

STEREO SPEAKERS

The best things come in pairs, and whether it's standmounter, floorstander or desktop, our stereo speakers category is proof of that



The Emit M20s are easily the best-value speakers on the market right now

PRODUCT OF
THE YEAR

BEST STANDMOUNT £400-£800

DYNAUDIO EMIT M20 £600



Even if the support act is unexpectedly good, it's a relief when the headliners come on stage and top their efforts.

That's the feeling we had when we first listened to Dynaudio Emit M20s just weeks after the range's smaller bookshelves, the M10s, triumphed over (last year's Product of the Year) B&W 685 S2s.

Displaying both more authority and dynamic expression, the Emit 20s justify the extra outlay over their sibling. We think they are the most capable pound-for-pound stereo speakers on the market - quite something considering the highly talented competition from Wharfedale and KEF.

Game for everything

The scale, dynamics and insight the 17cm magnesium silicate polymer mid/bass driver and 28mm soft dome tweeter achieve lays the M20's ambitions bare. But none of it comes at the expense of musicality and agility. In Ludovico Einaudi's *Ancora*, piano sequences enjoy nuance and texture, to the point where it sounds not so much as though he's striking keys but giving you a personal lesson in advanced piano playing.

Dynamically, the Dynaudios are as capable with explosive changes as subtle ones. Each piano note is solid, exact and punctual - even if in absolute terms they sometimes trade outright analysis for fun.

Unlike some speakers that favour certain music genres, the Emit 20s are game for everything, including the glitchy synths and intensely heady electro-beats in 65daysofstatic's *Prisms*. They whisk through the song

with attack and potency, and even in the most complex moments, still pick out the multiple strands of the music - rhythmic drums, ambient guitar lines, cutting cymbals - without sidelining any element.

They exhibit enthusiasm, but manage to stabilise it with a pleasant smoothness and refinement - and that winning algorithm makes them so listenable and versatile. They aren't quite as flexible with poorer recordings - you won't get the best from them playing compressed music - and they don't care much for being shoved up against a wall. Instead they require a bit of room to hit the right tonal balance.

Passing the baton

You won't want to hide them away in a corner of your room anyway. Sporting an uber-smooth satin lacquer (available in either white or black) and driver-dominated baffle, the Dynaudios deserve to be shown off. The smattering of screws bordering the drivers make the M20s look a little as though they have been used as target practice, but if this is a concern they can be covered with the grey cloth grilles. Personally we prefer their sound with the drivers on show. Build is excellent too, which only reiterates why these speakers are such a stellar buy.

We thought it would be some time before the multi Award-winning B&W 685 S2s handed over the baton, but it just goes to show how the speaker market continues to get better. And right now, the Dynaudio Emit M20s are easily the best around anywhere near this price.