

Paradise gained

Shahinian Arc Speakers \$7890



Richard Shahinian started the design of the Arc loud speaker over 30 years ago when he was working at Harmon Kardon in the US. He has since created his own company (now run by his son) producing a range of loudspeakers designed for the reproduction of natural instruments and voices.

Appearance and Features

The design of these speakers is unusual to say the least. However, I thought they looked attractive as soon as I set them up. They don't attract much attention, as they are compact at only 650mm high, but are beautifully finished in an American Oak wood veneer.

The front baffle is at a 45 degree angle to the cabinet and within it are a 25mm super tweeter, a 38mm titanium dome mid-range unit and a 200mm polypropylene woofer. The rear of the cabinet holds a 250mm passive radiator. A sturdy set of cable terminals is underneath the cabinets.

Because of this design, a wide variety of room placement choices are available, meaning you can put it partially behind furniture or plants.

Set-up and Sound

I found that these speakers were very easy to install as room placement is not that critical due to the top firing design of the drive units. I placed the speaker cabinets 50cm from the rear wall of my lounge to accommodate the rear mounted passive radiators, and made sure they were located well away from corners.

As these units were brand new, I allowed a couple of days' running-in before I had a critical listen, and found that the weight of bass could be fine-tuned by moving them out a few more centimetres from the rear wall.

The highs are clear and shimmering, the mid range has beautiful transparency and the bass is rich and deep. Even though this is the case, there is an aspect to this speaker that stands head and shoulders above any other speakers I have heard in my 30 years as an audiophile. They have the uncanny ability to transport me to the original place where the recording took place.

I found myself listening to music played in concert halls

“Cellos resonated, trumpets blasted and kettledrums thundered”

and spacious churches and experiencing different recording studios from around the world.

The sense of real musicians playing real instruments is so well created, I found myself forgetting I was listening to a set of speakers. The separate voices of a massed choir and the delineation of instruments of an orchestra have to be heard to be believed: cellos resonated, triangles hung in the air, trumpets blasted and kettledrums thundered.

I am sure you get the picture. From string quartets to rock groups, real musicians played real instruments in my lounge.

Conclusions

These speakers are designed and manufactured by a lover of music for music lovers and they have an uncanny ability to recreate the original recorded event.

The bottom line? They are so good I want to keep them. Now I will have to pay the price for being an audio reviewer, because having them in my house is audio heaven, and having to return them is audio hell.

By Paul Burgess



+ The ability to recreate the original event

- Expensive but totally worth every dollar

= All you will hear is the music

Key features

- Power Handling: 250 watts maximum
- Frequency Response: 28-18,000Hz/-3dB
- Nominal Impedance: 6ohms
- Sensitivity: 87dB
- WxHxD 350x650x250mm

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