

Two were the main manufacturing features I considered as selection criteria that made me decide to go for the Divine 100.49 speakers, beyond of course the widely spread good reviews about their sound performance. First of all, I wanted (needed) to have speakers with as much structural rigidity as possible, in order to keep at a minimum the interference between speaker body deformation and the surrounding equipment and room boundaries (which is a normal apartment living room). The second (criterion) was the speaker's equipment that would allow me to use tri-amping in both passive and -especially- active mode, since I wanted to try a range of different power amps that I have been using, the active mode giving me more options to calibrate their output (and the whole space) performance, and bypass the speaker crossovers, employing DSP. I can now in hindsight (after some work on the whole system and endless listening attest that the 100.49 has well rewarded and justified these choice-making criteria.

The 100.49 is a product of high quality in terms of both materials and parts used and –especially- the construction process. In the delivered product the care and quality are obvious, far exceeding the price range of the speakers (I've seen quite a few well advertised speakers at double the price that just can't compare to the 100.49 in build quality).

I initially connected 3 power amps to the passive posts of the 100.49s and the results were very good. Then I quickly proceeded to move to active/DSP driving, for the first time in my home listening life (I'm only talking about stereo sound reproduction here; I'm not interested in home theater, etc.). So my power amps were connected directly to the "active" posts of the speaker tweeters-mids-woofers. I have to admit that I currently have in use a quartet of -older and newer- reasonably priced powerful power amps (Electrocompaniet AW250R, Luxman M-03, Onkyo M-5000r, Advance Acoustic X-A160) which in active mode can drive the speakers very loud (at the limits of the listening space) using ridiculously small percentage of their rated power potential (1-5%). Especially the T+P midrange with its high sensitivity can play very loud using very low current. Maybe someone would be tempted to use low power valve/class A amps, in order to exploit the possibilities that actively driving these high resolution speakers may offer, but I am not a fan of mid-priced valve/class A power amps for all kinds of acoustic and practical reasons. Anyway, with the help of the completely configurable DSP and the "XTZ Room Analyzer Pro" that I am using now (see more details in the relevant review), I have managed to tune the output of the (3 out of 4) power amps in a way that the speaker sound is both extremely detailed and homogenous, both "nude" (no colorations, as I prefer it) and harmonious. Although even with the speakers' internal crossovers the sound is excellent, in active mode driving you get this little more directness and purity in the sound, even to the point that listeners with little experience may be "disturbed" by the reality of the reproduction (and even more experienced ears may be impressed of how much human body sound a close-up microphone can capture from a trying tenor sax improviser). I won't get into issues like bass extension, stereo imaging, etc. because these are in the end both matters of

personal preference and configuration of the system/room space, and as already noted in this area the 100.49 is a very adaptable component, including the back-side foam plugs it features, that provide some tuning in bass frequencies responsiveness.

The superb internal and external construction of the speaker's body result in very low level of speaker wall-edge deformation-diffractions over both side and top-bottom walls, something that is very much needed in my setup, as –for example- the turntable sits quite close to the left speaker and the right speaker is quite close to the room wall. Along with the other things I did to the whole system (DSP/Room Analyzer corrections, some room acoustic wave absorbing material) there is very little sound-to-object interference even at high SPLs. My subjective view is that the sound image is broad and focused in the front (of the speakers) and very subdued at the sides. This is not something I could achieve with “lightweight”-constructed speakers, as for “heavyweights”, another crucial characteristic of the 100.49 is that it achieves this body strength with use of –relatively- less wood materials, resulting in a very reasonable body width. Another speaker that impressed me with its construction behavior had to be 13cm wider (each one), and this wouldn't just fit easily in my room (let alone that it cost 3 times the price of the XTZ).

So, all good with the 100.49? Yes, if this is the kind of thing you are looking for. People who buy electrostatics or miniature “satellite-likes” just won't look at this one. Or, here are the cons: It's a bit heavier than a smart phone, it doesn't have a 2-inch touch screen, and still needs fat cable connections to receive any data, If you want everything fit the palm of your hand, you know what I mean...

As my current setup stands, I am pretty sure the Divine 100.49 have easily reached the limits of my listening space, and they can do even better in a more specialized room. I think they will keep me good company for many years to come.