

Reviewer: Phil Baatz

Phil Baatz is a service representative for an international consumer electronics firm. Baatz is expert in system component interfacing and writes freelance commentary for hobbyist publication. An audiophile for more than 30 years, Baatz maintains a vast collection of reference recordings and is an amateur music historian.

I've always thought the electrostatic to be the ideal midrange transducer, and the ribbon to be the ideal high frequency driver. The problem was that you could not find a speaker that would offer these elements along with clean, tight, powerful, and extended bass.

I've owned or evaluated ProAc, Apogee, B&W, Hales, etc., none of which could reproduce the natural tone and timbre of the Quad. Despite a rolled off top end and a rather light-weight bass presentation, the Quad conveyed sonics that made recordings real, moving, and emotional. The Quad reproduced the heart of music like no other speaker could. Until now, that is. I believe that the FOCUS is even better. It has more

heart than the Quad, and is also more dynamic with better extension top and bottom.

The FOCUS speaker is built second to none and certainly better than a lot of speakers in the 5-10 K range. Dollar for dollar this speaker is a bargain. (How many speakers have you purchased in the last ten years, and after a few months sold them at a loss to buy a different pair?)

FOCUS is one of the most attractive speakers I've seen. It will not alienate your living room. But good looks mean very little if the speaker comes up short sonically, and sonically these speakers do it right. Let's start at the top and work our way down.

The treble is smooth and extended with natural detail. It is lightning quick with excellent attack, yet never in your face like most speakers. Triangles and cymbals stay in place with detail and sharpness, and without a trace of hardness or forwardness. There is also a great deal of air around the instruments. Just excellent!

The midrange is open and natural with plenty of body. Just check out the piano and snare drums. On vocals, there is a real person in front of you, with a chest and lips — a live breathing person. I love vocals on the Quad, and the FOCUS is even more transparent.

Midbass is very good; clean, full, and delicate. I was concerned about this area because of the three 12" woofers and the two 7" midranges. But Bill Dudleston said, "Don't worry!" and he was right. No bloat or mid bass hump. Everything smooth down to the woofer range. Check out a standup bass — what detail!

The bottom end is tight, powerful, and transparent. Kick drums, kettle drums, and cathedral organs are reproduced where you can feel the power and dynamics of each instrument. In fact, it makes you realize that low frequencies are actually the foundation for musical structure. I can really find no fault.

Soundstaging is excellent. Images are pinpoint and instruments don't wander. Depth is also very good with solid reproduction of hall acoustics in appropriate recordings. The decay of tones and shadings of timbre are superb. The FOCUS has an uncanny ability to resolve low level details.

Simply put, **this speaker is a bargain**. It's like having the best qualities of electrostatic, ribbon, and dynamic speaker in one unit. Placement and toe-in is a breeze due to careful driver matching. Just set them up and smile from ear to ear. Natural, open, and transparent with tremendous dynamic range, the FOCUS truly make music enjoyable again.

Good Listening!

