



FIDELITY

Das Magazin für HiFi, High End und Musik.

Geräte im Test: ANALOG MANUFAKTUR GERMANY Giro — AMG 9W2 — AMG Teatro — AUDIO NOTE „Ladder DAC“ (Prototype) CALYX M Player — DIAPASON Dynamis — EMT 948 — GENUIN Straight — HARBETH Compact 7ES — HIFI BAUERNHOF Reference Stand 7 JE AUDIO Dyas S400 — JE AUDIO Reference 1 — KEF Reference 1 — KUZMA Stogi Reference — LIVING VOICE Avatar IBX-R2 LIVING VOICE Avatar OBX-R2 — MUSICAL FIDELITY V-90 Amp — SHELTER 501 III — TRIANGLE Esprit Comete Ez VOVOX Textura Fortis LS — VOVOX Textura Fortis IC Balanced — VOVOX Textura Fortis IC Direct — XIVERO MusicScope

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Diapason Dynamis

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THE SILENT TEARS OF A MASTER CARPENTER

It took a quarter of a century before Alessandro Schiavi finally gave in! After 25 years of denial, the Diapason founder finally admitted that his company too needed to build a really large loudspeaker. Over the course of those years, Schiavi had remained convinced that

simply ignore all the great halls palaces and ballrooms where a few insatiable audiophiles insist on listening to music. All you need is to declare “medium-sized rooms” to be the largest chambers in which hi-fi music can properly be enjoyed. Such a mindset is not unique, of course.

When I hear the name “Diapason”, I automatically think of beautiful walnut cabinets, compact two-way speakers and four-figure price tags. But not any longer!

By Cai Brockmann. Photos: Ingo Schulz

nobody needed massive and bulky speakers to listen to music “properly”. And who could really blame him? Every speaker that Diapason had produced for its audiophile clientèle had been two-way devices in beautiful, solid wood cabinets—also boasting an amazing sound. What’s more, when you’re keen on classical music and jazz, or are even a trained musician like Schiavi himself, it’s arguably easier to make the most of what you already have. You can then

Until quite recently, Porsche also refused to see the need for a four-door model in its product program.

However, Diapason’s compact speakers are obviously so good that adherents frequently call out for more. And there comes a time when fans who want to use the speakers in “large rooms” can no longer simply be fobbed off with a recommendation to add a top-class subwoofer. The call for a really large Diapason loudspeaker became

louder and louder until, 25 years down the road, the company finally listened. This led to the unveiling of Diapason's first four-door model—sorry!—its first big three-way speaker. Is this the perfect piece of equipment for the owners of great halls and ballrooms? Of course it is. In this case, however, the word “big” means it's suitable for any room of 30 square meters and above.

But before the Dynamis could be introduced to the expectant audiophile world, the Diapason team had one serious and almost philosophical problem to solve. As I have already mentioned, all other Diapason speaker models come in beautiful solid-wood cabinets that are crafted with possibly unparalleled skill and perfection. Beautiful as it undoubtedly is, solid wood has an almost natural upper limit in terms of size and the number of sides. When it comes to crafting a six-foot, solid-wood speaker, even Loris the Silent has to take a rain check.

You haven't met Loris yet? Loris Copiello is Diapason's in-house carpenter, and a true master of his trade (see FIDELITY No. 15, issue 5/2014). Visiting his workshop, I was able to see the first experimental carpentry work for the big Diapason. I was also able to see the expression on his face when he realized that he wouldn't be able to create the complex lines of the new speaker out of solid wood. At least not



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» without risking the emergence of tiny cracks a few years (or decades) down the line.

As a consequence of this, the Diapason team decided to switch to HDF panels as the basic material for the Dynamis cabinet. As Schiavi says, this material “doesn’t sound as dead as something like marble.” Which is certainly true, and I’m glad they also decided against using concrete, stainless steel or lead for exactly the same reason! Owing to the use of High Density Fiberboard, they were able to restrict the total weight of the Dynamis to around a hundred kilos. A good portion of this weight is concentrated in the base plate and baffle, both as thick as a master chef’s chopping board. As with the Dynamis’s smaller siblings, the rest of the weight is distributed across the cabinet’s 13 other sides. Despite its weight, the Dynamis is still relatively easy to move around. Soft rollers on the base enable you to maneuver it about until you find the perfect listening position in your room. These rollers don’t ruin the dance hall’s expensive flooring or the speaker’s performance. Once they’re firmly in position, there’s no movement at all.

Should there be any problems, however, Diapason offers the option of adjustable feet – the professional’s choice. Simply remember to tick the appropriate box when placing your order. And while we’re

on the subject of “personalizing” your Dynamis, it’s also possible to replace the logo on the base. A laser is used to etch the text into a magnetically-attached stainless steel plate. Maybe you’d like to have your favorite name there, or simply “Right” (or “Left”). The only limit to your creativity is the length of the text – it has to fit between the two tuning forks on the logo. I briefly thought about choosing “Malcolm” for the left speaker and “Angus” for the right. Or “Sviluppo Tecnologie Audio”, but the company’s motto already adorns the robust wooden chests that have been blocking my garage since the Dynamis arrived.

The two unpacked speakers are now standing in my living room. The radical three-dimensional form, so typical of Diapason, is similar to the Adamantes design from 1987, and so also alludes back to a loudspeaker book from the 1950s (from Wharfedale). What’s more, according to Schiavi, the ratio of surfaces to angles is designed to give “a balanced distribution of resonance”, something he learned from an instrument maker he is acquainted with. Because even an extremely rigid cabinet still has remaining resonance, he prefers to exploit this for a lively musical performance rather than trying to fight the sound to the

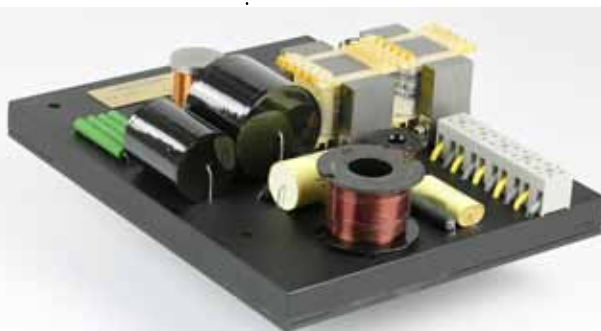
death. After all, this design principle has proved successful in the company’s compact speakers for the last quarter of a century. There are further direct links to company tradition, and especially to the Astera, the former top-of-the-range model. Astera’s excellent drivers – an 18 cm midrange from Scan-Speak with Nextel-coated paper cone and phase plug plus a 29 mm silk soft dome tweeter from SEAS – are responsible for the mid- and high-frequency ranges in the Dynamis.

A highly resilient 30 cm chassis from Scan-Speak extends the frequency spectrum into the low bass range. This features an aluminum cone and a fiberglass dust cap (somewhat reminiscent of the Magico). At the bottom of the diamond-shaped cabinet, a large and very deeply tuned reflex port supports the high-end bass driver. The cabinet itself stands on three dampened stainless steel tubes. What’s more, like its smaller siblings, the Dynamis is said to lack any sound signature that could suggest a bass reflex design. It is reputed to perform in an extremely free and relaxed manner, and be able to effortlessly fill any room right down to the deepest levels of the musical spectrum without droning. This is something we want to hear for ourselves.

So we now start setting up. The rear side of the Dynamis has a large plate with two pairs of binding posts. The screw-type terminals were specially manufactured for Diapason by a bike component maker from Brescia. An extreme biker himself in his free time, Schiavi was not satisfied with any of the components already available



- 1 Fourteen sides: optimum distribution of resonance, in the manner of the best musical instruments
- 2 Elegance: a custom-made crossover with the cabling hidden beneath it



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» on the high-end supplier market. By the way, single-wire terminals can also be ordered. Ironically, however, for an extra charge.

In cases where you or your partner (or your interior designer) cannot find the right color finish in the standard program, you will also have to pay an extra charge for your “perfect” shade. There are a number of unusual finishes on offer, such as “Glossy Gold/Copper Leaf Finishing”.

Whatever color you choose, the Dynamis is coated in waterproof fiberglass with several layers of high-gloss sealant. Interestingly enough, this curvy Italian beauty is coated and sealed by the same company that fits out the famous Riva boats. This contributes to Schiavi’s goal of making Diapason products robust enough to be enjoyed by several future generations.

Even though we are notorious for our critical niggling, we were only able to find one tiny weakness: on the symmetrical and extremely attractive-looking crossover, where the Vanden-Hul cabling exits in a hidden extra layer, amidst all the fine and mostly custom-made components, we discovered a pair of electrolytic capacitors that would probably not meet the highest standards in terms of robustness. This is surprising in view of the otherwise superb quality and attention to detail.

What’s more, the crossover features numerous options for adjusting the sound to the owner’s individual taste and preferences. This is why it is built into its own recess on the rear of the speaker, and can be accessed by screwing off an aluminum plate.

Thinking out loud, I remark that this architecture would enable a lot of innovative electronics to be fitted into this recess. With a mild smile, Alessandro Schiavi explains

that the Dynamis has been designed with maximum “upgradability” in mind. But such options are the stuff of the future, and completely irrelevant to me over the weeks that follow.

The Dynamis acts like a true professional in my listening room, performing in a truly uncomplicated and cooperative way. After connecting up the first electronics and cables I can find, the speaker races out of the blocks in a totally unexpected fashion. No bitchy behavior, no annoying warm-up exercises, no coughs and splutters, no need for constant attention. Just a brief “hello” and you can immediately choose the music you want to hear. Indeed, the Dynamis makes a distinctively alert and good-humored impression. It is immediately raring to go. Quite phenomenal! There was probably little difficulty in choosing the name of this speaker. It greets its listeners immediately and effortlessly with a laid-back yet captivating dynamism. Using the Greek word was simply a nice, extra touch.

FIDELITY has often talked about “truly high-end” devices, and about “great” or even “brilliant” performances. But, in this case, it really hits the nail on the head! It takes only a few seconds for the listener to appreciate

the amazing intrinsic qualities of this speaker. The Dynamis fills every corner of the room with sound – feather-light and detached yet massively space-filling at the same time. Its extremely wide range of sound can be heard even



THE REST OF THE TEAM

Turntables: AMG Giro, Audio Note TT 2, Clearaudio Innovation, EnVogue Astra

Tonearms: AMG Giro, Audio Note Arm Two, Clearaudio Universal, Nottingham Analogue Anna 12"

Pickups: AMG Teatro, Audio Note IQ-3, Clearaudio Da Vinci V2, Transrotor Figaro

MC transformer: Audio Note S2

Phono stages: Clearaudio Absolute Phono, Pro-Ject Phono Box RS

Music servers: Burmester 151, T+A MP 3000HV

CD players: Audio Note CDT-3, Soullution 541

DAC: Audio Note DAC-3 Signature

Preamplifiers: Audia Flight Strumento #1, T+A P 3000HV

Power amps: Audia Flight Strumento #8, T+A A 3000HV

Integrated amplifiers: Soullution 530, Westend Audio Monaco

Cables: Audio Note, HMS, Vovox

Mains conditioner: IsoTek Aquarius

Accessories: Clearaudio Double Matrix Professional Sonic, LignoLab TT100 and “Die Bank”, Solidsteel HS, various products from Harmonix and Subbase

» under the most unfavorable conditions – through a closed door while standing in the corridor. But that’s something you shouldn’t talk about too loudly when there are hard-core sweet spot adherents around – you’ll probably get a dirty look. So we decide to choose the best spots on the sofa.

Alessandro Schiavi has delivered the Dynamis to me in person, and sets about making the last tiny adjustments to the positioning. Finally, he adjudges its performance as worthy of the official benchmark. There is a serious background to this. The speakers in a Dynamis pair are supposed to sound like identical twins and produce exactly the same measurement data, with practically no deviations from the reference pair in the company’s own premises.

So, when a speaker performs in such a powerful and captivating way after only a few minutes of playing time, what do we decide to do? We decide to have fun experimenting with different combinations of cables, players and musical styles. Who knows, we might even find one or two weaknesses. But, apart from the obvious fact that a low-power amplifier connected to a pretty average and



bassy 4 ohm speaker would not normally be the equipment of choice, the Dynamis proved to be an absolute team player. Instead of hogging the limelight, it highlights subtle acoustic characteristics of the upstream electronics, including the cable. And it certainly doesn’t have to be the Van den Hul CS12, although this is used inside the speaker and is Diapason’s favorite cable. Personally, I prefer the amazing Vovox.

How does the 3000 HV series from T+A sound? Or Soudation electronics? Or the stylish Italian equipment from Audia Flight that is allowed to display its flair a little later on? What impression can the unassuming yet powerful combination from JE Audio make? Or the heavyweights from Musical Fidelity?

The Dynamis has no trouble at all in revealing the sound signatures produced even by top-class electronic equipment. But it does this in a completely gentleman-like way, without raising its eyebrows or going into a huff. This is an extremely attractive quality that makes the speaker really easy to live with. Have I already mentioned that the wonderfully integrated bass can descend to the furthest





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» depths of the basement and fill the room with sound? The performance is sharply defined and feather-light at the same time. So much so that, after only a few moments, you'll glide from critical listening into pure enjoyment. With the right choice of music, and in sharp contrast to its roughly-edged exterior, the Dynamis can be a real seductress. But it's not limited to schmaltz and Bel canto – it can deal effortlessly with the entire musical spectrum right through to Rock 'n' Roll and heavy metal. The Dynamis belts out Fauré's Requiem, featuring double symphony orchestra and choir, in all its glory, three-dimensional and room filling. It also copes easily with Cathedral organs, and after Brian Setzer's Big Band is unleashed, interspersed with shrieking electronic guitar. And when Boris Blank's subito transforms your living room into an exclusive nightclub. Nothing whatsoever seems to cause problems for the big, new Diapason. It masters anything you throw at it, on the highest possible level, and with a finesse that really justifies its ambitious price tag. All in all, the Dynamis is an excellent combination of artistry and artisanship. Instead of having just one "best side", it has just as many as the cabinet it comes in.

One might think that really expensive equipment such as this (and you could almost buy a 4-door Porsche for the price of a pair of these speakers) always take high expectations in its stride. However, experience teaches us that this is by no means always the case. A lot of high-price speakers seem to focus on only a small portion of the music spectrum, thrusting their own technology into the foreground rather than serving the music they are supposed to be performing. The Dynamis, however, immediately casts its spell over me and keeps me entranced »

- 3 The tweeter is custom made by SEAS and has a coated silk dome
- 4 The midrange, also from Norway, boasts a Nextel-coated paper cone and phase plug
- 5 The woofer originates from Scan-Speak, with modifications by Diapason

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» for weeks on end. Alessandro Schiavi has succeeded in retaining all the outstanding qualities of his previous products, and has added at least one further attribute: magnitude. A truly tangible and exciting magnitude thanks to a bone-dry and bouncy low bass and the sense of energy that only truly large speakers can create. What's more, the excellently implemented bass extension also dramatically enhances the spatial dimension and permits higher peak levels – but this is simply the icing on the cake. All in all, the performance of the Dynamis is so precise and finely-balanced that I was able to



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listen to it for weeks on end, with no desire to hear anything else. No matter how much is happening around me, the fantastic Diapason Dynamis lets me sink into a world of my own. This is a speaker that is great in terms of both size and sound!

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6 Color samples for cabinet finish: you can order practically anything except solid wood. The color of our test system is ...

7 ... "Glossy Sparkling Bronze", only one of 1001 possible color variants!

Diapason Dynamis

Type: 3-way floorstanding, bass reflex

Sensitivity: 89 dB/W/m

Nominal impedance: 4 Ω

Drivers: 30 cm woofer from Scan-Speak with aluminum cone, 18 cm midrange from SEAS with Nextel-coated paper cone, 29 mm tweeter from SEAS with a silk dome; all drivers have been modified by Diapason

Crossover frequencies: 150 Hz, 2500 Hz

Special features: Bi-wiring terminal with custom-made screw-type terminals (single-wiring terminal available for an additional charge!), 14-sided cabinet, fiberglass coating inside and outside, bass reflex aperture at bottom, base plate with magnetically attached stainless steel logo (can be personalized), finely-adjustable crossover accessible in separate recess on rear side, internal cabling with Van den Hul CS12

Versions: HDF cabinet entirely coated in fiberglass, with high-gloss finish of choice, several unusual colors available, such as "Chocolate Paper Effect" in gold, silver or copper

Dimensions (W/H/D): 45/128/71 cm

Weight: 100 kg

Warranty period: 5 years

Price for pair: 45,000 EUR

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