Subject: Journal of a First-time Builder - Pt 3: First Listening Session
Posted by GarMan on Tue, 11 Nov 2003 17:56:47 GMT
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I finally got my kit for my Tower and could not wait to hear how they sound. I spent an extended lunch playing with them and thought I'd share my impressions. However, please note that this listening session was done under the following conditions:1) The drivers came right out of the box and was probably used for the very first time.2) The drivers were not installed into the baffle with a tight fit. Only enough screws (and nails!) were used to keep it from falling off.3) The cabinet had no insulation installed.4) A port has not been cut from the cabinet.5) The back panel was fitted on tightly, but was only clamped in place. There was a gap along the entire length of one side between the rear panel and the rest of the cabinet due to the speaker wires entering the cabinet.6) This is my first experience with high efficiency speakers. Some of these impressions may be old news to you, but they're new to me.So, under these less-than-ideal condition, what were my impressions?- The speaker produces very high SPL. I purposely did not use the word "loud" because to me, it did not sound "loud". I've always associated the term "loud" as a negative term. When the volume is too high and the sound starts to break up, distort, or become painful, that's when I say "That's loud." But with this speaker, the music just has more presence .... more "there". So much so that it completely drowned out my Polk R30 on the other side (Yes, Polk R30. That's why I'm building a new pair of speakers). I did not realize how high the SPL was until I put my left ear against the driver for a closer listen. An hour after doing that, my ear still has a slight ring. The speaker is a lot like my Grado headphones. It's very easy to lose track of how high the volume is because the sound level climbs without any hint of distortion. I think "big" is a better description of the music than "loud". - Macro dynamics is excellent. Sure, you can crank these speakers up to very high average volume. But it's the swing between peaks and valleys and the contrast between them that brings magic to the music. Again, music sounds "BIG".- I have not decided if the speaker is "bright" or "detailed". But I am hearing a lot more in the top end than ever before. I've always known that Diana Krall's Live in Paris had a lot of noise in the background, but through these speakers, the noise was very prominent. I'm sure this will change when the drivers break in and the cabinet's completed properly, with insulation, fitted rear panel, and port.- Whether the speaker is currently "bright" or "detailed", it's showing me that there's a much bigger gap between my turntable and CD player than I thought. The vinyl front-end consists of a VPI Jr., PT6 arm, Grado Gold, and a DIY phono stage based on Hagerman's Bugle. The CDP is a $200 Sony player I got 10 years ago. The brightness was a lot less noticeable with the turntable than the CDP. Funny thing is, when I use the Polks, the CDP sounds "right" while the TT sounds too warm. Could it be that Polk tunes their cheaper speakers to sound good with cheap CD players? Bottom line is, now I have to upgrade my CDP. Curse you Wayne!The amp I used was an ASL 1001 integrated (KT-88 x 4) in triode mode (24W of power). Hopefully, after this weekend, I'll have all the parts cut and screwed/glued together properly, and be able to give a proper listening impression..... More to comegar.

Subject: Thanks for keeping us posted
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 11 Nov 2003 18:45:13 GMT

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Thanks for your impressions.I can hardly wait until you make the port and install insulation. The midwoofer sounds pretty good in a cabinet this size without a port, and response isn't peaky. But it definitely has less bass, having f3 of 70Hz. When you port it, you'll drop f3 by a full octave to 35Hz. And by adding the insulation, you'll improve midrange clarity quite a bit too.Thanks again for keeping us posted with your progress. The photographs and descriptions are most interesting.

Subject: Are you talking about the 2 Pi Towers?? Thanks
Posted by nutube on Wed, 12 Nov 2003 13:20:07 GMT
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Subject: Yes.
Posted by GarMan on Wed, 12 Nov 2003 14:03:53 GMT
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Another one of my long-winded entry about my experience building the 2 Pi Towers.

Subject: Brightness...
Posted by mollecon on Thu, 13 Nov 2003 00:10:57 GMT
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Thx for keeping us posted Garman. Concerning the brightness: As long as you have the speakers by & large working like a closed box, they'll probably lack some warmth & fullness in the bass (apart from the relatively high -3dB point Wayne mentions) - this will affect the perceived sound in the HF area; they may sound bright even though it's more a question of too little level in the bass. It's a well known psyco-acoustical phenomena. :-) So don't start adjusting your other equipment before the speakers are actually running as they are supposed to do!Just my two cents.