Subject: Re: Just scored a pair of 3pi speakers!
Posted by krikor on Thu, 11 Mar 2010 15:31:42 GMT
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Wayne - thanks for charts.

Tom-m - I have now had a chance to get the 3pis better positioned and spent a little more time with them the past couple nights.

First off, I am very impressed... it is a rare occurrence when I drop a new speaker into the room and I'm not immediately missing my Magnepans. Once I had the woofer connected in phase, the 3Pis had me hooked and started to reel me in fast. I was almost giddy with how good they sounded just plunked down with no real attention to position (they now have the recommended toe-in crossing in front of the listening position, but I think I still need to play with the width between speakers and distance from back wall).

Let me mention a few things I like about the Maggies:
- They throw a huge image portrayal (especially in height) of the musicians... some may argue that it is artificially large, but I've always liked the sense that the performer is standing right there (I think you also adjust to the portrayal over time)
- They are very coherent from top to bottom, using a single planar membrane for both the tweeter and woofer with a very simple low-order crossover that has a lot of overlap
- They disappear in the room, surprising for what looks like a big door panel, and load the room in a way that envelops you in the music yet sounds very natural and do a great job of imaging... IF you are in the sweet spot
- Though they may not be the best when it comes to dynamics, details and low-level listening, the dipole radiation creates a deep and wide sense of the recording environment that seems to extend well beyond the edges of the speakers (ambience?) which again some may say is very artificial and can cause room interaction problems

Pi Speakers seem to be almost the antithesis of Magnepans - big ported boxes, high-efficiency, pro drivers, easy-to-drive impedance, higher max SPL, seemingly more complex xover, monopole radiation, etc. I think that's why I was so surprised that do many of those things of love about Maggies so well (yes, it was likely an "audiophile" bias against simply monkey-coffins and pro drivers)

What I've noticed about the 3Pis:
- They are remarkably coherent with no discrepancy in the xover between the tweeter and woofer that I can detect... this was a big issue I had with another well-regarded speaker featuring Eminence compression tweeter/woofer combination
- They portray a large, life-like image (read tall like the Maggies, not shrunk down on the floor) ... perhaps due to the vertical dispersion of the constant directivity?
- They create very solid images of the performers and have fantastic detail... I find it easier to separate instruments, follow vocals and pickup on ambient cues, but the detail is not etched or overdone (I've heard excessively detailed speakers that emphasize or call attention to smaller sounds in a way that is annoying)
- They sound fantastic at low levels (I always have to tweak the volume up to get the Maggies

sounding their best) and utterly effortless at higher volumes... DYNAMICS! My Magnepans seem to have a much narrower volume window within which they sound their best
- They have tremendous TONE... I love how they sound with guitar and vocals

I do have a couple of quibbles, but I need to listen further before deciding as whether or not they are real, positioning related or perception related as I adjust to the new speakers both from an auditory and visual perspective. Also, this is an older pair of 3Pi with the original crossover, not the latest design.

By the way... no fooling around when it comes to a bigger sweet spot! It's great not having to lock my head in vice while I listen.
