



Audio Physic Classic 8 Excellent Entry into the Audiophile World

 Testurteil
2019

90/90
Oberklasse

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With its graceful shape, the Classic 8 blends well into the domestic ambience. In satin white, it harmonizes remarkably well with modern furnishings.

Are equipment feet audible? Yes, they are! Despite the Classic 8 being the second smallest floorstanding speaker within Audio Physic's entry-level series "Classic Line", this slender one meter tall column clearly demonstrates onto which high sonic level the company from Germany's Sauerland region has already pushed their entry-class: In the course of this review, the two and a half-way speaker even makes changing the feet under the involved amplifier to an audible event.

"Entry-level series" - this term very much emits the scent of limitation. It sounds like the restricted use of both materials and expertise, thus topping it all with a confined listening enjoyment. With their Classic Line, Audio Physic bluntly pursues the rehabilitation of this common term. The loudspeaker specialists from the town of Brilon lift their entry-class series onto a quality level where many manufacturers already strike their flags. Head of Development Manfred Diestertich, who, for almost twenty years now, has been responsible for the audiophile transducers from the scenic Sauerland region, lets even his smallest series run through a laborious manufacturing process with lots of innovative solutions.

The Classic Line, for example, is equipped with newly developed drivers whose demanding manufacture requires a ping-pong-like production process between China and Germany, as only the latter offers the expert knowledge necessary for the accurate assembly of diaphragm surrounds. Moreover, Diestertich also surprises with the use of copper foam, a material hitherto completely alien to the hi-fi world, causing a significant sonic improvement when applied in the signal path of the crossover. Of course, these and other features also honour the floorstanding Classic 8, so let's take a closer look at it.

Slender Sound Column

With the Classic 8, a very well-designed, graceful beauty finds its way into our listening room: The one meter tall speaker with its narrow front of 17 centimeters and its cabinet depth of 29 centimeters cuts a really tasteful figure. While its proportions are certainly pleasant on the eye, they were indeed chosen for sonic performance: That is to say, the narrow cabinet front avoids unwanted sound reflections.

The plinth's construction also contributes to the lightness of the speaker's appearance, but does that in two ways: on the one hand, the plinth ensures a secure footing, making the slender shape possible in the first place. On the other hand, four spacers keep cabinet and plinth at distance, so that the enclosure almost seems to float. But even these spacers are more than meets the eye. The cabinet features an opening on its underside with a bass reflex port, through which the low frequency performance of the speaker is fortified. But the air must be able to move freely - and here finally the spacers with their defined height come into play. In addition to that, a second bass reflex opening is to be found on the back of the enclosure, exactly behind the tweeter.



The bass reflex vents allow for the tonal tuning of the speaker. Here to be seen is the upper vent at the top end of the cabinet. Both reflex tubes are seamlessly made in one piece, which in combination with the rounded funnel-shaped opening minimizes air flow noises.



The gently rounded edges and corners of the cabinet even emphasize the already given visual smoothness.

Impeccable Appearance

When looking at the speaker, and especially when moving and turning it around, we notice that the Classic 8 is a relatively light exponent of its kind. On the balance it accounts for a mere 17 kg. For the enclosure of their smallest floorstander, Audio Physic relies on a classic MDF body with a wall strength of 16 mm. Rigidity and resonance response are further enhanced by several struts within the cabinet. The exterior comes finished with high-quality real wood veneers, on choice are walnut, cherry and black ash.

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Model:	Audio Physic Classic 8
Category:	Floorstanding Loudspeaker
Preis:	2.390,00 Euro / Paar
Warranty:	- 5 years w/o registration - 10 years with registration
Finishes:	- Satin White - Black Ash Wood Veneer - Walnut Wood Veneer - Cherry Wood Veneer
Distribution:	Audio Physic GmbH, Brilon Tel.: +49 2961 961 70 www.audiophysic.com

Specifications

Dimensions:	1055 x 170 x 290 mm (w/o plinth)
(HxWxD)	1055 x 210 x 350 mm (with plinth)
Weight:	17,1kg / piece
Concept:	2.5-way, bass reflex
Impedance:	4 Ohms
Tweeter:	1 x 22mm Soft Dome
Midwoofer:	1 x 168mm Cone (woven glass fibre)
Woofer:	1 x 168mm Cone (woven glass fibre)
Frequency Range:	34Hz - 30kHz
Cutt-off Frequencies:	500Hz / 3kHz
Sensitivity:	89dB
Recommended Amp:	25-150 W
Power	

Scope of Delivery

Audio Physic Classic 8, Spikes with counter nuts, Front grilles (black), Spirit Level, Certificate including the confirmation of production control and acoustic test, Owner's manual (German, English)

Verdict

Sound (60%):	90/90
Practice (20%):	90/90
Features (20%):	88/90
Overall:	90/90
Class:	Top-Class
Value:	Excellent



The tweeter is a soft-dome unit with a dome made from artificial silk. It's horn-shaped faceplate serves as a waveguide.



As the midwoofer takes on the heaviest job, it features a phase plug for heat dissipation. To keep the driver securely fixed and to prevent vibration transfer into the cabinet, the mounting screws use neoprene dowels as counterparts.

But if you don't endorse wooden looks, you can have the Classic 8 lacquered in satin white alternatively. And it's this modern looking version with its slightly rounded corners and edges, that logged in for our test review. The matt finish is immaculately executed - here it's striking that the manufacturing in Germany and the final inspection in Brilon are really paying off: On the rearward nameplate, an employee signs with his initials after the final control. In addition to that, the buyer receives a certificate, on which two Audio Physic employees document the production process and verify the acoustic accuracy of the speakers. And that finally leads us to the drivers of the Classic 8.

High On Silk

For the Classic series, all drivers have been newly developed, including the tweeter. In the Classic 8 a dome made of artificial silk takes care of transducing the high frequencies, doing its job from 3 kilohertz upwards. As to Audio Physic, the tweeter runs up to a respectable 30 kilohertz, providing the perfect preconditions for a light and airy performance. To optimize its dispersion properties, the soft-dome features a small horn-shaped faceplate, therefore offering a defined sound guide. Thus, the now slightly directional highs avoid getting into conflict with the ensuing midrange frequencies. All these thoughtful detail solutions pave the way for the Classic 8 performing precisely and openly paired to a most accurate sonic imaging.

Herculean Mids and Lows

The midwoofer positioned right below the tweeter is the driver that assumes the responsibility for the Herculean tasks of the Classic 8: This driver takes care of the entire frequency range below the tweeter's operational area. Therefore, this unit has to be both robust and agile. Its 17-centimeter cone is therefore made of a woven glass fibre material, whose interweaved surface can be sensed when gently letting the fingers slide over the diaphragm. This material is as stiff as it is light, and, in addition, it features a high internal damping. This means that partial oscillations, which may arise on areas of the diaphragm's surface during the sound transduction, thus affecting the sonic outcome, hardly crop up here - even at high volume levels. As this midwoofer has to undergo a hard-working job, it also develops heat. The increase in temperature changes the electrical and magnetic properties of the driver, which in turn leads to distortion in the sound. The heat must therefore be dissipated - and this is effected via the phase plug.



Like the midwoofer, the woofer as well features a cone made of woven glass fibre. Two of the mounting screws - like those of the midwoofer - are designed as protruding pins. They are used to fix the detachable front grille. This integrative measure allows for the baffle to remain free of visually disturbing elements.

This is the black "nose" that is positioned in the centre of the diaphragm, but has no contact with it. On the contrary: Between the oscillating surface and the rigid phase plug, there is a small gap, through which the air in the driver can better circulate. The other part of the cooling job is assumed by the phase plug itself: It is firmly fixed to the magnetic motor, which is located at the rear end of the driver. The heat of the magnet is deflected via the phase plug through its slightly conical shaped aluminum body. But the shape of the phase plug is not only intended to ensure optimum sound radiation, it also helps to reduce compression effects and to minimize distortion in the mid-range, for which the human ear is particularly sensitive.

Additional Woofer for Stronger Bass

To strengthen the sonic performance, an additional driver is intended to exclusively handle the low frequencies below 500 hertz, thus contributing to the Classic 8 playing powerfully down to 34 hertz. So, while woofer and midwoofer manage the frequency range up to 500 hertz in parallel, the midwoofer above that takes over alone until it passes on to the tweeter - this type of allocating the transducing tasks characterizes the Classic 8 as a so-called two and a half-way concept. Complementing the bass range by a second driver, the slender column has enough performance potential at its command to fill even

larger rooms with sound. In order to keep the tonal balance, both woofer and midwoofer use the same 17 centimeter sized diaphragm made out of the same woven glass fibre material, whereby the woofer, however, dispenses the phase plug. Instead, it uses a dust cap to prevent particles of dust polluting the voice coil behind it, thus impairing its freedom of movement.

Installing, Setup, Connections

Now that we talked about the interplay between the drivers, this is about how the Classic 8 interacts with the listening room. In order to achieve an optimal installation, it is recommended to read the detailed operation manual. It provides exemplary assistance regarding the correct placement and alignment of the speakers. After having found the ideal place for them, as well as having fixed its final position by having it slightly angled in, we can now compensate for any unevenness in the floor using the supplied threaded spikes. The metal pointed bolts are then tightened by the equally enclosed counter nuts.

Now we connect the speaker cables to the Classic 8's single pair of connectors. What, a single pair only? Right! Experience has shown that most of the buyers go with a single-wire operation, by using solely one amplifier as well as a single cable per speaker only. Therefore, the men from Brilon do without additional unnecessarily cost-causing, but also sound-degrading connectors and respective cable bridges. The built-in connectors are made of solid metal and come thoroughly gold-plated. However, the binding posts have fairly compact dimensions, so banana pins cannot be inserted in their full length. Nevertheless they still have a good grip. By contrast, the large cross holes in the posts even allow for cables with a bigger diameter when using bare stranded wires.



The gold-plated binding posts are very compact, but banana plugs still have a good grip.

The Sound of the Audio Physic Classic 8

We get going with "Hey Now" by London Grammar, a fabulously produced tune from the British trip-hop trio: With her beautiful voice, singer Hannah Reid hovers over a fascinating soundscape of synthesizer sounds, interspersed electronica, guitar sounds, percussion effects and drums. Already the first few beats get us deeply impressed: In its advertisements, Audio Physic promotes the slogan "no loss of fine detail" - and the Classic 8 lives up to this promise with ease.

Already the introductory chords of the keyboard, let the Classic 8 catch our full attention. This is nothing to be taken for granted, as with many other speakers the listener doesn't get engaged with those first notes in such a way. Here instead, we are immediately focused. However, in fact the first real ear-catcher sets in after four beats: Dan Rothman's undistorted guitar. Actually, he throws in only a brief motif, while at the same time muting the sound with the ball of the thumb of his right hand to create a percussive effect. This usually goes to the detriment of the instrument's assertiveness. But these few selected acoustic sparkles the Classic 8 renders with great coverage and accuracy. The playing of the guitar sounds so realistic and tangible that you can see the beating and dampening of the strings almost in your mind's eye.

Detail and Strength

Furthermore, the Classic 8 manages to capture the magnificent reverberation within this track and to project it into our listening room: Our ears follow the fading tones as well as the cleverly inserted percussion effects as they float through the room into a seemingly boundless distance. This sonic candour conveys a wonderful sense of freedom. Hannah Reid then intones her "Hey Now" with her melancholic, slightly smoky voice - and we can't avoid to immediately feel addressed, as there is no amorphous voice singing into the nowhere, but a singer of flesh and blood standing right in front of us, aiming her voice straight at us. We can hear her breath move, perceive how her throat elicits rather gutturally some of the syllables. This detail-loving directness and immediacy can only be experienced through a precise and articulated transduction of the music signal. Eventually, the upcoming ultra-deep synthie bass lets our fascination turn into mere astonishment. Even at most moderate volume levels, the Classic 8 delivers the bass with an unbelievable amount of power! Already at this point the low tones start pressing the eardrums and filling our listening room with might and main. Excellent!

Better Feet, Better Sound

Now we step onto the path of sonic virtues: We exchange the spikes supplied as standard for the optionally available VCF II M8 Magnetic feet. VCF stands for "Vibration Control Foot", thus outright describing these feet's scope of activity: They reduce the vibration transfer and decouple the Classic 8 from the floor. This is ensured by a combination of two neodymium magnets with a so-called SSC special fabric clamped in between. SSC in turn stands for String Suspension Concept, which shows up as a special weaving technique that assumes most of the decoupling effect. The resulting effect of these feet is striking: The guitar gets even more articulated, yet more crisp, while the overall performance of the Classic 8 gains in clarity as well. Detail is revealed to a much greater extent: The hissing and creaking, which underscores the song after about one and a half minute, really didn't come to our attention before. Now we are wondering how this effect could have ever escaped from us. And, also other small sound effects, which London Grammar has more or less hidden in this song, emerge from the crowd. Yes, there's still a lot to discover in the song, and it's the Classic 8 updated with these feet that makes it possible.

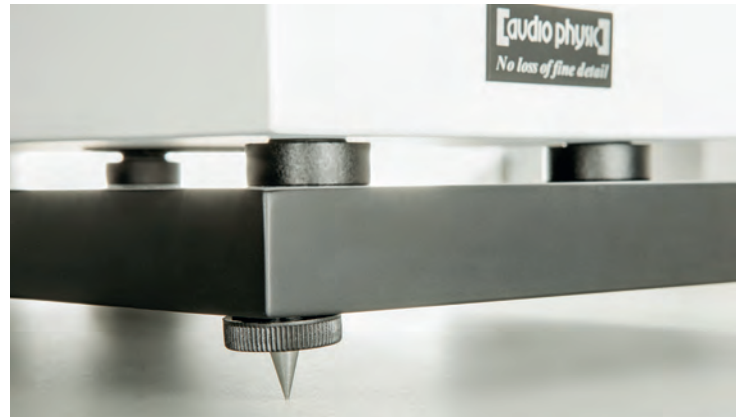


The Classic 8 acoustically demonstrates Audio Physic's corporate slogan in an impressive way.

Of course, the singing as well benefits from the change. Hannah Reid seems to have taken a step towards us, her voice addresses us even more directly, now striding out from the reverberation that surrounds her. The added clarity also benefits the low frequencies: Keeping their mightiness, they sound even more controlled and precise.

Even More To Discover

However, can it get even better? Yes, it can. The decoupling elements, which we have screwed as feet to the speakers, are also available without the threaded bolts to upgrade the sound of hi-fi components. Consequently, Audio Physic calls these feet "VCF II Magnetic Component". These discs are best used straight under the component's bottom plate, and not under its feet. And, if the original feet are too high, simply unscrew them. In this case, too, the sonic difference is quite astonishing: The performance gets even more down to it, the bass even more articulated, the detail resolution even more accurate, the sound even more open. All of those "even mores" are caused by these little black discs? Yes, that's right - but there is also a need for electronic gear and, in particular, loudspeakers, whose qualities make such sonic differences audible. The Classic 8 is able to reproduce even the smallest improvements, and that this speaker has shown in the course of this test in a very impressive way.



The plinth ensures a secure footing for the slender sound column. The spacers not only underline the visual lightness of the Classic 8, but allow as well for a free air movement through the bass reflex port embedded in the cabinet's bottom plate



Sound tuning: With the optional VCF II M8 Magnetic feet, the Classic 8 performs at an even higher level.

Conclusion

Audio Physic lifts the term „entry-level“ to a higher grade: The Classic 8 from the Brilon-based speaker specialists shows just how excellent an upper-range speaker can sound and which high pace its own entry-level series "Classic Line" has set.

The two and a half-way speaker offers a precise, sculptural, open and powerful sound, while this slender one meter tall column astonishes above all with its immense bass energy even at low volume levels. When it comes to sound tuning, the Classic 8 proves its fine imaging capabilities as well: If you replace the standard spikes with the optional VCF feet, you will experience a clear gain in performance culture, and even the exchange of feet under the upstream electronics, the Classic 8 manages to easily demonstrate. And, if you now take a closer look at the price tag, you will discover that you can buy its excellent sound at an excellent price.

*Review & Copy: Volker Frech
Photos: Frank Metzemacher*