

## Unbelievable

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It is known that advertising, is a deceptive art. Therefore one can appreciate the German company *Isophon* that chose the simple slogan "*Joy of listening*" in order to glorify her new flagship loudspeaker, *Arabba D*.

"Joy" may be the understatement of the year. The *Arabba* is an excellent, wonderful, remarkable boxy loudspeaker that we heard in 2007, with endless enthusiasm, especially, when we didn't expect such a totally shaking experience.

When we entered *Isophon's* demonstrating room we carried with us limited intellectual baggage. We knew that it was one of the senior loudspeaker companies in Germany (established on 1929). We remember for the best the loudspeakers named *Europa II*, but not more than that.

The ear, mind and heart were empty as a blank sheet, and our face welcomed the Japanese percussion player Takashi Otomata. The dialog that was created between him and us, using the CD player of Accuphase, valve amplification of Octave and first of all the loudspeakers, was awesome. The presence of the music in the room shook us in its vitality. The music flowed without any interruption, incredibly balanced, and the whirlwind of the knocking pipes on the floor, the xylophone and the rhythmic bump of the base drum with reverberation of the drums, climbed from the bottom of the loudspeakers to provide a feeling of reliable reality.

The feeling that it is the best bass there is, will be kept forever in our memory – deep volumetric, spacey, and in the same time fast and offensive – I have ever heard from a valve amplifier that drove any loudspeaker. And there's no wonder about it, as the *Arabba* is equipped with three 9 inch ceramic covered woofers of *Accuton*.

The covering is thin and fragile and is protected by a perforated metal grill, but at the same time promise a super-fast movement of the membranes.

The achievement is, maybe, thanks to the Octave Jubilee (44,000 Euro in Germany), a pair of output power in strength of 250 Watt – but not just that: The *Arabba* has an internal tuning system, using bridges in the back of the loudspeaker, which adjust them to the suitable hole tune the internal crossover and adjust the output of the three woofers to the size of the room. In rooms whose size is between 25 to 50 m<sup>2</sup> it is recommended to chose a "*low*" position. In the listening room in Munich, whose area was more than 50m<sup>2</sup>, the bridges were placed in "*high*" position and the loudspeakers were placed far, as required, from the rear wall, in order that the long rear channel, for dispersing the bass from the box, will not reverberate in its action.

We mentioned the amplifiers, we talked about the units, and now it the time to strengthen the impression of the cabinet. It's made of six layers which have been pressed together, three of plywood, two of MDF and one of aluminum.

In order to strengthen more and prevent unwanted echoing which will harm the music, the people of *Isophon* filled 15 Kg sand into the MDF strips, after completing the assembly, and then close the upper part of the loudspeaker.

Near the upper board is located a separate and sealed box for the 7 inch diameter Mid unit, which is also covered by ceramics, and the inside of it is filled with damping material named *Twaron*. At the treetop shines a tweeter with an artificial diamond skullcap (and from here is the D in the name of the loudspeaker).

The upper units bring the trio aces of the event. An instrumental part of a record ( the violin concerto of Beethoven played by David Oistrakh), and right after it two vocal

demonstrations on a CD (aria from "The Magic Flute" of Mozart by Cecilia Bartoli, and Messa Creola of Ramírez by the greatest folk singers, Mercedes Sosa), which left us breathless.

Oistrakh died long ago, but in the screech recording, he lives more than ever. The combination of naturally produced violin accompanied by orchestra can be defined as heavenly; the low level was so good, that I dropped my notebook from my hand as a result of my excitement. The Brass instruments are in the depth, but something in the dynamics collapsed. The blame is not on the loudspeakers but on the dynamics' limitations of the record player. Sorry.

The voices of Bartoli deepen its entry into the depth of soul, while it goes up to the distance, the width of her singing is eternal and the depth of the orchestra is unbelievable. Two simple reasons bring me to the conclusion that here the equation between life and reproduction in the CD tends towards reality.

The height dimension is missing something and it ends around one meter above the physical size of the loudspeakers, and the two *Arabba* loudspeakers assimilated inside of them and throw to the space between them a significant part of width of the orchestral sheet, but not all of it.

And then came the peak – every sound's fan must listen to the CD of Sosa with the *Arabba*, which was recorded by D.B. Studios in Tel Aviv. And just one question troubled my mind the whole time and didn't give me peace – Did Keren Plekstein, who recorded Sosa in the studio, listen in her monitors better than me? I doubt it. Waves and waves like locusts swarming attack the buyer, the finishes' catalog – the German company suggests the loudspeaker whose weight is 77 Kg more than 200 aluminum covering in various colors, among them gold, silver, red, blue and purple; and more wood finishes in white, black and shiny red Rosewood, whose look, knocked us over.

For a pair of *Arabba* D, made by *Isophon*, Germany, the price in Germany is € 32,900. It is possible to purchase it at:

*Igal Sabo High End*, 64 Ben Gurion, Hertzliya. Tel 054-4933903

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