Subject: Theater 4pi audition
Posted by dwkurfma on Tue, 28 Jan 2003 12:56:17 GMT
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I had a chance to audition a set of Theater 4Pi speakers here in town on Saturday. These were built using the Peavey horn lens. The timing was excellent since I had just been listening to Klipsch RF5's and B&W 603's the previous two days. I thought I would pass along my impressions for anyone that cares.The Pi4 speakers were driven with a Basie preamp and a pair of Wave DT power amps.First, the sensitivity of the speakers is most impressive. It was easy to generate the "you are there" sound pressure levels that many systems simply can't reproduce. Additionally, the sense of force and power from a piano was entirely accurately reproduced, along with string bass and electric bass. There was no sign of sloppy overhang on the bass or boom. For anything other than howitzers and the lowest organ notes I really don't see any point in subwoofers with these. Excursion was never an issue, and driver motion was virtually non-existent at even the loudest levels. Neither was there any sign of chestiness on male vocals. I really expected to hear some "spit/sizzle" on the high end, but didn't hear the slightest trace. With my eyes closed there was absolutely no evidence I was listening to a horn. Very impressive performance on every front!I did note that the speakers do not have the last touch of airiness on the high end that some domes provide, but they never seemed lacking for realism when playing cymbals or drum rim shots. They definitely did not have the peaky high end that can be so fatiguing. I would take the high end in a minute. There was a bit more obvious change in sound during vertical changes than I would have expected, but this horn is fairly directional vertically at higher frequencies. I found that I preferred to stay directly on axis to the horns. So, to this point, again, I consider them remarkable speakers, though too big to get past my wife!They only drawback I found was a slight sense of what I would call a "wooly" sound that seemed only to affect vocals. Sting's vocal on the 'Sabrina' soundtrack sounded recessed, or distant, and a bit like someone had placed a thin layer of felt or foam in front of the microphone. This same affect was observable on female vocalists, but not to the same extent. I didn't have my pink noise generator/display with me so I didn't have a way to try and pinpoint where this might have been happening, or whether it was a slight boost at some frequency, or a bit of a suck-out somewhere. The speakers were well away from all room boundaries and sound treatments were placed to absorb early reflections. I preferred the sound with the early reflection treatments removed, but that was very much a matter of personal preference. Some might find the result a bit too bright.All in all, a very satisfying speaker, though I think the stage series is probably more suitable to my listening environment. If only I can find an acceptable box and figure out something for a center channel!Best regards, and thanks to Kevin for his hospitality.Dan