

Dynaudio Audience 62

Dynaudio Audience 62 loudspeakers. \$2500.

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It's not widely known, but for a brief period during the reformation, lying was elevated from its place among the prohibitions of ten commandments to a position as one of the seven deadly sins. This supplanted wrath, which was Pally sanctioned at the time. (Um, this part isn't exactly true.)

Now let me nail my colours to the mast here and say that I'm actually quite fond of lying; it's an essential life-skill. How else would we deal with moustachioed aunts, unwanted gifts or, indeed, our own mistakes and shortcomings?

Sadly, lying gets a bit of a bad rap in most circles. Which is a shame. I mean, who really wants to hear that they look fat, or that they're only averagely competent? Not me.

However, once in a while someone comes along just asking for a bit of honesty. Particularly those who claim it as a virtue of their own.

For more than fifteen years, Danish speaker

firm Dynaudio has promoted its philosophy of music reproduction with the line "Danes don't lie." It's certainly a beguiling idea for audiophiles, but is it... well... completely honest?

Whoppers

At \$2,500, the Audience 62s are Dynaudio's cheapest floorstanders. Finished in a very nice, real wood veneer and weighing in at 13.6kg each, nothing about these speakers says budget. Of course, this could just be due to the 25mm MDF used for the cabinets.

The detailing is nice too, somebody actually took the trouble to specify a set of grille mounts on the back of the cabinet, for use when listening without the grilles fixed to the front.

As for aesthetics, well that's a matter of taste, but I find them bulky, ill-proportioned and, frankly, a bit ugly. Was that too honest?

Fabrication

Setting the Dyns up was straightfor-

ward. They seemed unusually insensitive to room position, perhaps due to their front port, but probably because they are so solidly constructed. Regrettably, the insensitivity extends to their electrical characteristics. At 4 ohms and just 86dB sensitivity, the Audience 62s are tricky to drive and require some fairly solid amplification. My 60w Rega Mira was up to the task, but only just.

Porky pies

So how truthful are these particular Danes? Well, in the case of John Eliot Gardiner's stunning approach to Handel's *Messiah* (Philips 434 297-2) disappointingly so. Usually, the otherwise flawless Monteverdi Choir can clearly be heard to sing "And his name shall be Colin". I always liked that, it seemed so... ordinary. Alas the Dynaudios took us back to the original, "and his name shall be called."

It's not a fearsome or unforgiving accuracy, more a question of communicating what's really there, unfazed by the mass of voices.

This was also true for Claud Abbado's LSO performance of *Alexander Nevsky* (Prokofiev, DG447 419-2). As with the Handel, one is immediately aware of the massed individual voices rather than a wall of voice-like sound. Unfortunately, the scale of the piece didn't fare so well. The Dynaudios have a slightly restrained bass, and dynamics that make the great Russian bear seem more Denmark-sized. Honest.

Terminological inexactitude

Next I took some time with old vinyl, Sade's *Diamond Life*. On *Your Love is King*, Sade's glossy voice just oozes from the Dynaudios, and even though there's a slight hardness to the saxophone, the overall effect is quite gorgeous. For a recording that suffers from its origins in an early digital studio, the intimacy conveyed by the Dynaudios was impressive.

For a little perspective in the face of all this subtlety, I went back to CD and the *Downward Spiral* from Nine Inch Nails. Listening to *Closer* exposed tuneful and very, very controlled bass. So although Trent Reznor's psychotic, driving basslines seem a little understated, they're still intensely disturbing.



There is a surprising musicality here that even the slightly aggressive treble only seems to accentuate, adding drama and dynamism that might otherwise have been lost.

Pants on fire

So do the Danes lie? Well yes, of course they do. Just like any speakers, these Dynaudios add something of their designer's ear. But it's not an inaccuracy or an omission as such; it's more a question of using accuracy to put a positive spin on things. Telling your aunt that her moustache is a stunning and attractive feature that she should groom and display with pride.

Personally, I like the lies these Dynaudios tell. I like the purity, the lightness of touch and the way they flatter my musical taste. For \$2,500, I'd buy them, even though they look horrid. Cross my heart and hope to die. —Matthew Masters

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