

## ESPRIT AUDIO AMELIA



# A river of emotions

Featured on the 1976 album *Hejira*, the title "Amelia" is the eponym of the loudspeaker designed by Richard Cesari, who is so fond of the singer Joni Mitchell. This carefully thought-out model took three years to develop, after extensive research into transducers capable of approaching the ideal sought: transparency, speed and naturalness. The result obvious.

**Close-up  
of the  
Norwegian  
SEAS built to  
specifications  
and its anti-  
swirl ogive;  
the lacquered  
finish of  
the Amelia is  
exemplary.**

**W**hy on earth did Richard Cesari, the internationally renowned cable specialist who demonstrated his expertise with the sublime L'Esprit line, embark on this adventure? This project was close to his heart, first and foremost out of passion, to prove that he was capable of realizing what a loudspeaker should be.

and deeply musical. Secondly, it was a challenge, as the company was able to carry out this ambitious and, it must be said, costly project by choosing the best, both components and cases, to achieve an absolutely perfect finish. Esprit squares the circle with Alnico, AMT, no parallelism and minimal filtering to racing components.

### ALNICO AND AMT

The 20 cm bass driver is a SEAS, manufactured by the highly reputed Norwegian brand, but to Esprit specifications, such as the slightly modified cone profile and Nextel-coated cellulose pulp diaphragm. In the center, the copper anti-vortex ogive is clearly present, while the salad bowl features slender spider-like lugs to prevent turbulence at the rear. The loudspeaker is powerfully driven by an AlNiCo V magnet (an alloy aluminum, nickel, cobalt, iron and other metals), which is very expensive to manufacture but produces a strong magnetic field and, as the designer was able to verify, is far superior in listening performance. Filtering





## BANC D'ESSAI IN SITU

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is made at 7 kHz, well below what this superb woofer is capable of, to let the 11 cm AMT (Air Motion Transformer) tweeter by Mundorf express itself. Here, sound is produced by a lightweight accordion-pleated membrane that compresses air laterally, driven by a powerful magnetic field thanks to a neodymium magnet acting on a track engraved on the diaphragm, which explains the high efficiency, incredible speed and very low distortion due to the reduced movement of the oscillation.

The AMT tweeter is damped by a block of felt around its perimeter to prevent wave reflection from disturbing the diaphragm, which can be seen on measurement by a comb response curve.

#### DUELUND AND MUNDORF

The 6 dB low-slope filtering consists of two exceptional Duelund VSF (Virtual Stack Foil) capacitors connected in parallel by a clever XLR connector. The low-frequency coil is a low-resistance Mundorf flat ribbon made of pure copper, the best choice after extensive testing. There's no resistance in series, because even the best bring a signature. The components are firmly glued and strapped to a glue-and-bolt plate at the bottom of the case, avoiding any problems during transport. The Mundorf copper terminal block is mounted on a metacrylate support that eliminates electromagnetic and capacitive interference. The internal connection uses cable for Eterna and Aura bases from 6 mm<sup>2</sup> silicone-coated. All the components selected are of exceptional quality, virtually unheard of on a loudspeaker of this price.

#### PIANOLACQUERSET

All these people deserve cabinetry that's up to the task, especially with its non-parallel walls, which are essential to the final result, but which also come at a cost. The slightly pyramidal shape is very slender, flared when viewed from above, with an inclined front and curvilinear sides. To further minimize colorations, the internal stiffeners are also inclined. In this way, no damping is needed in this bass-reflex load with its rear port, to preserve all the detail of which the drivers are capable. Top-of-the-range finish, the body is made of a 30mm-thick triple sandwich, with a 5mm sheet of bitumen sandwiched between two panels of 10 and 15mm medium. The column is mounted on a thick aluminum stand, where the 4 screwed conical feet feature a wide base that is internally decoupled from the upper part, allowing perfect level adjustment to support the speaker's 45 kg in complete stability. Finally, the splendid piano lacquer finish is available in black or white, plus gloss or satin-finish varnished walnut. It's the same for the small Stella bookshelf model in this Esprit range, which looks set to expand in the future.

#### LISTEN

Here, the system is perfectly optimized in a large, well-treated room of over 50 m<sup>(2)</sup>, with a ceiling of over 4 m, adjacent to the Esprit factory where the speakers and cables are assembled. Amplification is by Pass, with X160.8 mono blocks in pure Class A, Yamaha C5000 preamp, Lumin X1 digital transport with separate linear power supply, Bulgarian APL DSD MR DAC with tube and trans-output.

**A. The complete system: Pass X160.8 blocks in pure Class A form a sumptuous couple.**

**B. The Mundorf AMT tweeter, and the splendid Alnico 5 magnet of the SEAS woofer.**

**C. The walls are flared, a block of felt to suppress primary reflections of the AMT.**

**D. The membrane is made of pulp coated cellulose of Nextel.**

**Next page : In addition to black and white, the high-gloss varnished walnut finish is also very elegant.**

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#### DATA SHEET

Origin: France  
Price: 18 000 euros  
Gloss finish: black, white, walnut  
Satin finish: black, walnut  
Dimensions:  
1050 x 420 x 450 mm  
Type : 2-way bass-reflex  
Nominal impedance: 4 ohms  
Frequency response :  
40 - 30,000 Hz  
Output: 90 dB  
Recommended power:  
20 to 100 W  
Weight: 43 kg

fos Lundahl. The cabling is of course L'Esprit for the speakers, and a mix of L'Esprit and Gaia for mains and modulation. It's worth noting that, with their good efficiency of 92 dB, the Amelia go very well with wide range of amplification, such as an Atoll IN400 E, a B.audio B.amp One or a Yamaha M5000. In such listening conditions, size should not be taken for granted, for the Amelia are truly large speakers, delivering an image that unfolds with incredible, life-size dimension, filling the room with a lively, palpable soundstage. Every little musical inflection is fully expressed, without the distortion that is often the manifestation of multiple distortions and non-linearities. The exceptional quality of the transducers is not hindered by the acoustic color of the body, which has none whatsoever. The Alnico's naturalness and gentleness make it possible to listen for long hours without tiring, while the AMT offers incomparable energy and liveliness, without marked directivity, for unprecedented freedom of expression in the upper frequencies. Close to the rendering of a Quad ESL in transparency, but far superior in the low frequencies, no break in timbre is perceptible, for a perfectly successful fusion and rigorously integrated tonal balance. In the low register, the Amelia's are very surprising, as their extension is proven (30 Hz at -2 dB), even in the extreme low register, which is well felt, but they respond with speed, ease and harmonic richness, where any heaviness or hypertrophy is banished, to merge instead in a magnificent coherence. Just listen to Garcia Fons's double bass, with its rare accuracy, grain and speed, and to the well-recorded piano, and you'll appreciate the breadth of the bandwidth, including a strikingly powerful left hand. The complexity of the orchestrations is magnificently legible, with no intermodulation, and all planes articulated with precision. In the midrange, whether it's Fairfield Four, Mercedes Soza, Prince, Sting or Joni Mitchell, emotion of the voice always comes through, because the Amelia exalt the music first and foremost, with the ability render its complex, ethereal strata in a real dimension, sublimating it without distorting it.

#### VERDICT

With their deep musical embodiment, the Amelia's make the music flow like a powerful river, as on Joni's "River", which calms or unleashes according to the musical flow, always pure and transparent. Whatever the musical style, it's a real enchantment that takes place, as they are capable of conveying emotions while revealing the infinite richness of nuances: content and form merge as if by magic, in a perfectly successful alchemy. The budget is therefore more than justified, as this indeed a top-class model, yet easily housed. The future benchmark for high-end French electrodynamic loudspeakers?

Bruno Castelluzzo