

Audience 62



What Hi-Fi?, June 2001
Dynaudios love to dig deep



Dynaudio's reworking of its classic Audience range continues apace with the 62s, which are designed for those with a small to mid-sized room but wanting the extra scale and bass weight offered by floorstanders. Once run in over a couple of days, many of the qualities we'd expect from the Audience range become evident in the 62s – dynamics are good, and the levels of musical detail and insight are typically excellent. They deliver the Rolling Stones' Exile On Main Street with fabulous energy and realism: the vicious groove of 'Ventilator Blues' is captured with every ounce of musical aggression intact – without the overall presentation ever sounding harsh.

The Dynaudios sound best when positioned fairly close to a back wall and with a mild degree of toe-in. The bass reflex port is positioned below the 17cm carbon-impregnated polypropylene cone midbass driver and 28mm soft-dome tweeter, rather than at the back of the cabinet, which is why these speakers are happy when close to a wall. They manage to reach down further into low frequencies than their smaller cousins, the Audience 52s (a good 10Hz lower according to Dynaudio) and this gives the Audience 62s an excellent sense of scale and power. The result is that Pink Floyd's classic Dark Side of the Moon is given a finely balanced airing, power and precision combining to produce a superb overall musical effect.

Spin something more modern and that extra bass weight gives the Audience 62s exemplary authority and power with dance music. Blur frontman Damon Albarn's Gorillaz project comes across with plenty of weight and punch, the reggae-tinged rhythms conveyed in fine style.

From Led Zeppelin 1 to Daniel Barenboim's fabulous reading Bach's Goldberg Variations, the 62s are extremely even-handed and revealing performers. The intricate dynamics of Barenboim's solo piano are reproduced with panache, each tiny rhythmic figure springing clearly from the speakers.

On the technical front, Dynaudio quotes a sensitivity of 86dB/W/m and impedance of 4ohms. Now, these figures may suggest they're a difficult load for an amplifier. Do not fear, however. Dynaudio rates these things fairly conservatively, and any similarly priced amp will have no trouble driving the 62s.

Obviously we have a fine pair of speakers here, so are there any downsides? Well, they don't lend music the last ounce of blissful insight some speakers provide. While it would be churlish to criticise the 62s midrange in absolute terms, they don't quite communicate the natural edge and sizzling presence some rivals can offer.

Still, make no mistake: the Audience 62s are very good speakers. And of their type – floorstanders for smaller rooms – they are worth an audition. But in absolute terms their sound-per-pound value is not quite worth the full five stars. More than anything, they're a tad shown up by their smaller stand mounted cousins the 52s – and to a lesser extent, the even more affordable 42s. Despite the extra bass extension that the Audience 62s bigger cabinets afford them, they don't quite achieve the sheer sonic brilliance that the 52s attain for £150 less.

Given the choice, we wouldn't trade the 52s' near-magical midrange for the slightly deeper reach in the 62s bass performance. The 62s are good floorstanders, but they don't conjure the extra magic to make them true stars.

A MATTER OF IMPEDANCE

The 62s are improved over the old Audience 60s in several ways: the cabinets are taller, allowing the drivers to be positioned for optimum performance, while the heavy-duty MDF front baffle has also been made more rigid to prevent unwanted resonances. A word about impedance and 'hard-to-drive' speakers. Despite the quoted impedance of 4ohms, Dynaudio has paid special attention to the 62s' impedance curve to make it as smooth and non-reactive as possible. It's not so much a low impedance figure that makes a speaker hard to drive, as it is a bumpy impedance curve (where the impedance for different frequencies varies widely). The 62s' impedance curve is impressively smooth and linear, making them comparatively easy to drive, despite the 4ohm rating.



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Dynaudio Audience Home Theater Speaker System
Well Balanced for Your Audio Protection
By Mike McGann

In a small factory in Denmark, Dynaudio has spent most of the last 17 or so years turning out speakers, slowly. In an average year, only about 30,000 speakers leave the factory.

Like a fine wine, Dynaudio takes its time. Such patience has won the company fans, including the BBC, which is using its drivers for monitors in its recording studio in London. Sony, of all companies, uses Dynaudio speakers in its studios in New York and Tokyo.

In fairness, this high level of quality has generally come at a pretty high price. Thankfully, the company has slowly and quietly been moving toward somewhat more affordable price levels, without resorting to mass production methods. This introduction of the Audience line of speakers a couple of years back was a nice foray into the mid-priced speaker market.

We were able to get the new, updated Audience 62 towers (which replace the well-liked 60s), with Audience 42 monitors for the surround, matched to the 42C center-channel speaker. The low-end grunt comes from the Audience 20A sub, which features a 90-watt amp powering a front-firing 10-inch driver. While the entire system, at just under \$4,000 is not exactly budget minded, it makes sense to spend a bit on speakers if you've already spent \$3,000 to \$4,000 on electronic. I matched the new Audience system to Onkyo's TX-DS989 a/v receiver, in part for its ability to handle six-channel DVD-Audio inputs.

Not being the patient type, I put off my usual testing of the system in stereo mode and instead dove right in using JVC's wondrous XV-D723GD DVD-Audio player (reviewed elsewhere in this issue). Using Emerson, Lake & Palmer's Brain Salad Surgery, an album programmed into my head by my older brother Jim back in the days of Nixon, I was completely blown away.

In part, I was wowed by the whole DVD-Audio thing, which I address elsewhere in this issue. Mostly, I was seriously impressed at how well integrated this Audience system is. A lot of the first DVD-Audio releases use pans and rotation, as John Kellogg of Dolby did in his loving remix of this title. If the rears of centers are not perfectly matched to the mains, it would be pretty obvious quickly.

Thankfully, Dynaudio's 42 and 42C work exceptionally well with the 62s. It took a bit more work with the 20A subwoofer to get it to sound good, mostly fiddling with the crossover point and the gain (volume). Since you can't easily fix any speaker system shortcomings with your receiver (the DVD-Audio path runs directly through the amps, bypassing the digital-to-analog converters), this Audience system is perfect for matching with your brand-spanking-new DEV-A player.

Eventually, I did get around to listening to primitive two-channel audio, resorting to my usual test discs, Queen's A Day at the Races completely cooked, with warm bass and a strong midrange. The sound stage was very deep and wide, and detail was nothing short of miraculous. Once in a great while, I did notice a bit of spittiness on the high end, and some vocals, such as Freddie Mercury's in Somebody to Love, sounded a tiny bit brittle, but not enough to really bother me.

Not surprisingly, I found the Dynaudios even better with movie soundtracks, such as Star Trek: first Contact and Dances With Wolves. The 42C, with its single woofer, delivered sharp and clear dialogue and kept audio pans around the front very smooth. I did notice that the sub seemed to lack punch slightly once in a while, something that seemed more noticeable while watching movies than when listening to music. If it were up to me, I'd have probably opted for the slightly more powerful 30A sub, which would probably resolve my issues. The 20A seems better suited to a smaller system, maybe one made up entirely of Audience 42s.

The more I used these speakers, the more I found they lacked any serious weakness, no matter how I used them. Considering the number of systems I've heard that are either excellent for music or movies but merely competent for the other, Dynaudio has done a nice job creating a product that seems to suit any audio purpose.

While I picked a couple of very minor nits, rest assured that the Audience system is right at the top of the class for this price range. I've heard systems that are better, but only at prices that would drain the blood from your face in a nanosecond. Keep in mind, I've heard a system that cost more than twice as much as the Dynaudios but don't sound half as good.

If you've been thinking about upgrading to an audiophile-grade home theater system, the Dynaudio Audience speaker line is a great place to start, although opt for the bigger subwoofer. From what I heard, you'll be very happy, whether you love movies or music.

Audience 60 Reviews (previous model)



Dynaudio Audience 60
Extract reprinted with permission from **May 1999 WHAT HI-FI?**

Dynaudio Audience 60:

Rating: 5 Stars

Loudspeakers: £730

For: Impressive clarity; great punch and dynamics; superb bass.

Against: Cabinet finished in vinyl only.

Verdict: More fine designs from Dynaudio's Audience range of speakers.

Like the rest of the Audience range, the 60s look surprisingly ordinary. There is no luxurious wood veneer here nor stylish aesthetics - rather, your £730 buys you a pair of 80cm-tall floorstanders made of MDF and wrapped in vinyl. Build is solid, but we'd hoped for more at this price.

Compensation arrives in the form of top class drive units, comprising a 28mm soft-dome tweeter and an unusual looking 17cm polypropylene mid/bass driver. Sensitivity is fair at 86dB/W/m, and with a very linear 4ohms impedance the vast majority of price comparable amps will easily drive the 60s to reasonable levels. Finally, the Dynaudios are a single wire design, the company finding no benefits in biwiring.

Though not particularly sensitive about positioning, we found these Dynaudios to sound best 50cm or so into the room, and at least a metre or so from side walls. Thus positioned their bass extension is superb, having impressive power and weight combined with fine agility. Listen to Wyclef Jean's *The Carnival* and the 60s can't fail to please: rhythms are hard-hitting and dynamics wide-ranging. Clarity is of a high order and it's easy to make sense of the multi-layered samples and drum machines used.

Switch to classical music in the form of Tchaikovsky's *Marche Slave* and the little 60s continue to impress, boasting high levels of detail and fine stereo soundstaging. Tonally, they lend a convincing character to vocals and instruments, and while treble can sound over enthusiastic at times, this is more than acceptable in view of the openness and insight on off.

It'll come as no surprise to learn that we rather like the Dynaudio 60s. They're accomplished all-rounders whatever type of music you care to play through them. And with a performance such as this we can even forgive the lack of a luxury finish. Buy these floorstanders with confidence.