
Subject: Re: Builders of ART arrays: Impressions?
Posted by [FredT](#) on Fri, 13 Apr 2007 09:09:42 GMT

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Bass: tight, fast and tuneful, with strong output down to 40hz and nothing below that. The most noticeable characteristic of the bass is it's tactile impact on transients such as the strike of a timpany or bass drum. You'll really notice this in songs like "Gaia" from James Taylor's Hourglass CD. Also, the eight woofers are capable of fairly high bass output levels. Midrange: Surprisingly good for such inexpensive woofers. It doesn't have the absolute clarity of more expensive speakers like the Vifa XT series and the Seas metal cone drivers, but I was pleasantly surprised when I first heard it. Upper Range: That Vifa DX25 is the same tweeter used in the Studio One and Two Pi speakers, with the same first order crossover (a single 10uF cap). It's ever so slightly edgy compared to the \$120 Founteks in my Selah Audio arrays and the \$127 Scan Speak tweeters in my Eros MKII MTM's, but better than you would expect for a \$25 tweeter. You can remove almost all the "edge" by upgrading the Solens to Sonicaps, a worthwhile \$40 upgrade. Vertical off-axis: Not good. They don't sound objectionable off axis because their deficiency is one of omission - much of the upper treble disappears. That's the big downside of using a point source tweeter with a woofer array. At the listening position the vertical sweet spot is about two feet high, so if you're standing they will not sound right. Horizontal off-axis: Very good. All those drivers mounted in a straight line result in a wide sweet spot. I set my toed in slightly, which seems to give the best midrange/treble balance. Overall sound: Much better than you would expect. Luther Ward (Wardsweb) heard them and commented it was the best sound he has heard in my upstairs listening room. Fun Factor: About the same as a tall, thin, athletic Sports Illustrated swimsuit model who loves to play all kinds of games with you;) OK, maybe I'm exaggerating a bit, but I spend more time listening to the ART arrays than I do to any of my other speakers. Imaging (width height, depth, pinpoint vs. diffuse): A Houston Audio Society friend was over Saturday nite, and he said he could hear "lots of air with precise placement of the instruments across the soundstage". He also commented about how good the center image is when the CD features a solo vocalist. The image doesn't extend much beyond the outer edges of the speakers - they're not as good as my Jim Griffin MLTL full range single driver speakers in this regard. Dynamics: Just a bit shy of spectacular! I have about a dozen disks that feature uncompressed dynamics, and I find myself spinning these a lot. This is a characteristic of all the line arrays I have heard, and I believe it is why all the arrays that get reviewed in the audio magazines impress the reviewer so much. Pros (of sound): Soundstage, dynamics, easily drawn into the music. One big plus for these speakers is that they are easily driven to room filling levels by most tube or SS amplifiers. They are versatile enough to sound good with all the other amps I've used with them including 3 watt Bottlehead Paramours, NAD 320BEE, Monarchy class A monoblocks, a 10 watt KT88 SET, an Assemblage 300B SET, and a 40 watt Ella EL34 PP amp. They reach their full potential with about 20 watts. Cons (of sound): A pair of two ways costing the same \$350 to build would use higher quality drivers, resulting in greater resolution, but the tradeoff would be in the dynamics and sensitivity. Upgrading: I have the Selah Audio XT8's in the other listening room, but I plan to keep the ART arrays too. I'll have these at the Lone Star Audio Fest, so some other more objective listeners will be able to comment after that.
