

Away in a Manger

MANGER AUDIO ZEROBOX 109 (£3000)

Ian Harris zeroes in on the smallest of the range to use the Manger Sound Transducer

The smallest of Manger Audio's Zerobox range of speakers, the 109 combines the German company's unique, and nominally full range, Manger Sound Transducer (handling everything between 35kHz and 140Hz), with a 210mm ScanSpeak paper cone woofer.

differing driver types, and the MST is certainly different, with its flat diaphragm replacing the familiar cones or domes of more conventional speakers.



SOUND QUALITY

From the first few bars of the Allegro from Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, it was clear that

'It was clear the Zerobox boasted a rare level of transient speed'

As with hybrid electrostatics, there is a huge theoretical advantage in this frequency split, with no intrusive crossover in the sensitive presence zone. Of course, the downside of a hybrid is that its drivers still have to cross over somewhere, with the challenge of matching

the Zerobox boasted a rare level of transient speed. The piece sparkled with *joie de vivre* and vitality which filled the room with a remarkable sense of presence. One issue with reproduced music is that genuinely life-like volumes can be overpowering in real-world listening spaces, and what the

Zerobox achieved superbly was to provide the life and energy of live music at 'comfortable' domestic listening levels. Ultra-clear treble and extremely agile bass straddled a midrange which was neutral without ever being recessed, while integration was excellent, with no hint of any sonic mismatch between the differing technologies.

Thus encouraged, I moved on to the title track from Simple Minds' *New Gold Dream*. Here, the introduction was rendered in a rhythmically irresistible fashion and, again, the sheer energy on offer when the vocal, drums and bass kicked in was mesmerising. The Zerobox appeared to perfectly merge panel-like speed with the solid punch of a sealed-box bass unit, leading to kick drum and snares having a visceral sense of impact, even at quite moderate levels.

Soundstage depth was excellent, with image presentation falling somewhere between the solid focus of the finest moving-cone units and the airy space of electrostatics. While stage width seemed to be largely defined by the outer-edge of the cabinets, the Mangers had a neat trick: whenever it seemed that images were 'hanging' on the boxes, if I moved my head slightly to one side, the image was revealed as being some three feet behind the speaker. Impressive indeed, and very beneficial for off-axis listening.

VERDICT

The Zerobox 109 is a highly amplifier-dependent speaker, which is capable of a quite stunningly vital sound when paired with appropriate electronics. While it may not match the levels of neutrality and lack of coloration of the very finest moving-cone designs, its sense of life and presence is both musically appealing and highly addictive. ⬇️

AUDIO FILE

Two-way standmount speaker with Manger Sound Transducer

Price: £3000

Made by: Manger Sound Systems

Supplied by: Manger UK

Telephone: 0161 304 0099

Web: www.manger-audio.co.uk



hi-finews
HIGHLY
COMMENDED

HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Sensitivity (SPL at 1m for 2.83V rms input)	85.0dB
Impedance modulus min/max (20Hz-20kHz)	3.6ohm @ 50Hz 8.5ohm @ 20kHz
Impedance phase min/max (20Hz-20kHz)	2.8° @ 4.1kHz / 33° @ 92Hz
Pair matching (200Hz-20kHz)	±0.6dB
LF & HF extension (-6dB ref 200Hz & 10kHz third-octave smoothed)	36Hz & 37.5/37.0kHz
THD 100Hz/1kHz/10kHz (for 90dB SPL at 1m)	0.6% / 0.9% / 0.1%