency is also employed in the full size DIVA speaker. To use the same driver in a more compact speaker with the purpose to aim at other market segments was a hunch decision which proved to be a full success.

For the DIVA Monitor, having a reduced box volume, it is important that its rigid driver is supported by lower bass frequencies.

This can be achieved either by an appropriate sub-woofer of good quality and efficiency or by made-to-measure optional electronic device called DIVA-CONTROL (€ 500). It is to be placed between source and amplifier or between pre-amp and amp for an appreciable extension of the lower frequencies, an enhancement of the bass thus forcing the amp to work harder; i.e. the lowering of the bass is counter balanced by a higher output performance of the amp, because physics can not really be deceived. The phase linearization is making sure that there are no adverse side effects on the timing, a smooth performance without any noticeable interruptions. As a matter of fact, the specially designed DIVA CONTROL is avoiding unwanted overlaps of the base frequencies experienced with the larger PASSIVE-CONTROL device.

The DIVA MONITOR is a really fast speaker; enormously eager to play and with exciting temperament, cracking and precise to the point.

Also in the test rooms of STEREO the DIVA MONITOR gave an excellent performance, with tremendous musical flow, with superb tonal accurateness and space imaging. The "cooperation" with the DIVA-CONTROL is working well, we preferred the high pitch adjustment (at the rear of the box) at -2 dB and the position between 0 and +3 dB on the DIVA-CONTROL device.

Both variables are a very suitable means for the individual adjustment to the prevailing listening environment. The incredible start-up speed may derive from the sport activities of its developer: Martin Schützenauer who was 6 times Olympic participant and World Vice Champion of the bob sleigh.

In comparison to the DIVA, some other top monitor speaker appears to be "tired-lame". The little DIVA is not behaving as the name may connote. Thanks to its high efficiency it can easily be matched with small amps, play well at low volume and is reacting willingly at increased volume levels – it can perform louder than any other compact box. Much, much louder - and all this without being aggressive. More important still, the speaker is maintaining a very homogeneous sound imaging with excellent timing. Test of "playmates" prove to be lots of fun, since it is very responsive to such experiments.

At first we tried the obligatory SYMPHONIC LINE Integrated amp RG14 Edition and then changed to the MANLEY STINGRAY, later to the DENON PMA-SA1; and the different characteristics of each of the amps became apparent. All three are working well with this speaker. Changing over to the OSH interconnect or to the SHUNYATA mains cables still brought a noticeable improvement, each step became clearly apparent. We do not want to part too soon with the daring DIVA. Having to perform with lower output amps, e.g. triodes, we do not know of any speaker system – not considering the size of the box - that has impressed us with chamber music or large orchestra recordings like the DIVA. Even though the WLM, due to the coax chassis technology, is not always reproducing the signal in a completely neutral manner, it will stay with us as our working tool.

This precious, in our opinion still compact "jewel" is available in Maple, Cherry and the very decorative Zebrano; at a surcharge of 15% other finishes like Makassar or Santos are offered. We have very little to add to WLM's slogan: "The compact speaker for great music": **TOP REFERENCE!**

### **WLM DIVA MONITOR**

**One of musically most convincing and thrilling speakers of the recent years. An outsider with character. Thanks to its high efficiency performing with temperament and agility even on "small" amps. Top!**



# STEREO

## SERVICE TESTSPIEGEL

Modell	Test in <i>STEREO</i>	Preis ca. Euro	Preis/ Leistung	Klang- Qualität
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## KOMPAKTLAUTSPRECHER

(Paarpreise)

### Top-Referenzen in alphabetischer Reihenfolge

**Dynaudio Confidence C1 4/04**      5000      ★★★      100%

Ungemein stimmiger, extrem durchhörbarer und ganzheitlicher Klang. Dazu kommt das innere Glühen musikalischer Überzeugungskraft. Einfach super!

**Focal Micro Utopia Be 12/03**      5000      ★★★      100%

Kompaktlautsprecherdesign auf höchstem Niveau: Diese Box kann fast alles und hat einer der besten Hochtöner aller Zeiten

**MBL 121**      12/04      9500      ★★      100%

Radialstrahler für Mitten und Höhen, fantastisch plastische Raumabbildung, das Fenster zur Realität, niedriger Wirkungsgrad, aber standfest, sehr natürlicher, dynamischer Klang

**WLM Diva Monitor**      10/06      3580      ★★★★★      100%

Unglaublich agil aufspielender Koaxial-Konzept mit enormem Wirkungsgrad, hervorragendem Timing und tonal herausragend musikalischer Homogenität, schon mit kleiner (Röhren-)Leistung. Tiefbassentzerung (Diva Control) und Einwinkelung Pflicht!