



ANALOG HI-FI AND VINYL CULTURE



A SIGN OF GREATNESS

Of course, I won't try to convince you that I have suddenly become a fan of cute little two-way speakers. But there is a but.



A little history

We remember: Epos was a British loudspeaker manufacturer that established an excellent reputation between 1983 and 1988. Designer and founder Robin Marshall was good at using loudspeaker drivers that were exactly right for the application and working with simple crossovers. The company then passed through various hands, and its star quickly sank. In 2020, the Essen-based loudspeaker professional Karl-Heinz Fink bought the brand, returned to its original virtues, and began to develop „philosophically“ suitable loudspeakers under this label. The first result

of his efforts was the Epos ES-14N, which was causing quite a stir in the compact loudspeaker market and was also named „Product Of The Year“ by us for a good reason. It was clear that it would not stop there. These days, Karl-Heinz Fink has let the second Epos arrow from the string: The new one is called the ES-7N and, somewhat surprisingly, is also a two-way compact loudspeaker, but an even smaller one than the ES-14N. This also has pleasing consequences for the pricing: at EUR 2000 per pair, it costs half as much as its „big“ sister.

The ES-7N is a compelling speaker with a net volume of only ten liter





The woofer works with a double magnet system and a 30 mm voice coil

When developing the small Epos, Fink had a role model in mind that no one would have expected: The BR 25 from the pen of Musikelektronik Geithein founder Joachim Kiesler. This was a development from 1984, and despite - or perhaps because of - its „state-owned“ origins, it remains one of the most successful German loudspeakers, with around 650,000 units sold. Fink is a big fan of a whole series of constructive details of this concept and deliberately takes its hat off to Joachim Kiesler with the small Epos model. If you google „RFT BR 25“, you will immediately understand why the ES-7N looks the way it does.

Adjustability

With a net volume of ten liters, the ES-7N should be able to be integrated into pretty much any living environment. It can be placed on a shelf or free-standing in the room on appropriate stands. As both have pretty different acoustic conditions, there is a switch on the back of the speaker that should guarantee optimum results for both placement options. By the way, I find it astonishing that hardly any manufacturer considers this with their compact loudspeakers.

Teammates

Turntable:

- Clearaudio Concept Signature

Phono preamp:

- Clearaudio Balance Reference

Integrated amplifier:

- NEM PRA5

Power amplifier:

- Silvercore Collector's Amp

Integrated amplifier:

- Thivan Labs 811 Anniversary
- Yamaha Pianocraft

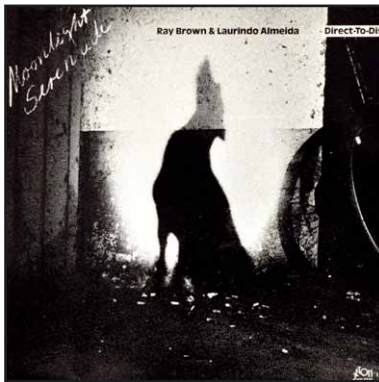
Competitors

Loudspeaker:

- JBL 4301B

We already know the aluminum tweeter with ceramic coating from the ES-14N





What we played

Ray Brown, Laurindo Almeida
Midnight Serenade

The National
Trouble Will Find Me

Ryan Adans
Live At Carnegie Hall

Wishbone Ash
Coat Of Arms

Ingredients

Epos connoisseurs will immediately notice the tweeter: The 28-millimeter ceramic-coated aluminum dome is the same as the one that gives the ES-14N its fine and energetic high range. You will look in vain for this driver on the shelves of the relevant suppliers. Like all loudspeaker chassis from the Fink universe, it is an in-house design manufactured by a specialized supplier. The quality does not result from pseudo-features suitable for brochures but from properties tailored to the application. This also applies to the brand-new 13-centimeter midbass driver of the ES-7N. Like its larger colleague from the ES-14N, its cone is made of filled polypropylene and is suspended in a soft rubber surround, which is intended to ensure maximum linearity even at higher excursions. The motor is provided by a 30-millimeter voice coil mounted on a glass fiber carrier. The magnet system is very clever: an impedance control ring minimizes distortion, and a second magnetic ring reinforces the magnetic field in the air gap. The double

magnet arrangement also reduces the stray field of the magnet, which thus interacts noticeably less with the coils of the crossover. The older ones among us may remember: In the age of CRT monitors, PC loudspeakers had to be set up so that they did not produce funny colors on the monitor.

Box

A significant part of the weight of almost eight kilograms is due to the housing. It consists of two layers of eight-millimeters-thick MDF. Between them is a highly elastic adhesive. Such „constrained layer damping“ arrangements are a specialty of Karl-Heinz Fink. A quick „knock“ on the ES-7N's housing immediately clarifies why. A wooden disk mounted under the lid provides additional reassurance. Incidentally, the DIY scene was delighted to adopt this trick from Fink because it means a valuable use for the otherwise useless piece left over when the baffle is cut out for the woofer. In addition, there is only a single brace between the side walls of the impressively low-vibration cabinet.

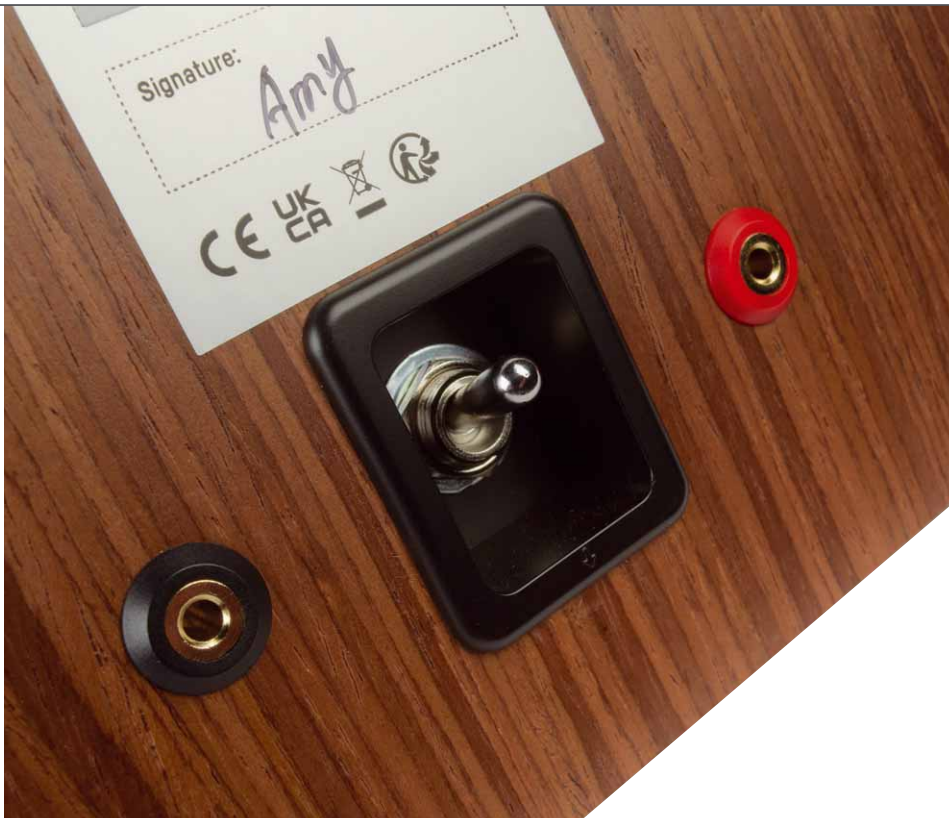
The vent also has a special feature. Fink uses a curved tube that, despite its lateral placement, ends in the middle of the cabinet and has damped ventilation holes that ensure precisely defined pressure control. The baffle's layout is asymmetrical, forcing the manufacturer to build a left and a right speaker. The manufacturer recommends operating the speakers with the drivers on the inside.

Crossover

Although it looks pretty simple structurally, the crossover board has accumulated a lot of parts, partly due to the switchable room adjustment. The crossover frequency between the two drivers is around 2000 Hertz. High-quality components are used across the board in the crossover. Fink only uses air-core coils and mostly custom-made non-inductive resistors.



The woofer measures around five inches in diameter and is a brand-new development for the ES-7N



The toggle switch is responsible for setting the room adjustment

The rear looks a little empty because the vent is also on the baffle

The room adaptation influences the frequency response from the mid-range upwards: in free-standing mode, the SPL is flat, while in the switch position for near-wall or shelf operation, it rises towards the top. This compensates for the „amplification“ that the low frequencies experience when the speakers are not free-standing.

Combinatorial

The small Epos only want to be connected via banana plugs, with the simple sockets located to the left and right of the operating mode switch. It is modest regarding power consumption, as genuine 86-89 decibels of sound pressure (depending on the operating mode) are very rare for such a compact converter. It even plays with single-ended tubes of the not-too-weak-chested kind but also likes refined semiconductor concepts.

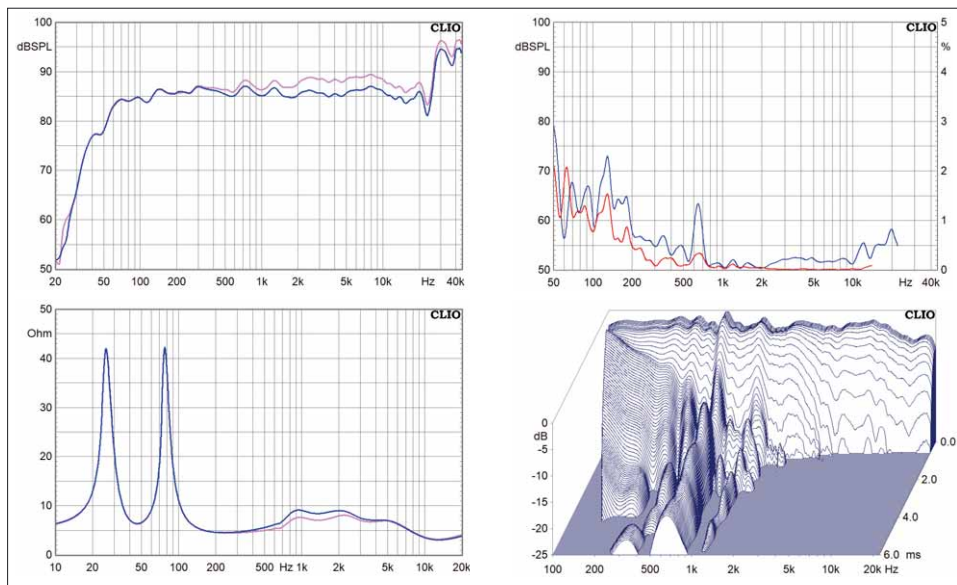
Sound

First of all, the room adaptation works very well. Standing freely in the room, the Epos has a pleasingly mature and spacious sound. Fortunately, this doesn't change when you put it on the shelf in the corresponding operating mode. In „free-stan-





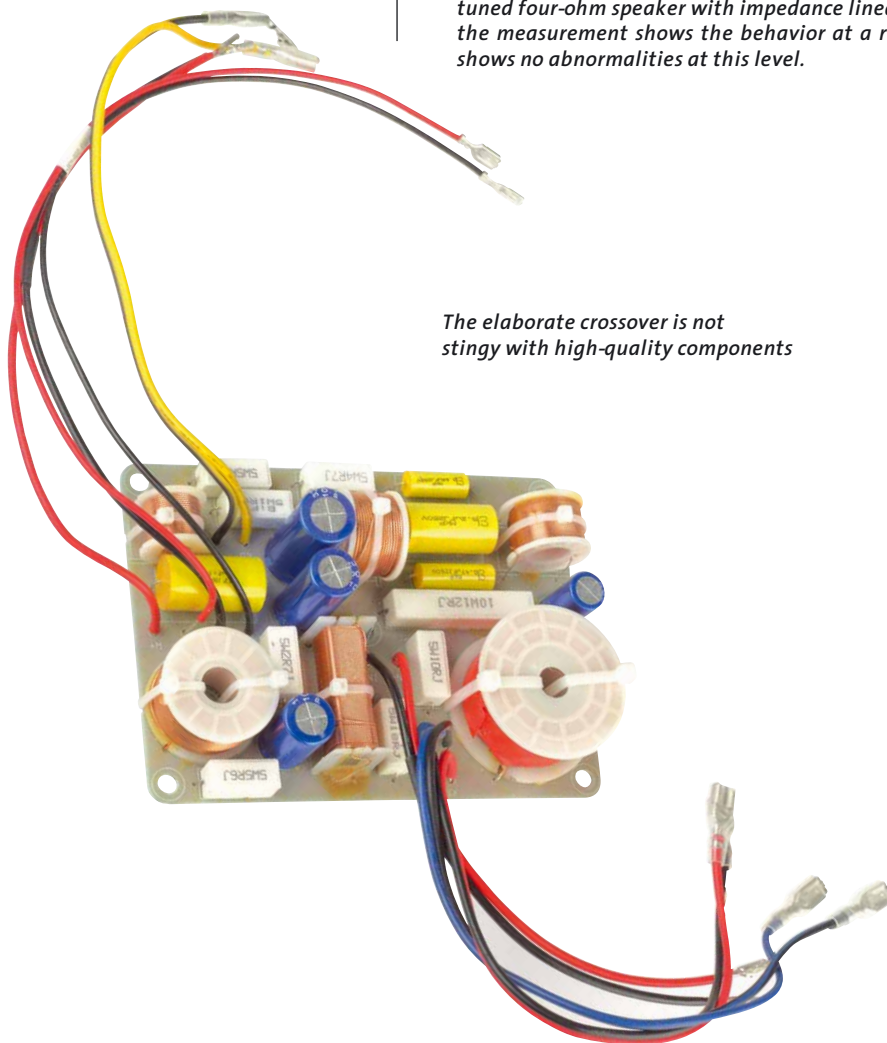
The vent is equipped with pressure equalization openings again



Measurements

Lab commentary

The small Epos performs flawlessly in our lab. The frequency response chart reveals the effect of the room adaptation, and in free-field mode, the SPL is very linear. The tweeter delivers a peak at around 25 kilohertz, which is irrelevant in practice. With an efficiency of 86 to 89 decibels (depending on the switch setting), the ES-7N is highly efficient, and the impedance measurement shows it to be a low-tuned four-ohm speaker with impedance linearization. It behaves excellently in terms of distortion: the measurement shows the behavior at a really loud 95 decibels of sound pressure; the speaker shows no abnormalities at this level.



The elaborate crossover is not stingy with high-quality components

ding“ mode, it becomes too grumpy and compressed for me, but the toggle switch solves the problem remarkably well and provides air and clarity. Great!

Then, the Epos replaced the much larger JBL 4301B in my second system, and I was amazed at how well the two thirteen-inch speakers held their own against the eight-inch speakers of the American classic. The speaker manages completely without an artificial „hump“ in the fundamental range, which is often used to suggest volume in small speakers. The Epos is entirely free of this and instead sounds concise, precise, and flawless in the bass; it doesn't even capitulate to Ray Brown's double bass. Amazing! The ES-7N comes across as lively and playful; it intones vocals such as those of „The National“ frontman Matt Berninger precisely to the point and opens up pleasingly large spaces. This is far more than can be expected from a speaker of this size.

Holger Barske

Epos ES-7N



- Price per pair
- Distribution
- Phone
- Internet
- Dimensions (W x H x D)
- Weight

2,000 Euro
IDC Klaassen, Lünen
+49 231 22178822
idc-klaassen.com
200 x 290 x 270 mm
approx. 7,6 kg



» Superb! Precise, refined, spacious, and tonally accurate, the small Epos is a hot tip for people with limited space. The room adjustment is also a true highlight.