
Subject: Re: Just scored a pair of 3pi speakers!
Posted by [krikor](#) on Mon, 08 Mar 2010 18:30:16 GMT
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tom-m wrote on Sun, 07 March 2010 20:45Hi krikor,
I think I saw these on eBay. If correct, they did look very nice. After you listen to them a few days, I would be curious to hear you thoughts on the sound.

Yep... found them on eBay. I always keep an eye out for local listings as I don't trust shippers for most items, and these are way too big/heavy to ship economically. Picked them up last night and put them in my main room replacing the Magnepan 1.6s (Squeezebox>Cary 306/200>PS Audio GCC-100 integrated). They are an older pair and the cabinets are not perfect, but very presentable as long as you don't look too close.

Got to say that right off the bat I was a bit perplexed by their sound. Huge, open, spacious, but the bass was lacking and vocals had a strange "in-your-head" feel... kind of like headphones or if you cup your ears towards the speakers... a sound I usually associate with a phase problem. Vocals especially seemed completely out of place in the soundstage and much too forward. To be honest, I was quite disappointed given the following and reputation of Pi Speakers. How could a speaker so highly lauded seem so out of whack to my ears?

I thought it might just be the way the xover is designed, or a characteristic of horns which I have really no experience with, being a planar and open baffle fan. Perhaps this is that "honky horniness" I've heard described regarding other horn speakers. I also thought it might be interactions with the room, so I started moving the speakers around, trying different positions, extreme toe-in, no toe-in, and running through again and again (much to the chagrin of my wife, dog and cats) the various reference recordings I use to dial in my system.

Overall I was liking the tone, openness and dynamics (esp. vs. Magnepans!) of these speakers, and I was able to address the issues a bit through placement. But this "phasing" on vocals and a lack of bass extension continued to bother me and I knew I would not be able to live with these conditions. I also noticed that I could reduce the effects by moving to one side of the sweet spot (closer to one speaker than the other). Plus, on recordings that I know make use of out-of-phase L/R balance to add ambience at the expense of image specificity (in particular the California Guitar Trio), these suddenly seemed to be flatter in soundstage depth albeit with clearer placement of the musicians.

I took a break for dinner and watch some of the pre-Oscar coverage with my wife, but couldn't get it out of my head that something was amiss with these speakers. Buyer's remorse was setting in big time as I watched the inane fashion commentary from the red carpet . I got up, grabbed a screwdriver and removed the bass drivers (Eminence Deltas). Sure enough, one of the woofers was wired out of phase! I checked all the connections between the xover, binding posts and tweeters, put them back together and fired them up again.

BINGO! Singers snapped into focus, properly positioned in the soundstage, and the bass improved.

Unfortunately it was almost midnight at this point. I can't wait to spend some more time listening this week to get a real handle on what Pi Speakers are all about... first impressions with the woofers in-phase are very positive.

Being a factory-built pair, I wonder if that woofer has always been out-of-phase and the original owner never noticed or never cared. The guy I bought them from only used them briefly in essentially a nearfield position in a very small room at low volumes, so did not recognize this issue. I think he mentioned that the original owner had tried to sell them once, but were returned because that buyer couldn't stand the sound... this would explain it!

WAYNE... any chance I could get a copy of the original xover schematic as well as your current xover design? I want to make sure I've got everything right and may pursue an upgrade after I listen a bit more. Still need to pull out the tweeters and see which ones they are (Eminence PSD2002 I assume), and perhaps clean the tweeter screens up... they looked quite dirty and partially blocked.

Thanks.

File Attachments

1) [3PI.jpg](#), downloaded 5598 times
