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Das Magazin für
hochwertige Musikwiedergabe

»A Secret Star«:

Audio Physic Tempo 25

First it's time for us to add a few words of our own regarding this special occasion. We would like to wish Audio Physic a very happy anniversary and thank Manfred Diestertich, the chief designer, for not simply grasping for components provided by the limited number of suppliers, but using his own new ideas where drivers, crossovers and cabinets are concerned. On the occasion of its 25th birthday, Audio Physic is even giving us, its customers, an extra special treat in the form of the Tempo 25, a loudspeaker that contains practically all of the features that make the company's larger models desirable and well worth a listen, yet won't break the bank. In fact, the price of the Tempo 25 makes it the secret star in the Audio Physic product range.

In the case of such a special anniversary it is only fitting to take at least a quick glance at the history of a company that has been going its own way since the day it was established. "No loss of fine detail" has always been the driving force behind Audio Physic's success and practically all of the loudspeakers from the Brilon company keep this promise with no ifs and buts whatsoever. It's no secret that providing a comforting pool of music and sound initially often fell by the wayside as a result. The first Virgo model, for example, can still be classed as an unbearable pain in the neck that denatures every single moment of musical bliss with its harsh tones if used in an unsuitable room or with the wrong setup or music player. Nevertheless, this loudspeaker was certainly a logical step required to make the subsequent models possible and there are few other companies that would have had the guts to follow this path. Audio Physic also actively experimented in other areas. Whether they were testing the Manger driver in the Medea or trying out drivers that were distributed among the walls of the cabinet, like in the Caldera, Joachim Gerhard and Bernd Theiss, who were responsible for these constructions at the time, certainly didn't hold themselves back. At the end of the 1990s, a new Audio Physic member was brought on board, namely Manfred Diestertich, whose loudspeakers looked less extravagant and whose drivers also seemed to be a bit more on the "normal" side.

Loudspeakers: Audio Physic Tempo 25

Audio Physic is celebrating its 25th anniversary with the Tempo 25, a loudspeaker that combines all of the company's top technologies.

This was, however, not the case and it was Diestertich who actually bought the really special concepts to the company. Let's start by looking at the cabinets. Many loudspeakers now have curved backs but few, however, are so complex once you get under the surface. The cabinet walls are processed using a computer-operated milling machine, which results in the interior surface of the cabinet looking like a cratered desert landscape. In using this method, Audio Physic kills several birds with one stone. One positive consequence is that standing waves are much less likely to cause detrimental effects. In addition, the structure reinforces the cabinet whilst simultaneously increasing the volume of the loudspeaker. None of this can be seen from the outside, but once you get inside, you'll find special features that barely any other loudspeakers can match.

The drivers are also not as "normal" as they look. The midrange drivers contain an extremely rigid aluminium diaphragm, which does not require major damping measures thanks to its special geometry and which, as a result of its shape, barely adds its own sonic signature to the music. Only the rim of the cone is covered by a light U-shaped rubber ring, which helps to slightly "tighten" the diaphragm. Particularly intricate constructions are involved when it comes to the baskets. A fine metal frame provides the necessary stability and heat dissipation while a plastic basket nested inside brings the desired mechanical damping to the partnership, overall demonstrating a fascinatingly logical concept.

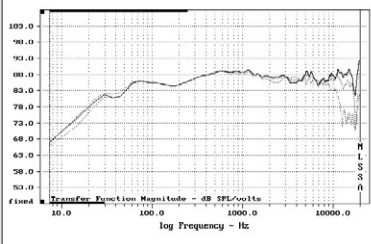
Audio Physic goes "back to the future" with its tweeter, which doesn't use a dome but reverts back to the good old days with its cone diaphragm. When developing his drivers, Manfred Diestertich discovered that he couldn't make any real progress with domes; this concept seemed to have reached its limits. So he decided to rummage through the artefacts of the past and came across the trusty old cone, which was never further developed back in its day because materials and production methods did not permit drivers with the required lightness, rigidity and hardness. But surely given the fact that current technology has opened up a whole new world of pos-

A Secret Star

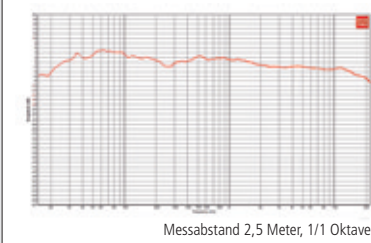
Lab report

Due to the low cut-off characteristics of the side-firing woofers, the Tempo 25 is too light in bass when measured at 1 metre. Nevertheless, the room acoustics measurement shows that this has nothing to do with the loudspeaker itself. The cone tweeter exhibits a slight resonance at 5 kilohertz, which can also be identified in the waterfall plot. The narrowband dip at the highest frequencies should not be overestimated. The impedance curve is uncritical. The most balanced result can be achieved at a 15 degree angle to the listening position; any more off-axis and the cone tweeter (similar to the ring radiator) falls off.

Frequency response: on axis, horiz. 15°/30°

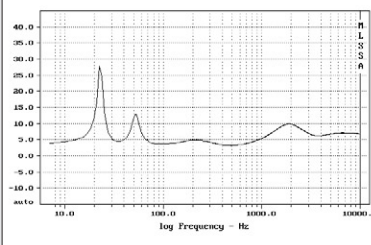


In-room frequency response: Tempo 25

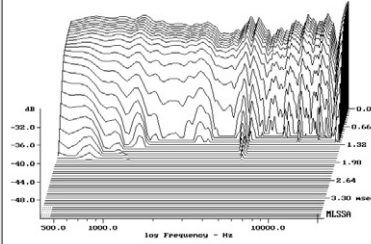


Messabstand 2,5 Meter, 1/1 Oktave

Impedance: Audio Physic Tempo 25



Cascade: Audio Physic Tempo 25



sibilities, it might be feasible to... And for Diestertich this was no sooner said than done, resulting in the present tweeter that works so quickly and naturally, with barely any compression, that it has put a smile on my face time and time again.

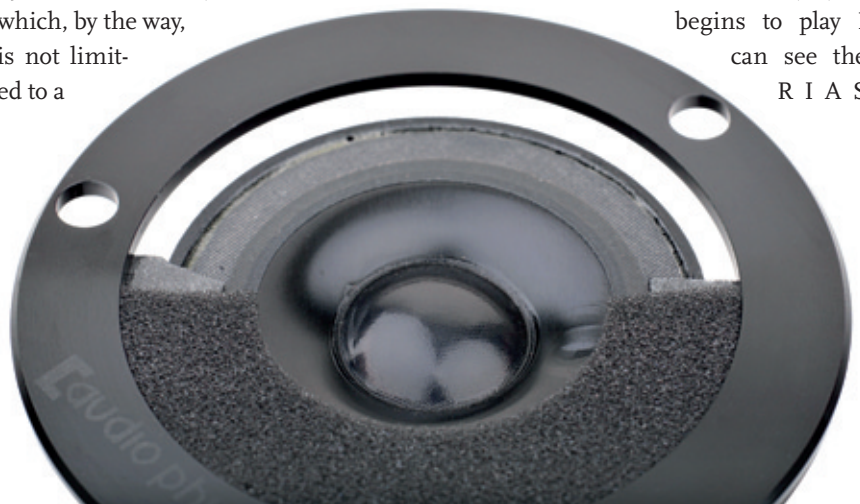
And what about the crossover? Of course! Audio Physic also scrutinised fundamental aspects of the crossover. After all, who else offers crossovers that are decoupled from the cabinet by SSC components? Who else can provide a distribution of components that strays from the norm by also placing parts of the circuit “behind” the driver? This trick created an even more natural spatial image, which succeeded in impressing us when we tested out two pairs of loudspeakers with different crossovers in issue 3/2009. Even Diestertich himself is unable to explain how these changes in sound quality come about because nothing can be proven using measurement techniques. “Something”, he explains, “has to happen on the ground path, but we still have no idea what exactly this is.” I find this whole solution really innovative and extravagant. It is certainly light years away from conventional concepts.

So now let's take a look at the Tempo 25, the anniversary model, which, by the way, is not limited to a

specific number of units. According to Audio Physic, this loudspeaker has had the most successful introduction of the past few years, meaning that, at least this year, everyone who orders a Tempo 25 is sure to get their hands on one. The newest versions of the tweeter and midrange drivers described above are used in this loudspeaker. As a result, the special edition model is on a level with the top products and can even reach the pinnacle thanks to its crossover. After the Cardeas, the Tempo 25 is the second model in which the new crossover concept is not only used in the tweeter but in all drivers. In terms of the cabinet, however, a tiny bit of cost-cutting was required and the elaborate cutouts are therefore not present in the area of the midrange driver, given that these would have boosted the price far beyond the envisaged range. The Tempo 25 makes up for this by also offering the new connecting terminal with high quality WBT jacks and a solid aluminium base plate.

But that's enough of the seriousness for now; there's an anniversary model waiting to celebrate and, together with McIntosh's MA 6500, the Levinson 390s and Stereolab cables, these celebrations can now begin! The ideal music for this occasion seems to be an excellent reproduction of Bach's Mass in B Minor.

When the introductory kyrie begins to play I can see the R I A S





Chamber Choir standing spread and out distinguished before me, while the Berlin Academy for Ancient Music provides a wonderfully defined musical background. And indeed, the good ingredients in this loudspeaker recipe produce a wonderful delicacy. I can't remember having heard this musical introduction, which I know so well, in such a wide, free, open, broad, detailed and yet so relaxed, laid back and spatially precise manner by a loudspeaker costing under 10,000 Euro ever before. Even in the case of the subsequent fugue played by the orchestra the Tempo loud-

speakers captivate me with their inoffensive and yet meticulous reproduction quality. I can identify and locate each of the vocal sections and the differentiation between the various timbres is so successful that I can even recognise individual voices within each section. The extent of the fine distinction between the cellos and the bassoon, for example, which play in unison for long periods, is truly awe-inspiring. You can sense the combined involvement of the instruments within the composition and yet can also distinguish between the two at all times thanks to the excellent resolution. Bravo!

After this performance it's time for the Tempo 25 to face a tougher challenge, which is why the second act of "Siegfried" (Janowski, State Orchestra Dresden, Eterna-LP) ends up on the turntable. Again the loudspeakers succeed in effortlessly revealing the fusion of individual instruments created by the composer, exposing every single detail without being detrimental to the magic of the overall sound. It is clear that the tremolo at the start of the pieces is formed by several sections, with the cellos then providing a short introduction leading directly into the beating of the kettledrums, which are clearly separated from the rest of the instruments, located right at the back of the room. Every fine musical blossoming and every equally delicate accent is filled with life. All of the musicians come across as so enthralling and true to life that the performance has a lasting effect.

So can these loudspeakers also handle pop music? Of course they

can, as they prove when reproducing Fiona Apple's idiosyncratic arrangements with an almost provocative nonchalance. With this music, the Tempo 25 again produces a broad and precisely distributed, in this case in a virtual sense, soundstage, playing fine, free and open high tones as well as quick, deep and crisp bass tones, without taking anything away from the midrange. Indeed, this represents the most significant achievement of this slim loudspeaker. I know other loudspeakers that can also play high, low and detailed tones well. Nevertheless, in doing so most of them sacrifice the smooth and melodious midrange, without which I simply cannot bear to listen to a singer or violin. The Tempo 25 manages to reproduce all tones without making any sacrifices and this is what makes it stand out.

Conclusion

My summary of this loudspeaker is short and sweet: I searched long and hard for weaknesses in the Tempo 25 and couldn't find a single one. This slim floor-standing loudspeaker outperforms its price range, combines a staggering number of virtues and produces such a homogeneous and integrated sound that you'd need the proverbial magnifying glass to find anything else like it on the market, especially at this price. This is exactly why I'm going to keep giving myself a special treat and listen to more music with the Tempo. *Stefan Gawlick* ■



Audio Physic Tempo 25

WxHxD	18,7 x 100 x 32 cm
Warranty	10 years
Price	3.750 Euro
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