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AUDIO REVIEWS

SWISS INNOVATION
SINCE 1951

NAGRA



AWARDSIGHTING

May 2017



CODEx

COUNTRY OF C



Reviewer: Srajan Ebaen

Financial interests: click [here](#)

Sources: 27" iMac with 5K Retina display, 4GHz quad-core engine with 4.4GHz turbo boost, 3TB Fusion Drive, 16GB SDRAM, OSX Yosemite, PureMusic 3.01, Tidal & Qobuz It streaming, COS Engineering D1 & H1, AURALiC Vega, Aqua Hifi Formula, Fore Audio DAISy 1, Apple iPod Classic 160GB (AIFF), Astell& Kern AK100 modified by Red Wine Audio, Can Audio iD100, Pro-Ject Dock Box S Digital, Pure i20, Questyle QP1R; *Metrum Adagio* [on review]

Preamplifier: Nagra Jazz, Esoteric C-03, Vinnie Rossi LIO with DHT module, COS Engineering D1, Wyred4Sound STP-SE Stage 2

Power & integrated amplifiers: Pass Labs XA30.8; FirstWatt SIT1, F5, F6, F7; S.A.Lab Blackbird SE; Crayon Audio CFA-1.2; Goldmund Job 225; ; Aura Note Premier; Wyred4Sound Nord Acoustics One SE UP NC500MB; *Linnenberg Audio Adagio* [on review]; *Metrum Forte* [on review]

Loudspeakers: Albedo Audio Aptica; EnigmAcoustics Mythology 1; soundkaos Wave 40; Boenicke Audio W5se; Zu Audio Druid V & Submission; German Physiks HRS-120; Eve Essence

Cables: Complete loom of Zu Event; KingRex uArt, Zu and LightHarmonic LightSpeed double-header USB cables; Tombo Trøn S/PDIF; van den Hul AES/EBU; AudioQuest Diamond gla; Toslink; *Arkana Research XLR/RCA and speaker cables* [on loan]; *Sablon Audio Petit Corona power cords* [on loan]; Black Cat Cable Lupo; Ocellia OCC Silver

Power delivery: Vibex Granada/Alhambra on all components, 5m cords to amp/s + sub

Equipment rack: Artesania Audio Exoteryc double-wide 3-tier with optional glass shelves, *Exoteryc Krion and glass amp stands* [on loan]

Sundry accessories: Acoustic System resonators

Room: Rectangular 5.5 x 15m open floor plan with two-storey gabled ceiling, wood-sleeved steel trusses and stone-over-concrete flooring

Review component retail: £10'450/pr in premium finish



Audio Physic. The name indicates a company concerned with measurable reality. It's not a variation on MySound to lock us into a particular man's purely subjective vision. Rather, physics are universal laws of how things work. This German company applies them to loudspeaker design, with the leitmotif 'no loss of fine detail'. Founded in 1985 by Joachim Gerhard who later ran Sonics and today operates Suesskind, the laboratory connection with MLSSA, Klippel & Co. is part of the firm's genetic code. Gerhard-era models were also predicated upon his setup ideal of very wide spacing, extreme toe-in and a close-up sitting distance. By 2017, the company which had played under the baton of chief engineer and prior Gerhard partner Manfred Diestertich [right] since 2005 was already two years past their 30th anniversary. Many of their classic models had been re-imagined for the jubilee occasion.

The new Codex tower scales up the classic Avanti platform with a new 7" mid/bass driver atop the Avanti's 6" 2-way head with 1.7" tweeter. With that addition, the Codex grew into a 4-way with more cubic volume than the still current but also revamped 3-way Avanti. Audio Physic's famous geometry of two force-cancelling side woofers has morphed into a single 10" long-throw woofer. Like an integral <100Hz passive subwoofer, that lives in its very own box tucked inside the trapezoid multi-lam main enclosure, then vents toward the floor. The narrow profile and rearward rake

remain classic Audio Physic. When the opportunity arose to review a sample from UK distributor Elite Audio, I took it. Soon a gloss Ebony pair hustled it across the Scottish sea to Shannon airport in the Republic of Ireland. I was happy to catch up with an illustrious brand whose show demos I'd witnessed for so many years without ever experiencing a pair within our own four walls.



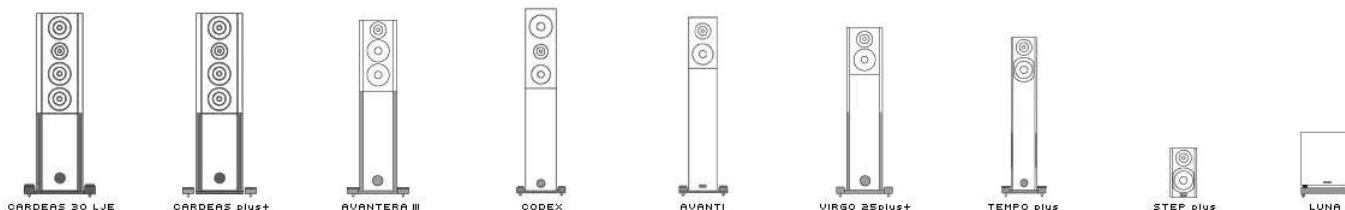
The cutaway shows porous open-cell ceramic dampers in strategic locations which include resistive damping for the holes of the window-pane braces and even the downfiring woofer v also shows discrete floating filters for each of the four ways, with the upper three drivers terminating in their own chambers. Not apparent is the proprietary nature of two of these trans manufactured for them by Wavecor on tooling developed and owned by Audio Physic.



Their 3rd-gen ceramic-coated aluminium *Hyper-Holographic Cone Tweeter* above 3kHz is not a ubiquitous dome at all but a cone with a dust cap...

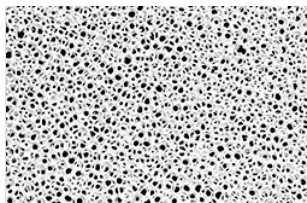


... whilst the equally 3rd-gen *Hyper-Holographic Cone Midrange* with ceramic-coated aluminium membrane explores new mechanical ground with a dual-basket array that combines a c aluminium outer for stiffness and thermal coupling with an optimally damped plastic inner frame [red in exploded drawing]. As the drivers are from their baffle and the filter boards for supports, even the single-wire WBT terminals are elastically decoupled. With a claimed bandwidth of 28Hz-40kHz at 89dB/4Q, the 44kg Codex takes up 29 x 37cm of floor space—a bit more with its stabilizers—and 119.5cm of air space. Finish options include five wood veneers and six high-gloss, yes *glass* skins. The latter not only increase weight but enclosure st The spike footers can be upgraded to Audio Physic's 'levitation' devices where counter magnets support string suspension for mechanical isolation from the floor.



Above we see how the Codex slots into the core lineup which, past the Step, continues with the Classic range. It occupies the mid spot between Avanti and Avanterra III. We might call it Audio Physic central perhaps? To learn more, I contacted Manfred Diestertich. Aside from further tech on the Codex such as crossover points/slopes plus more on the bass alignment [the Avanti's 8" woofer box with resistive foam loading at right], I was curious about which core virtues of the early company had been retained.

Going 12 years back, one can hardly call the current three owners new. To most current customers in fact, the brand's Joachim Gerhard days might be all but forgotten and hardly worth revisiting. As our very first review of the brand however, it seemed fair to at least cover this ground in passing. Companies like Sonus faber and Thiel have gone through far more recent restructuring. Like Audio Physic, the Italians are clearly successful at innovating well beyond their famous founder. Thiel's complete disregard for the brand's original design ethos meanwhile did not meet commercial support. With nearly 20:20 hindsight, how would Herr Diestertich frame the company's evolution since he took to the helm; and what was he most proud of as having pooled into their 30th anniversary lineup?



Before his email arrived, I'd given the photos on his bass solution a good long look. As it appeared to me, mounting the face of his 10" long woofer within inches of the main cabinet's side wall probably served as a mechanical brake. Ditto for the shallow woofer box's rear wall. On b forward and rear stroke, the driver's pressure wave immediately hits a solid object which exerts instant resistance, hence stopping power. The wave vents to the floor through a slot at the bottom behind the baffle whilst the rest dissipates in the main enclosure. The rear wave captured tiny woofer box too escapes toward the floor which creates a second resistive barrier. This scheme of exploiting very close boundaries reminds of the H-frame subwoofers by Voxativ and Zugspitz which had exhibited terrific control and speed during their reviews. Was this in some way related? At left, the highly porous ceramic foam such as it is made by Selee. Aluminium foam shows up in the Alporas® shelves of Finite Element hifi racks which call the material of "outstanding homogeneity and extremely low weight combined with high specific rigidity and excellent absorption." Manfred Diestertich's background in civil engineering and steel construction has him very focused on mechanical address suppress resonance. In his drivers, this includes pre-stressing the metal diaphragms with a circumferential silicon/rubber ring similar to carbon damper which pushes up the first cone breakup modes well beyond their pass band.





Halle 4 W12

18.-21. May, München

Life's too short for boring hifi



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