



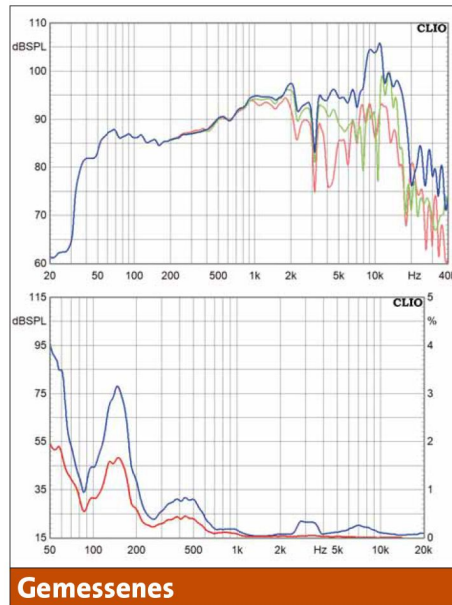
You have to be tough now. This is a loudspeaker that breaks with many conventions, costs a lot of money and is by no means the right solution for everyone. But if it fits you, then you are in Hi-Fi heaven.



The exit for the low notes: the opening on the underside forms the mouth of a horn

You have to be tough now. This is a loudspeaker that breaks with many conventions, costs a lot of money and is by no means the right solution for everyone. But if it fits you, then you are in Hi-Fi heaven. Actually, I should recommend to you to look around for a new loudspeaker from among the current models of well-known manufacturers. Their products have reached such a high standard of quality that building a conventional floorstanding speaker yourself is not even worth your effort. However, I admit that this is a rather pragmatic approach to the subject, and it is not for everyone. Some people are looking for a challenge and want something special. Whatever the cost. In this case, the cost is 12,900 euros per pair, which is so special that you have to search a long time for something comparable.

Nenuphar Mini is a product of the relatively young manufacturer, Cube Audio from Poland. Its major feature is that it has dedicated its efforts to the archetype of all loudspeakers, that is the full-range full-range driver. In other words, a single driver is responsible for reproducing the entire musically relevant frequency range. The now practically obligatory division of the action into two, three or even more paths is not employed. Okay, Cube Audio also has models with subwoofer support, but the core is always a full-range driver. These gems are real extreme structures. Cube Audio builds all drivers in-house. Actually, the company sees itself mainly as a driver manufacturer and also sells the gems individually. At the moment, there are models with 8 in and 10 in diameters, although prototypes of a 15 in type have already been spotted. The Nenuphar Mini floorstanding speaker contains one of Cube Audio's most elaborate chassis, called F8 Neo, the flagship among the eight inch types. You can buy a pair of these for 5,500 euros even without a speaker cabinet, if you have your own ideas for designing a suitable enclosure.



Gemessenes

The frequency response of the Nenuphar Mini shows a few special features. The speaker produces low tones down to below the 50 Hz mark, which is sufficient for almost all situations. From about 200 Hz onwards, the frequency response on axis starts its inevitable rise. On axis, the speaker definitely does too much of a good thing in the high frequency range, but this can be corrected quite well with correct alignment. The full range driver has an upper cut-off frequency of almost 20 kHz. The average efficiency is just under 90 decibels, which is reasonable. We are dealing with an 8 Ohm loudspeaker; the clean distortion behaviour at moderate levels is striking.

With the Nenuphar Mini, the goodies are in metre-high floor-standing speakers whose special features are not obvious at first glance. The loudspeaker must be operated at a slight angle to the rear, because the speaker "breathes" through an opening in the bottom. The enclosure volume is divided with a sloping partition into two sections of a "duct" that widens towards the bottom. The driver radiates into this duct quite far at the beginning. The manufacturer calls this arrangement TQWT – "Tapered Quarter Wave Tube". At this point, however, I have to veto it, because the Nenuphar Mini enclosure lacks the cross-section reduction at the end of the duct – a bass reflex port, if you will – to meet the specifications of the TQWT principle. As I see it, we are dealing with a flawless once-folded horn enclosure radiating against the ground, which is also confirmed by the measurements of the box.

Certainly one of the most elaborate full-range drivers on the market: F8 Neo

Mitspieler

Turntable:

- TechDAS Air Force III

Tonarme:

- Reed 3P
- Transrotor SME 5009

Cartridge:

- DS Audio DSE1
- Ortofon Windfeld Ti

Phono Preamplifier:

- DS Audio
- MalValve preamp three phono
- Lehmann Decade Jubilee

Preamplifier:

- NEM PRA5
- Grandinote Genesi

Amplifier:

- Silvercore Collector's Edition
- Grandinote Demone

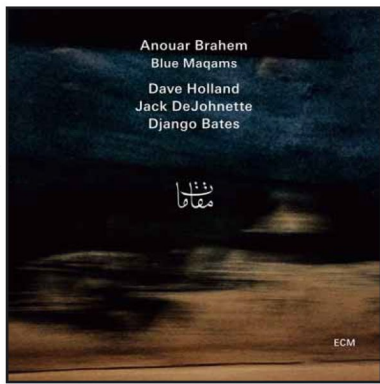
Counterpart Speaker:

- DIY Mini Onken / Focal / JBL



A total of four cones form the membrane of the exotic broadband driver





Gespieltes

Anouar Brahem
Blue Maqams

Nina Simone
At Carnegie Hall

Bill Evans Trio
Live At The Village Vanguard

e.s.t.
Live In Hamburg



The visible tilting of the cabinet is handled by two needle-sharp spikes, for which you definitely want to use suitable coasters, especially since you will have to work on the positioning of the speaker more often. It is because simply placing the thing there to listen to music is not possible with a concept as extreme as this one. The speaker has character, and this should be taken into account during operation. This is due to two things. Firstly, the complete absence of any form of electrical filtering, and secondly, the rather extreme driver. This is really a splendid piece of loudspeaker design which combines many features from the early days of loudspeakers with very modern technical elements. The diaphragm, for example, is actually made of four parts. In addition to the large cone for the low tones, there are two “whizzers” that are intended to support the high-frequency reproduction in different ranges. Without such a cone, the driver would not be capable of reproducing high frequencies worth mentioning. The diaphragms are made of very stiff paper. The drive of this set is provided by an impressive collection of 81 cylindrical neodymium magnets, with steel plates on both sides focusing energy where it is supposed to act. The very short voice coil always moves completely in the magnetic field of this arrangement, which is called an “underhang drive”. Its main advantage is the low mass that its moving part brings to the scales.

Building such a driver is an art, and even more so if you want to operate it without filtering. Then you have to ensure that the practically unavoidable frequency response increase towards high levels does not take on unpleasant dimensions. All in all, Cube Audio has managed this very well.



Behind the driver, you can see the “dividing board” that compartmentalises the enclosure.



lp 6/21

Cube Audio
Nenuphar
Mini

No filtering whatsoever, pure full-range: rarely has this minimalist approach worked so well as with the Nenuphar Mini. For pure music enjoyment, there is hardly anything more convincing.



The old-fashioned way: a Pertinax spider guides the diaphragm.



The drive of the driver consists of 81 cylindrical magnets

Yes, that's right. We already had the Cube Audio 8 inch models in the works some time ago under the aegis of our DIY magazine Klang + Ton. In other words, we had a pair of these extraordinary drivers in front of the microphone, measured them meticulously, analysed them, and found them quite exciting. However, we somehow failed to realise an intrinsic design with them, because we couldn't come up with anything extraordinary that was worthy of the price tag.

The Nenuphar Mini makes me look a little ashamed. Technically, it is not a sensation, but a solid standard concept in which the full range driver obviously feels at home. But it is not the big sensational thing that would be appropriate here. The joke is that there is no need for that, because it is simply fantastic when you surrender to the special sound aesthetics of this loudspeaker. And let yourself be captivated by the completely self-contained and self-evident lightness of the minimalist concept. Which happens pretty quickly. The Nenuphar Mini is not a real efficiency wonder, but it does not need much power, so a variety of amplifiers can be considered.



Cube Audio Nenuphar Mini

- Paarpreis: 12.900 Euro
- Vertrieb: KlangLoft München
mediabit GmbH, Aschheim
- Telefon: 089 96058981
- Internet: klangloft.de
- Garantie: 2 Jahre
- Abmessungen
(B x H x T): 250 x 1000 x 400 mm
- Gewicht: ca. 30 kg

The manufacturer has published a list of suitable candidates, featuring many illustrious names and concepts, from 300B tube unicyclers to switching amplifiers from modern multimedia solutions. I let the wonderful hybrid "Collector's Edition" from Silvercore do the job first, and it fits perfectly. The trick with the Nenuphar Mini is the angle at which they radiate towards the listener. Straight on the ear - that is clearly the primary presence area. In most cases, an almost parallel alignment is fine and the tonal balance is just right. This loudspeaker is a treasure trove of infinite detail that sets up a wonderfully sovereign stage and draws the listener deeply and naturally into the music. Yes, there are limitations on maximum level and bass extension, but they quickly become negligible when music is playing. When, for example, Anouar Brahem's string rips explode in the room without a trace and Jack DeJonette's cymbal dabs take their place beside them as if by magic, light and fluid. All the musicians on "Blue Maqams" present themselves incredibly relaxed and unstrained. The Nenuphar Mini allows us to enter so deeply into the action as I have rarely experienced. Nina Simone's goosebump performance at her Carnegie Hall concert is at least as inspiring. With Bill Evans' live piano I turn the speakers a little further out, then the sound is just right. This doesn't detract from the smooth reproduction of the Nenuphar Mini, the midrange is still perfect. So, please leave me alone and make your own appointment to listen to the Nenuphar Mini. In the meantime, I still have a lot of records to wear.

Holger Barske