

# HIFI CRITIC

**AUDIO REVIEW  
MAGAZINE**

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**£17 (UK)**

## **HIGH END 2016**

Jason Kennedy spent three days at Europe's biggest hi-fi show, but we only gave him two pages for his report

## **A PURR OF PRE-AMPS**

Julian Musgrave compares a number of pre-amps and passive system controllers

## **dCS ROSSINI PLAYER + CLOCK**

Chris Binns assesses dCS's Rossini CD player/DAC and its associated Master Clock

## **WHY DO WAV AND FLAC FILES SOUND DIFFERENT?**

Dr. Charles Zeilig and Jay Clawson measure the sound quality loss when interconverting FLAC and WAV files

## **WILSON AUDIO SABRINA**

Martin Colloms tries out an accomplished floorstanding, three-way moving-coil loudspeaker with ample power handling

## **ROGUE AUDIO SPHINX V2**

Paul Messenger auditions an affordable hybrid integrated amplifier that combines valves with digital amp modules

## **MUSIC & MORE**

## **REVIEWED THIS ISSUE**

MFA Baby Classic  
Cambridge Audio Azur 851N  
Benchmark AHB2  
Thorens TD124  
Focal Sopra No2  
First Watt M2  
Naim NAP 500 DR  
Townshend Allegri  
Bespoke Audio  
Gamut D3i  
XTZ Tune 4  
NVA The Second Statement  
Exposure 3010 S2  
Rogue Audio Sphinx V2  
Glasshouse Passive #1  
Vincent SV-700  
Hattor Ultimate Passive  
Little British Monitor  
Roksan Caspian RPP  
dCS Rossini Player+Clock  
Glasshouse TVC  
MFA Classic 632 Phono Amp  
Rothwell Headspace  
Rothwell Simplex  
Lounge Audio Copla  
Lounge Audio LCR MkIII  
MFA 632  
MFA Classic Step Up



# AudioSmile LBM

THIS LITTLE BRITISH MONITOR COMBINES TRADITIONAL MATERIALS WITH MODERN FEATURES

Initially financed through Kickstarter, this fully formed desktop monitor sells for around £500/pair. Designer Simon Ashton has come up with a tiny little loudspeaker that sits on special decoupling stands. He's quite deliberately adopted a number of traditional techniques, such as birch-ply cabinetwork (ported through the base), conventional Class A/B amplification, and active drive (which is potentially far superior to passive operation, and should provide a substantial advantage).

The electronics are all packaged within one of the speakers, communicating with the other via a four-conductor cable. Besides the conductor output socket, this 'master' speaker has other things on its rear, including a modest metal heatsink, a volume control, selector switches for input, on/off and bass alignment (wall/space). Inputs include one *via* Bluetooth aptX, a 3.5mm analogue signal input jack and a 30V DC power rail from the

supplied mains in-line supply. A thin foam grille is removable, albeit with some difficulty.

Although the weight of the cables might make its physical stability rather marginal, the sound of a connected LBM was an immediate and very welcome surprise, thanks to very low box colorations. Bass is inevitably somewhat constrained, but by much less than one might expect – sinewave measurement indicated that output was pretty well maintained down to 60Hz when close-up (which is more like 100Hz when further back).

Above the bass, and slight lower-mid leanness, the in-room far-field averaged trace looks very smooth and well ordered, while the low coloration and small physical dimensions help ensure excellent imaging. I've long been a big fan of B&W's tiny *MM-1* desktop speaker, and while I didn't have the opportunity to make a direct comparison, I reckon the LBM justifies its £100 higher price, and therefore deserves a Best Buy rating.

HIFICRITIC  
BEST BUY

