



EXCLUSIVE

Amelia

The speaker by
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TEST

LOUDSPEAKERS

ESPRIT AUDIO AMELIA

Laurent Thorin



ORIGIN

France

PRICE

€ 18 000

DIMENSIONS

232 x 1050 x 407 mm

WEIGHT

44 kg

BANDWIDTH

35 to 27 000 Hz

EFFICIENCY

90 dB/1 W/1 m

CROSSOVER FREQUENCY

7000 Hz

RECOMMENDED POWER

20 to 100 watts

Esprit Audio has been developing and manufacturing a wide range of high-definition cables for hi-fi systems in France since 1997. Today, the French manufacturer offers us a range of two loudspeakers, including a fine floorstanding model that we have selected for this test bench. This exceptional product is in keeping with the brand's philosophy from the outset: to interfere as little as possible with the original signal so that the recorded music is delivered in its purest form.

The Amelia takes its name from a Joni Mitchell song to which the designer is particularly attached. And, just like its prestigious interpreter, the new loudspeaker sings with a harmonious, powerful voice. Richard Cesari is no novice. Prior to this range of two products, which will subsequently be supplemented by other models, he produced several prototypes with original options and an undeniable taste for creativity. Paradoxically, Amelia is the most discreet and pure of his creations to date.

This attractive, relatively compact column comes as standard in a beautiful white or black lacquer and an elegant wood veneer. All colors are available as optional extras, at an additional cost. No cover is offered, and the high-end loudspeakers remain visible. The cabinet itself is detached from the floor by means of an integral aluminum base comprising four eccentric inverted cones to increase Amelia's seating height and optimize its rigidity. None of the walls are parallel so as not to be disturbed by internal standing waves. Consequently, no absorbent material is used. What's more, they are of unusual construction: an MDF-bitumen-MDF sandwich with a total thickness of 30 mm.

The two transducers immediately inform the observer of the status of the product: this is a two-way configuration. The top end of the spectrum is reproduced by an AMT-type driver from the Mundorf catalogue. The pleated

ribbon of the Air Motion Transformer transducer offers a large surface area of acoustic radiation condensed into a compact chassis for very high efficiency and improved power management. The AMT also features a low crossover frequency for ideal coupling with the 21cm woofer.





The woofer was developed by SEAS to strict Esprit specifications. This is an 8-inch bass/midrange driver designed to deliver a wide, smooth frequency response, high sensitivity and low distortion.

The special Nextel-treated paper cone is inlaid with papyrus fibers to optimize rigidity and damping. Special foam rubber reduces suspension mass by 40%, resulting in greater sensitivity and excellent damping properties. An exclusive new spider design significantly improves the performance of this critical suspension component. By combining an extremely open weave with a new resin formulation, any noise normally generated by friction is virtually eliminated.

A high-temperature copper voice coil is wound on a rigid fiberglass support. Above all, the magnetic system uses an Alnico magnet for high sensitivity and excellent stability. Solid copper rings above and below the gap between the magnets reduce distortion due to eddy

currents and flux modulation. A copper ogive provides optimum radiation conditions for the critical mid-frequency band. Finally, the rigid and stable injection-molded zinc bowl keeps the critical components in perfect alignment.

The loudspeakers have been deliberately chosen to complement each other naturally, requiring only a minimalist crossover, which Richard Cesari has designed using a 6dB schematic.

Always in the quest for unconditional quality, the crossover uses two Duelund capacitors. These components were originally based on the revolutionary Virtual Stack Foil principle invented by the late Steen Duelund, a brilliant Danish sound engineer and innovator. This principle involves winding thin metal foils in a precise, symmetrical arrangement, creating a capacitor with minimal losses, distortion and microphonics.

The internal wiring is of course done using Esprit Audio's proprietary conductors. The connectors are a pair of silver-plated copper Mundorf HP terminals.

INSTALLATION

Eager to make the most of our chances, we went to listen to the Amelia in Esprit's auditorium nestling in the peaceful Charente countryside. There we enjoyed many hours of listening in total peace and quiet. The system consisted of a Lumin U1 network transport combined with a Rockna WaveLight converter, a Yamaha set and Esprit full cabling with a mix of Lumina, Eterna and L'Esprit. The auditorium, measuring around fifty square meters, is acoustically treated but not excessively so, and boasts high ceilings. In these conditions, with a quality but not excessively ambitious system, we were able to analyze the speakers perfectly, which were carefully placed at a respectable distance from the rear wall and side partitions.

THE SOUND

Air, air and more air. These brand-new speakers bring a breath of fresh air to sound reproduction, striving to be as unobtrusive as possible so that the recorded music emerges in its simplest and most complete form. Like their cables, which aim to distort the fragile audio signal as little as possible, the French manufacturer's speakers are as natural as possible. Listening to them is instantly surprisingly open. Far apart from each other, they nevertheless recreate a vast, rich musical landscape without the slightest 'hole' in the center. This remarkable spatial reproduction is the common thread running through the Amelia's performance, which in this respect is more like a panel than a conventional electrodynamic loudspeaker. Knowing their creator's love of Quad ESL, we weren't surprised! The panorama created by the Amelia is very wide and deep, with superb punctuality of the various sound sources and



always plenty of air. You can breathe deeply and, above all, enjoy an incredible lateral extension that doesn't seem to want to fade. These columns can easily develop their relief in about fifty square meters. And there's no shortage of relief, because in addition to precise azimuth, the Amelia has an exceptional sense of proportion. This explains why a trio sounds delicately intimate and a symphony grandiose. To sublimate their sense of staging,

Esprit loudspeakers have a secret weapon: a high level of resolving power. They deconstruct modulation with a rare acuity and above all a coherence that their «two-way» status gives them from the outset. As a result, the listening experience is abundant and dense, but always divinely ethereal because, as with the panels, there is no need to deplore overweight. Density, yes; fatness, never, because the line is so pure, and the foundation so measured. All that's missing from this idyllic picture is a nice nervousness, and the Amelia, born and bred, are equipped with this through their woofers with alnico motors that accelerate and brake like F1 cars. This gives them a great sense of rhythm and a melodic punctuation that is unprecedented for their price.

OUR CONCLUSION

We've known for a long time that Richard Cesari, a sincere enthusiast and connoisseur of hi-fi equipment, has designed several loudspeakers, but this is the first time he's presented us with a real range available for sale alongside his cables. The Amelia column and the small Stella are just the beginning of a series that will grow over time. We thoroughly enjoyed the Amelia's qualities of smoothness, clarity, openness and ventilation, and their obvious potential for a very reasonable size. The price also seemed realistic given the high quality of the components used, which are already very expensive. It seems obvious that this speaker has been the subject of



a lifetime's work and experience in terms of thought and design. It could therefore be included in your 'hit list' alongside some fine international references, with which it will have nothing to be ashamed of. ■