



Q&A

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AS: How does the new Excite range improve on the previous models?

RH: The new speakers have an upgraded crossover, improved woofers with more headroom and are easier to drive. We've also changed how we've engineered the phase relation of our drive units, and for the Excite floorstanders the sound is focused slightly upwards towards the listener. At this listening position, staging and imaging between the speakers is more accurate, compared to many small floorstanders, which often sound best at knee-height level or when tilted back slightly.

Can you tell us what's special about the X34's crossover?

Our woofers and tweeters generally have a very balanced frequency roll-on/off to start with, so there is no need to use steep filters to suppress any unwanted sound colorations or resonance peaks. We design most of our crossovers as a 6dB filter, but adjust this individually for every speaker model. The X34 employs a first to second order crossover (6-12dB, depending on the frequency), which uses upgraded components from the former Excite models that are closer to what we specify for our Focus series.

Why do you favour single pairs of binding posts that don't cater for bi-wiring/bi-amping?

Without going into the genuine benefits of bi-amping and bi-wiring, one can either design a good frequency split crossover or a good overall crossover. Dynaudio mostly favours an overall impedance correction and a finely tuned and balanced overall filter design. Separating such a design afterwards, and then bridging it with often cheap metal strips for users who choose not to bi-wire or bi-amp is not the right way to go. True bi-amping would separate the frequencies way before they reach loudspeaker's crossover, as in our Xeo range, which employs a DSP-based crossover feeding two separate digital power amps for the woofer and tweeter.

IN SIGHT



If you like Dynaudio's house sound and lean towards a slightly warmer presentation, consider Dali's Mentor 5 and 6 models, if you've space to let them spread their wings. If you like your music with more bite, check out PMC's twenty.23, which may not offer the low-end wallop of the Dyns, but has rhythm in spades. ATC's recently revised SCM40 three-way offers an even greater degree of honesty if you like your music warts 'n' all. Lastly, Neat's Motive SX1 that we tested in January, has excellent tonality and is less fussy about positioning, but the Neats may not offer the same levels of grip as the Dynaudios.

in this price bracket. Without being overly bright, the treble is clean and crisp, requiring only a few degrees of speaker toe-in towards my listening position to find their sweet spot. Tracy Thorn's unmistakable voice on Massive Attack's *Protection* sounds pure and natural, and how the X34s render its slight echo in the mic is hairs on the back of the neck stuff.

Firing the speakers almost straight down my 4 x 5m room allows the soundstage to expand well wide of their physical footprint. Within the soundstage, the X34's treble is a tad forward, illustrated by Tracy's voice emanating from a good few inches in front of the X34's front baffle, which gives the music a heightened sense of immediacy and realism, as it brings the performance closer to you.

The uninhibited treble combined with its layered midrange also helps emphasise soundstage depth, by placing instruments and sounds deeper in the mix, illustrating again how the Dynaudios invoke such a three-dimensional soundstage.

Quickening the X34's pulse via a 1973 vinyl pressing of *Led Zeppelin III*

shows that they aren't afraid of letting their Nordic locks down when they hit the hard stuff. The X34s hold the steady acceleration of *Gallows Pole* with ease and hit their stride as the track reaches full throttle courtesy of Messrs Page and Bonham. As the track's tempo shifts, the X34s consistently maintain a sense of vitality, as though they're eager to show off how much they like to be pushed. While they perhaps don't head too far into raucous territory as some speakers that favour the harder brand of rock tend to, the way they present the raw energy of this music in an even-handed manner makes them a composed all-rounder.

Conclusion

The £2,000 floorstander market has plenty of worthy contenders, but thanks to its impressive sense of scale and energy combined with an even nature, the X34 isn't fazed by the competition. Its recommendation does come with two caveats though: firstly, despite Dynaudio's efforts to make these a more amp-friendly speaker, you still need a decent

I'm surprised by how much punch this packs from its slender profile

amount of grunt to really open them up, I'd suggest upwards of 70W. Secondly, like with any serious floorstander, be prepared to spend time and effort positioning these speakers to focus their bass, which means a home demo is even more essential. Get these elements right and you have a speaker that will breathe life into even the most restrained recordings, with an enrapturing sound that's blessed with plenty of detail ●

Hi-FiChoice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY



LIKE: Powerful and refined sound; great quality finish

VALUE FOR MONEY



DISLIKE: Careful positioning required to tune lower bass; needs plenty of power

BUILD QUALITY



EASE OF DRIVE



WE SAY: Big sounds from a modest-sized speaker that has plenty of detail

OVERALL

