Subject: Are Pi's suitable for Hi-fi?
Posted by GarMan on Tue, 28 Oct 2003 19:34:42 GMT
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I just ordered a kit for a pair of 2 Pi's and I'm very excited about attacking my first speaker project. Haven't decided on the bookshelf or tower yet, but leaning towards the floorstanders.However, there are still some nagging thoughts about whether the speakers are suitable for hi-fi or audiophile use. I'm not raising these questions to troll. The fact that I've already paid for my order demonstrate my interest and commitment to Wayne's design. I've also never listened to a Pi speaker before. However my perception has been skewed by several observations. I thought this would be the right group to address these.There are several reasons why I'm questioning this:1) While nobody has explicitly said that Pi's are PA speakers, I have seen several posts on DIYAudio that have grouped Pi's and PA kits together.2) The use of large woofers. I'm not a kid, but I'm young enough that the only audiophile speakers I've been exposed to are the slimline towers, where the largest driver you see is 6" (maybe 8" but that's pushing it). Yes, there was a recent post in the Speaker BBS on how the slim towers is more of a fashion trend with high WAF, than functional design. That the best way to produce bass is still with large drivers, not multiple drivers. But for some reason, when I see a 12" woofer, I think of Cerwins.3) The use of Pi's by clubs, theaters, and halls. Perhaps it's the venues that I visit, but I've never associated club speakers as hi-fi. In fact, some of the lowest quality sound I've heard have come from clubs and live shows. But then again, I'm also listening to Marshalls cranked to level 11 at the shows.4) To me, Pi's look like those crappy club speakers that I've been exposed to. I've certainly seen some beautifully finished cabinets. But all you have to do is slap some gray carpet on a Theater and it looks just like those concert speakers.Rather than let my perceptions guide me, the best thing to do would be to build the speakers and listen. However, any comments from this group would be appreciated.

Subject: Re: Yes.
Posted by Matts on Tue, 28 Oct 2003 20:00:15 GMT
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First, I'm not sure everyone means the same thing by "HiFi". To me, it harkens back to the golden tube era of the late 1950s, when it was tube amps and big bass reflex speakers and the LPs sounded great on them compared to what had gone before. In that sense, big sound and great dynamics, they definitely qualify.In an audiophile sense, Pi's are fine also. Array speakers can produce some great bass, but have their issues also. Like most things, it's not always the type of the design, but how well each particular model is implemented. I have Pi 2s, and have done several upgrades on my system, but the Pi's still haven't hit the wall yet. They sound very good, especially for their price range. I get a lot of compliments on them. Just cause speakers are used for PAs and professional apps doesn't make them substandard- probably the exact opposite. These are very demanding apps, much more than home use. Most Eminence and JBLs will blow the doors off of the drivers used in most of the so-called audiophile speakers in most stores.

Subject: Re: Are Pi's suitable for Hi-fi?
Posted by Bill Martinelli on Tue, 28 Oct 2003 23:01:23 GMT
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Hi Garman,1)People often ridicule something they have no experience with if it appears as something they wont like. Wouldn't it be nice to able to take your 6" woofer hi-fi speakers out to the deck for a party? Too bad they would explode, and a pi speaker with the right drivers and crossover can sound so much better too.2)The larger woofers generally provide better dynamics at much higher efficiency than small woofers. Thats the trade off. Small woofers work great with lots of power and give you a more compressed sound. For smaller more liquid tube amps, the higher efficiency speaker gives you better head room with less distortion. 3) If you took a pile of sound reinforcement gear to your living room and just plugged it in. It would sound pretty bad at your house too.  Using professional level drivers offers you some of the lowest distortion products available. Audiophile drivers are designed to give you great advertising power. Pro sound components are designed to give you performance. Its now up to the system designer to combine the right components and use the right filtering network to give the best sound quality. Sound production is different from sound reproduction. Using the same components requires a few different routs.4)If you slap gray carpet on your BMW it might then look like a Ford Pinto. The best part of buying the kits you have. Is that you can make them look any way that suits your decor the best.Here is a pair of tower 2 Pi's with a veneer a little on the wild side. Enjoy the kits and good luck,Bill

Subject: Re: Are Pi's suitable for Hi-fi?
Posted by Adam on Wed, 29 Oct 2003 02:30:55 GMT
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I'd have to concur for the most part with what Matt and Bill said here. While I think Bill underestimates the potential of audiophyle drivers (they are far more than "advertising" power), I woudl really have to agree.I've never built a true Pi Speaker in my life. What I've done could be best described as Quasi Pi's. However, several of my systems using Eminence drivers are remarkable close to Wayne's designs in crossover design, so much so that the two could be directly compared.While I don't think that my designs that are similar to Wayne's designs, or even true Pi Speakers themselves, are a fair match for the very highest end audiophyle speakers in terms of straight sound quality, that doesn't mean they don't sound absolutely excellent. I have built several pairs very similar to Wayne's 4 pi's using the Omega 15" drivers (except mine use the Kappas), and all of my customers have been *extremely* happy with sound quality, not to mention myself falling very much in love with them, and missing them over a very high quality pair of 3-ways I built to replace my set.Your kit will just about smoke anything on the consumer market for sound quality and output. Will it compete with the very best audiophyle speakers? Probably not. However considering the price point, Pi Speakers are incredibly hard to beat.Of course the other nice thing about all of this sound quality, is you can also toss them out on the deck or in the living room for a pounding house party, and not worry about blowing woofers left and right. My design (again, virtually identical to Wayne's in all but the tiniest respects) is running in high powered P.A. applications with minimal tweaking over the home version, and very

sucessfully.One thing to keep in mind... P.A. is as much or more about install and setup as it is about the equipment itself.

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Subject: Re:Hello and  Are Pi's suitable for Hi-fi?
Posted by GeorgeJ on Wed, 29 Oct 2003 03:57:02 GMT
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Hello all and allow me to introduce myself and butt in.I have been lurking in this forum for awhile and have corresponded with Wayne about his designs. I am close to building a set of Stage or Premiums 4Pi's.I have not listened to the very upper echelons of "audiophile" speakers, those in the $20,000 plus bracket, but I certainly consider myself a seasoned and experienced audiophile and music lover, having owned very high end systems in the past 24 years, including many planars and electrostatics.I have concluded that if you want (as I do) the visceral impact of live music, vocals that soar above an orchestral wall of sound and clean realistic dynamics, not much can compare to horn loaded systems.If your inclination is for low to moderate volumes, then probably a couple of grand will get you a little smoother sounding and "imaging" speaker than a horn based system, with lots more WAF.I have designed and built a few "audiophile" type systems and full rangers. There are merits to all of these approaches but high efficiency and low distortion at realistic SPL's are it for me.I'm here because I'm impressed by Wayne's knowledge and no-nonsense approach and will let you know how I make out with the 4Pi's.By the way, I have built the 2Pi's and they are darned impressive for the money.Fergus

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Subject: PA speakers and Pi Speakers - the difference is
Posted by Adrian Mack on Wed, 29 Oct 2003 07:43:35 GMT
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Hey GarmanThe 2Pis are the smaller speakers compared to 10Pis, etc, so they'd be suited to the home environment and not large clubs etc. 4PI Pro's would be great for clubs. PA speakers themselves are really only different in that they can go real loud - but nothing else can be known just by the name. Its also nothing to do with "horns" which are not limited to PA use. Pro Sound woofers like Eminence shouldn't be looked upon as "bad" just because its got the word "PA" attached to it. The entire thing needs to be evaluated to see if its suitable for use in your HiFi application. Those slimline towers with the 6" woofers work too. I think the 2 Pis use 8" ers. The 4Pis use 15"ers. Its not really the diameter of the driver thats the issue. Advantage to using large diameter woofers? Nothing, if its a piece of crap. But if its something good like JBL 2226, then its a different story. I have JBL 2225H 15" drivers that I use for the midbass/lower midrange. I use them because of their excellent directional control characteristics, low distortion, high efficiency, and high maximum output capabilities. Basically without knowing anything about the drivers themselves then we cannot make a decision. Driver diameter means just about nothing to me.

The only thing I like about large diameter woofers is that people can go "WOW!" when they seem them :-) Implementation of the parts also plays another huge role. Good quality parts won't sound good unless they are setup correctly. EG: Crossovers, boxes, baffle spacing, etc. I think you'll be happy with the 2PIs though. I dont have 2 Pi's, but looking at the parts used and the design that Wayne has done for 'em looks like they will be great performers especially for the cost. Adrian