Joachim Pfeiffer's

HiFi

SOUND & MUSIC



Preview

English version

Peak Consult

EL DIABLO



Perfect Timing

On top of Mount Olympus for loudspeakers, there blows a strong and often costly wind, and the dimensions of speaker cabinets dwarf telephone booths. But, there is another way…

Text: Joachim Pfeiffer, Photos: Stephan Schmitz

It was in Berlin in 2007 when I had my most intense musical experience. A crazy story, almost too good to be true. One that I was not allowed to tell all these years because I lacked the opportunity.

Now it is here. In the form of a loudspeaker that can do something others can't.

HiFi can do more than expected when properly implemented

The story began one year earlier. Jörg Lehmann from the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra (RSB) asked me if I could imagine using »his« orchestra as a musical benchmark to compare the original live music with a recording during the next installment of »The most expensive Stereo System in the World« (a recurring feature of the German magazine Audio in the 90s and 2000s).

I thought this was a great idea. An idea which would inspire culture to the IFA-spectacle (IFA »Internationale Funkausstellung« is Europe's biggest consumer electronics show and takes place in Berlin) conceived by my predecessor as editor in chief at the Audio Magazine. How many musicians do you have in mind, I asked? Two, three or maybe a quartett? All of them, he answered. A prime orchestra, like the RSB, has 120 musicians.

The RSB belongs to the Deutschlandradio, a national German public radio broadcaster. This arrangement made it possible for the entire orchestra to play on a especially erected stage for us in the Sommergarten (event location at the IFA). The concert began and I found myself with 120 musicians on that wooden stage.

This combination made me feel like a turbocharger kicked in. Or rather, like a rocket took off and launched me with immense musical energy into an unknown universe of sound.

HIFI Sound & Music **Fakten**

Manufacturer: Peak Consult

Model: El Diablo

Price: 55000 Euro per pair

Finish: American walnut wood, leather, acrylics

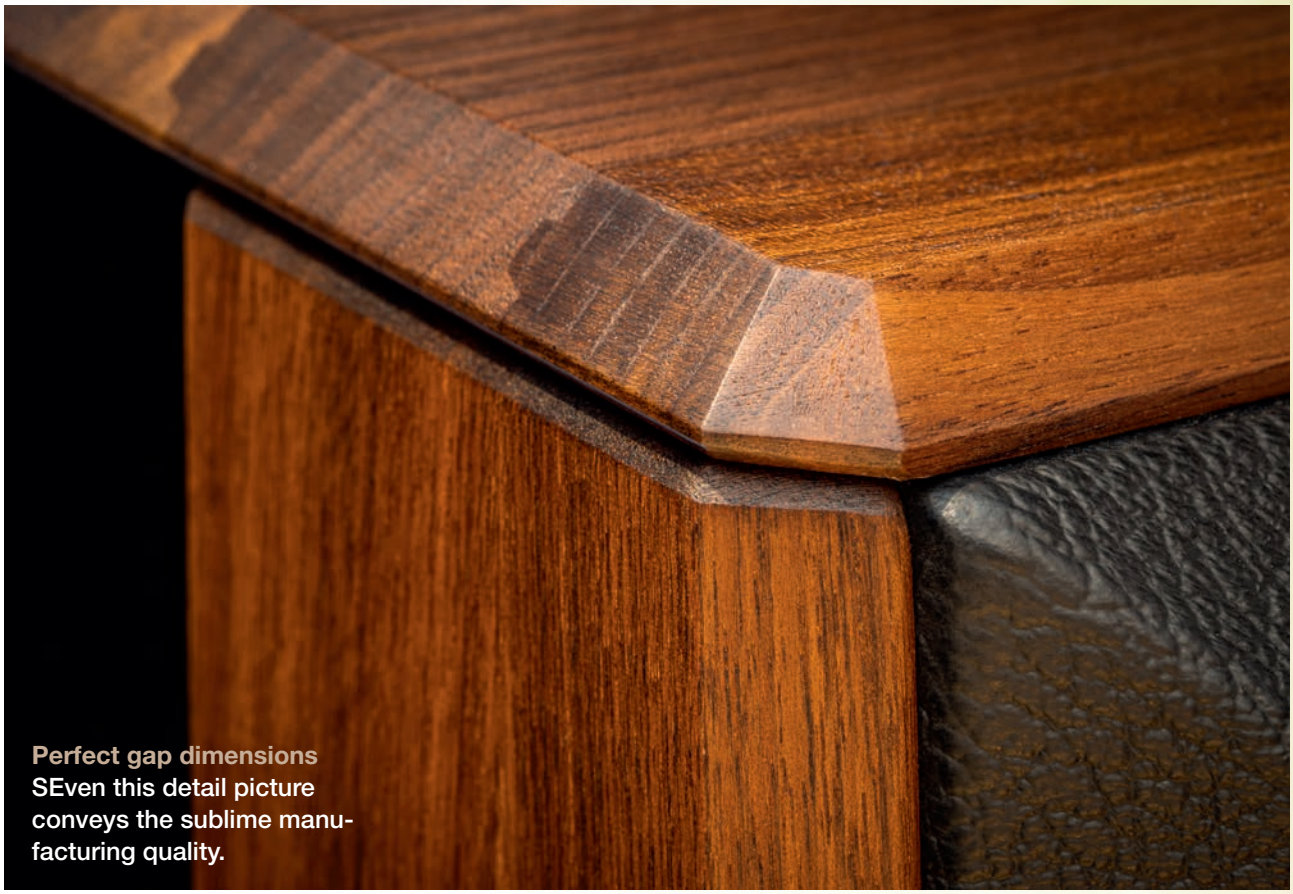
Construction: Three-way LS (Ported Double Bass)

Dimensions: 115 x 30 x 54 cm

How tame seemed philharmonic concerts in comparison, how distant and lost does classical music ripple from a HiFi system. I quickly realized, I would never have another chance for a privileged listening experience like this. I still remember how I addressed the audience. I said that HiFi ▶



Wood & Leather interact with a strip of colored acrylate to create a delicate looking sculpture.



Perfect gap dimensions
SEven this detail picture conveys the sublime manufacturing quality.



World class chassis
Not off the shelf or high volume production: individually manufactured drivers.

▶ can accomplish many things but in no way will it be able to reproduce a lifelike performance of a large orchestra. Not to mention the musical revelation that befell me just a few minutes ago.

Gigantic sounds are not a question of dimensions

With the Peak Consult »El Diablo« in its latest, obviously radically revised version, I evaluate for the first time a transducer that brings me closer to this primal experience more than anything else that I have listened to.

The »El Diablo« with its slim, inconspicuous and living room friendly dimensions pretends that it can at best create a realistic stage from the so-called fundamental range. But these wonderful sculptures draw their power from the acoustic depth. Root cause analysis: There is no doubt that the drivers of the two Danish companies Scan Speak and Audio Technology, handmade according to strict specifications, are among the finest currently available on the chassis market. Trivial as it is true: Their performance is ultimately determined by the way these valuable components are treated. The fact that comparisons are always flawed is a platitude. This one just a little bit:

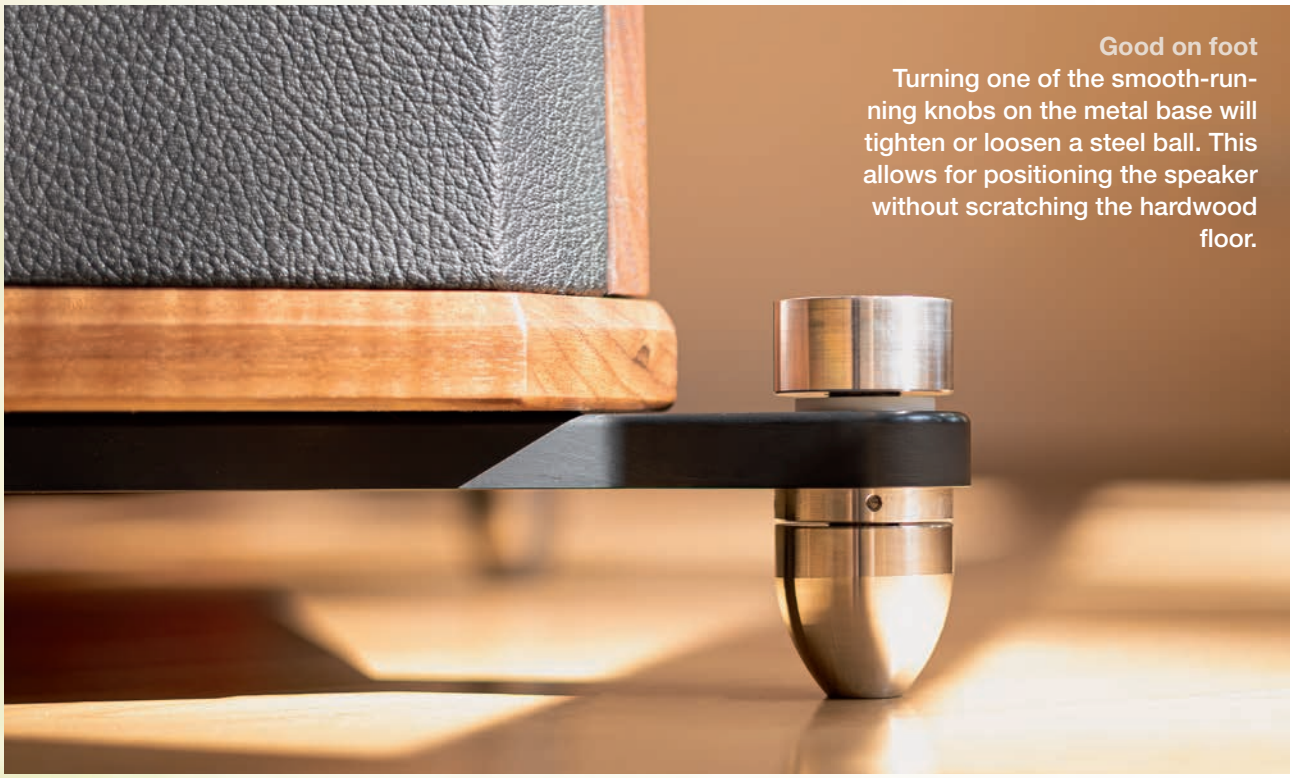
The composition of a world-class loudspeaker is like the preparation of a menu at Michelin Star restaurant. Both cases require a knowledgeable, experienced and talented, ideally an ingenious person for the best result.

Wilfried Ehrenholz, the founder of Dynaudio and currently, together with Lennart Alsbjorn Jensen, the head and driving force behind Peak Consult fits this description. On top of that, Ehrenholz surrounded himself with a network of the best. A team that works in developing, tuning and manufacturing. So they are first and foremost people who live for music and master their technical craft enriched with a healthy portion of inventive talent. The best ingredients such as drivers, crossovers, and gifted designers with "golden" ears are combined with a unique internal department at Peak Consult, a carpentry shop equipped with all the bells and whistles.

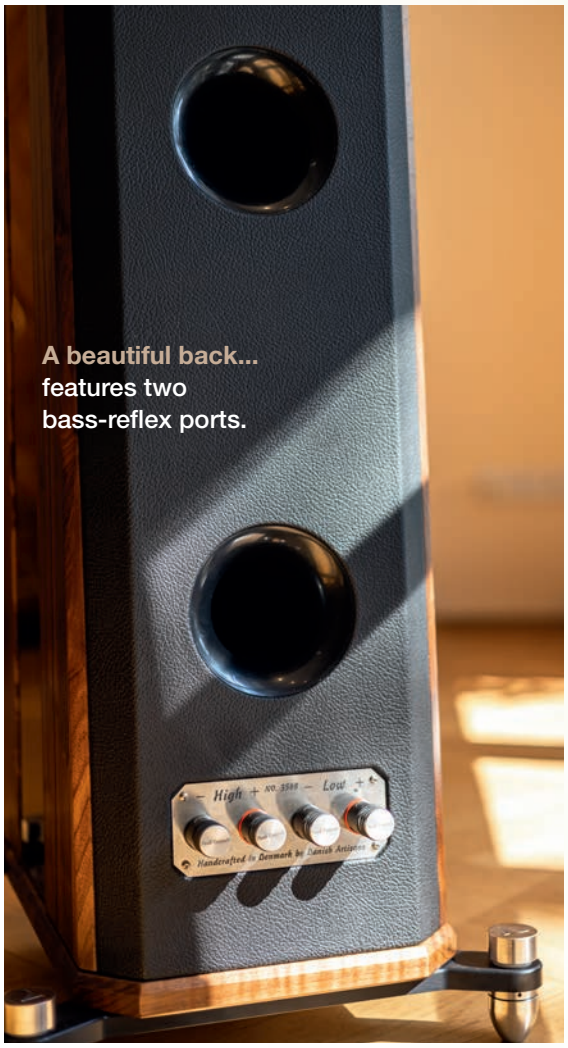
This is where actual cabinets are created that limit the mechanical impacts on all components to levels beyond measurement. The »El Diablo« weighs 90 kilograms. Not the pair, but one piece. You can't tell by looking at them, but you can hear it.

How just one instrument separates the wheat from the chaff

One of the most meaningful listening test pieces of past, present and future days is the Piano Sonata No. 23, the Appassionata, by Ludwig van Beethoven, for example in Theodore Paraskivesco's version. Although »only« one instrument is played back, this sonata marks the limits of reproduction in all technical and musical disciplines. Overwhelming dynamics, from ▶



Good on foot
Turning one of the smooth-running knobs on the metal base will tighten or loosen a steel ball. This allows for positioning the speaker without scratching the hardwood floor.



A beautiful back...
features two
bass-reflex ports.

Optimized for bi-wiring
Excellent quality, but single-wiring would have been fine.



Bridging design
Jumpers like these are a compromise at best.





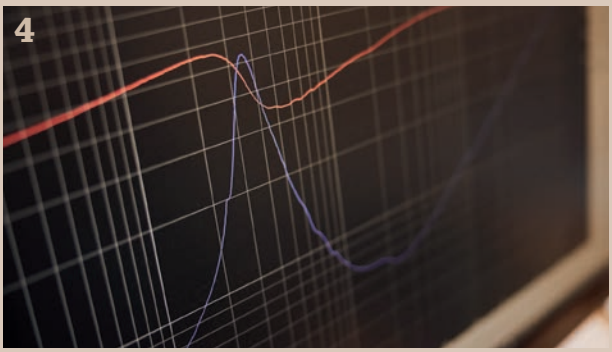
Love for detail
The steadfast support structure is assembled after the transport.

In the calm lies the **strength**









1| Good things take time
The production of a loudspeaker at Peak Consult takes several weeks. That is pure craftsmanship.
2| Hand wired crossovers
Inductors, resistors and capacitors - most of them are handmade.
3| Attention to detail
Ingeniously designed feet with the functionality of spikes - without the risk of damaging sensitive floors.
4| Measuring and listening
Valid measurements accompany development and manufacturing at all stages.

► extremely soft and delicate to the most powerful and extremely loud attacks.

During reproduction via HiFi, there must be no distortion, compression or otherwise artificial coloring present. Any deficiency or even an acoustical compromise will be exposed mercilessly by the Appassionata. The 'El Diablo' places the grand piano genuinely in the listening room.

The Peak speakers master this kind of exercise with ease. Even when almost all other loudspeakers I know sound tainted or flawed at certain passages, the El Diablo remains superior.

The fact that this happened with integrated amplifiers (Audio Systeme Schaefer ASR Emitter 1; Symphonic Line La Musica) in the chain is yet another surprise. Perfect.

Test result: Peak Consult »El Diablo«

»When it doesn't sound like hi-fi, rather like real music, we are happy, cry, laugh, dance, dream. Welcome to the realm of emotions«

★★★★★