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Full Tower Speakers

Atomica Audio Floor

THE ELEGANCE OF SIMPLICITY MEETS A UNIQUE RESEARCH

by Alberto Guerrini

You should know that behind the brand's achievements there is a considerable amount of know-how, resulting from the industrial network that has turned Foligno into one of the centres of excellence for advanced technology. First of all, the cabinet is made using numerically-controlled machinery, which allows for exceptional precision; its components are also assembled using press bonding, which makes it possible to obtain final shapes that sound like a single block. The cabinet consists of a blend of natural poplar and birch woods (the same used for the legendary Ls3/5A designed by Rogers), shaped according to a concept of zero vibration research, using variable-geometry rails with extremely high rigidity; combined with the tempered-glass sides, these rails allow the overall rigidity of the cabinet to be dramatically increased, thus enhancing precision and the ability to focus and control the bass.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKERS

The project is a two-way full tower with a D'Appolito configuration and rear reflex tuning; the customer is offered the option of adding the innovative Atomica Reflex system, which allows them to adjust the resonance frequency of the box according to their needs, up to a virtual closed-box arrangement.

The Floor speakers feature two 18cm diameter woofers, with a diaphragm in treated cellulose pulp, supported by a rigid extruded aluminium chassis.

The tweeter is a 28mm diameter Morel with an Acuflex dome and is especially characterised by its aluminium voice coil.

The bass loading is a reflex, as previously mentioned, with adjustable Q, up to a virtually closed box suspension (if configured with the Atomica Reflex option). The variation with respect to the very first version: instead of the wooden nosepiece at the bottom of the extendable tube, there is a new nosepiece made of oriented expanded polymeric material, which allows a 6 dB range of adjustment of the low band – as in the previous one – but this now happens in a much more gradual way. The rotation of the knob acts as an actual logarithmic potentiometer, making the adjustment more effective and regulable at the same time. Daniele Melelli confessed to us that achieving this result was not easy at all.

The cabinet is assembled in poplar and birch wood, carefully layered by press bonding; this allows to create a single block with very high rigidity, considering the very high thickness of the variable geometry rails, the rear and upper walls, and the front baffle itself.

The front baffle housing the speakers is finely curved to phase the tweeter with the two mid-woofers.

The synergy between the single block and the thick tempered glass sides results in a cabinet capable of dispersing very large amounts of energy in a very short time, and of working at very high output volumes without the slightest parasitic vibration.

The tempered glass sides are not only visually striking, they also give the speakers a rich and accurate sound. When properly implemented, materials of such different mass and flexibility combine to create a cabinet with excellent elastic and inertial properties.

The base is made – as with Fraxinus – of AISI 304 steel; it has height-adjustable conical spikes (4 per speaker) or feet.

They are obviously very suitable for soundproofing medium to large rooms – they are even guaranteed to support amplification of up to one kilowatt without clipping.

Floor speakers feature a proprietary crossover with home-wrapped coils with internal wiring and top-quality materials, and thanks to the glass side walls it is possible to admire the crossover in its overall layout.

Available finishes are: white and black lacquered, Cherry, Blue Electric, Light Walnut, top finish, or any RAL colour on request. The overall weight suggests the great rigidity on which the construction philosophy is based, with each speaker weighing 75 kg.

Power terminals are in a bi-wiring configuration, and are also home-made with CNC machines.

LISTENING TEST

After a really long break-in period – I've had these speakers for months –, I decided to use our listening test disc, conceived together with Fonè founder Giulio Cesare Ricci: **Percorsi Sonori (Sonic Paths) N° 1** (Fonè e Fedeltà del Suono, SACD).

1. E. Delmar – I loves you Porgy G. Gershwin (album: Fonè Records SACD 042): we begin with an introduction by Maestro Giulio Cesare Ricci, directly from the Rossini Theatre in Lugo di Romagna. As soon as you listen to the door being opened and hear the sound of his footsteps, you can sense the environment being compressed and immediately returning information from the walls of the room. The woods of the panels, the reverberations detailing the distances, even Giulio Cesare's footsteps approaching his classic Neumann microphones set – carefully positioned to best capture the emissions of the instruments – would have been enough to instantly understand the exceptional qualities of the Floor speakers.

The output effect when the voice cuts in tells us that the design result of these full tower speakers is spot on.

We begin by describing the first track with the distinctive and remarkable features of Elaine Delmar's voice, especially in terms of midrange output quality, which is ideal for the D'Appolito configuration of the speaker group. There is plenty of fine details, there is also an abundance of micro information not only around the mouth and lips themselves but from every single instrument played in the track.

The focus is extremely accurate, and paradoxically best captured when all the instruments are in action. The environment around the artists is perfectly reconstructed, we don't notice any flaws nor voids.

The piano is as dynamic, expressive, and articulate as the soloist's voice. The drums are delicate and slightly on the warm side of timbre, characterised by real flashes of dynamics and stylings of material - truly brilliant.

2. J. Leary - Bumpin' on sunset (album: Vital Records - VITAL 003): we move on to the exceptional recordings made by David Manley, whose rights were acquired by the founder of Fonè himself. We have here a strong, deep, well-proportioned double bass, with a strong, secure, and very well articulated action. The persistent squeaking of the bass drum pedal is perfectly audible. The piano is also powerful and loaded with information on materials. The amount of micro-information is so great that you tend to get distracted while listening. The strings are so effective that they crack like a whip throughout the track.

3. T. Cochran - The river bends (album: Fonè Records SACD 044): piano, guitar, drums, light percussion – everything screams how well designed this speaker is. Dynamics and microdynamics are distinctive factors that truly stand out. There is great articulation in both

midrange and low-midrange as already shown in the previous track. In this case, we have the conga in addition to the double bass, and the transparency qualities come through clearly, even in these areas of the overall spectrum, and they are truly amazing.

The three-dimensional reconstruction is very realistic and combines with the timbre rigour of the instruments. The guitar vibrates and stands out because of the material of the strings and the overall oscillations of the neck and soundbox – an instrument whose parts you can easily tell from one another. The percussion sounds fast, strong, dynamic, and most importantly in perfect synergy with the rest of the ensemble, without attempting to take over or lower the overall level of emission precision. The tiny details you notice at the end of the track are worth the whole listening experience.

13. G. Zucchetto - Altas ondas Raimbaut de Vaqueiras (album: Fonè Records SACD 9822): another recording in an almost ancestral setting in terms of features and effects.

The opening flute is delicate and at the same time rich in detail and chiaroscuro, very articulate and, most importantly, positioned in the sound stage with remarkable precision.

The lute is brilliant and rich in textural detail.

When the voice breaks through – and it does break through –, we immediately appreciate the exceptional positioning and focusing qualities of these speakers. The quality and naturalness that can be perceived are remarkable, the voice is articulated, detailed, enriched with a dynamic contrast and a micro-contrast that can almost carry the mind to the visualization in the listening room of the performer, in terms of depth, amplitude, and even height of the sources. The second counter-chorus voice is just as authentic and genuine when heard in a listening room, with great precision of emission and equally impressive differentiation of overall timbre.

Tambourines and other instruments are added to surround the music, gradually filling the listening room – with no cancellations whatsoever – while remaining firmly on their own emission paths.

The holography is exceptional and the sensations of being carried are once again intense and imaginative to say the least.

CONCLUSIONS

Well, after liking the Fraxinus so much, we were destined to simply adore these Floors speakers, which represent the very first step of Atomica Audio Solutions on the top-quality Hi-Fi stage, with their truly amazing design from both an aesthetic and a manufacturing point of view.

We liked their naturalness of timbre and their great suitability for large attack and release transients, as well as their ability to reconstruct some of the most complicated sound scenes ever. They allow for an effortless representation of large orchestras, yet an extreme delicacy with very small ensembles, while maintaining a very high dynamic range.

Voices are reproduced with a great deal of micro-information texture, presented with confident focus and great precision.

I have to be honest: I liked them so much from the first moment I saw them, that I ended up buying them.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating!

TECHNICAL FEATURES

Full Tower Speakers

Atomica Audio Floor

Type of project: passive 2-way bass reflex floor-standing speaker, D'Appolito configuration, rear-vented reflex port with optional chord length control;

Layout: Reflex with adjustable Q or closed box (if equipped with Atomica Reflex)

Number of drivers: 3 Morel;

Number of ways: 2;

Type of drivers: 28 mm Morel tweeters with Acuflex dome and aluminium voice coil, 2x midwoofers, 18 cm diameter with treated pulp cone with extruded chassis;

Frequency response: 25 Hz - 25,000 Hz (in a typical environment);

Sensitivity/Efficiency: 91 dB 1W/1 m, 94 dB 2.8 V SPL;

Max. applicable power: 1,000 W/pair without clipping;

Nominal impedance: 4 Ohm (minimum impedance 3.55 Ohm) (4.37 Ohm at 1 kHz);

Terminals: double set of terminals for bi-amping and bi-wiring, with proprietary screw clamping;

Base: height-adjustable conical spikes made of CNC-milled AISI 304 stainless steel parts;

Cabinet: zero-vibration frame made of poplar, birch, and transparent tempered glass sides;

Grid: none;

Available finishes: White/black lacquered, Cherry, Blue Electric, Light Walnut, top finish, or any RAL colour on request;

Dimensions: 470 x 530 x 1280 mm;

Weight: 75 kg each.