
Subject: Re: 4 Pis at low volumes

Posted by [mikebake](#) on Thu, 24 Jan 2002 00:05:18 GMT

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"In my experience, electrostatics loudspeakers are very clear at low volumes while dynamic loudspeakers require a fair degree of volume to convey a similar amount of information." Well, maybe cheaper dynamic ones do!! (Cheaper drivers, not price!) I'll take a meager shot at an answer, knowing that Wayne's response will trump mine.....I think I know what you mean, but "clear" and "convey a similar amount of information" seem like a bit of two different things. It seems you are saying that at low volumes (but high power, as electrostats need a lot of power to get going even at low volumes) the electrostats present a sound that is revealing, maybe life-sized, stable, and perhaps musical? I think it depends very much on what these other dynamic speakers are that you are referencing. Many average non-electrostatic speakers need to be played at a certain healthy volume level to sound like they are doing something, but the better horn/high eff. designs do this from low levels on up. Plus, a dipole is radiating more power into the room at seeming low volumes than you might imagine. My Maggies always needed 10:00 on the volume knob to even begin to spring to life, and even when the subjective volume was low, they were eating considerable power. Then when things got really interesting, they were either gobbling all the power I had, or sounding like they were suffering a compression of dynamic range. They simply couldn't handle the dynamics when it came time to let'em rock. I did like them for creating a large soundstage, though. My current speakers, however, need 1/10 the power to get cruisin'. I think I understand your point, but being specific would help answer this. It is entirely possible that these "dynamic" speakers, regardless of price point, used fairly mediocre/higher distortion drivers, or suffered from a less-than-optimum cabinet design. I am pretty familiar with the sound and characteristics of the drivers (JBL 2226 woofer, JBL 2426 tweeter) that can comprise a professional series 4 Pi, and they are good, accurate devices.....and I have owned and listened to various electrostats and planars for years.....they were my favorites for a long time.....but frankly I think you just need to hear one of Wayne's speakers...a good system like his will give you clarity and a big soundstage, but will add dynamics and impact. This ain't PR, it's just why I drifted into this camp and stayed. Within the horn/high efficiency realm, guys like to disagree about some of the specifics, but they are all fans of the genre for a good reason. Give us an idea what some of the speakers you have heard are. They may help with an answer.