

Special Edition
April 2007



Audio Physic Avanti 5

"No loss of fine detail". This statement can still be found on the website of Audio Physic where for years on end the manufacturer made the theme central to the design of new loudspeakers. Audio Physic sometimes overdid it a bit in creating loudspeakers which were able to play a piece almost without any loss of detail while at the same time running the risk of casting such a sharp light on detail that the sonic performance seemed somehow out of breath. Such loudspeakers were practically craving for detailed information in order to closely approximate the long held ideal of high-end. Today's high-end scene continues to appreciate a recording reproduced with fine resolution, however audiophiles are increasingly less likely to sacrifice a holistic and natural sound for the sake of detail. There is probably no use in capturing every single detail when, after a couple of minutes, it makes the slightly annoyed listener want to turn down the volume.

Manfred Diestertich, mastermind designer behind the Brilon based German manufacturer, is certainly not a freak who religiously sticks to a concept regardless of the consequences. What matters to him is the reproduction of the "healthy" and laid-back sound he enjoys during a concert. Diestertich prefers a pragmatic approach – and I mean that in a very positive sense – where he neither indulges in absurd concepts nor revels in the creation of unprecedented sound worlds. Physical rules cannot be bent and therefore the chief designer has both feet firmly on the ground of consolidated findings while at the same time attempting to explore the current limits of performance. Some high-end enthusiasts might argue that this sounds rather boring or uninspired. However let me assure you that it is quite the opposite. To provide a loudspeaker with several tweeters for a wide spatial sound image needs much less creativity than developing an excellent driver from scratch which does not rely on sleight-of-hand techniques. It is much easier to just order a driver from the many existing manufacturing companies. If one actually knows how large an order quantity must be for large producers to be willing to lend an ear to customer requirements, one will be far more inclined to rethink other loudspeaker manufacturers' statements when it comes to using special designs.

Test Review: Audio Physic Avanti 5 loudspeaker

Sonic sensuality instead of infatuation: With the Avanti 5, Audio Physic has said a final good-bye to "No loss of fine detail" sound.

The Avanti 5 is filled to the brim with smart and innovative approaches such as the new absorber feet, the decoupled terminal and the more lightweight yet more rigid and less resonant cabinet construction. In addition to being slanted, a vintage Audio Physic feature, the rear of the cabinet is smoothly rounded, thereby following in the tradition of the previous generation. One feature severely reduces the possibility of standing waves whereas the other feature serves to time-align the drivers. The front baffle design includes strongly rounded sides in order to avoid possible diffraction. A mix of highly dampening materials is used for the walls of the cabinet where structural elements are effectively applied to specifically calculated sections in order to ensure increased rigidity with the use of less material. It is quite exciting to look at the inside of the cabinet where the walls are marked by numerous cuttings and drill holes. Thereby, the appearance of echoes shall be avoided from the start making much of the previously used dampening material superfluous. The Eventus Audio loudspeakers have already given testimony to the fact that this idea is anything but far-fetched. The loudspeaker remains quiet without being "dampened to death". The finish of the cabinet surfaces of the Avanti 5 could not possibly be better and therefore deserves the highest praise.

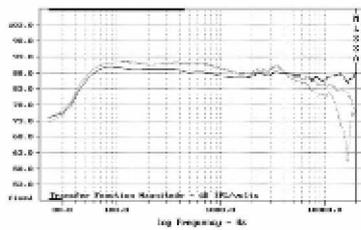
The stable front baffle is crowned by the above mentioned tweeter. "Hyper Holographic Cone" is the name of the beauty. Diestertich has seen it fit to make use of the old principle of cone tweeters. He thinks that due to modern and state-of-the-art material, stability problems occurring with the design principle are no longer an issue. Therefore, a cone design was developed, tested, rejected and redesigned, followed by lively disputes and negotiations with manufacturers until the driver went into production: a new cone tweeter with an aluminium diaphragm, coated with ceramic. The homogeneity of a loudspeaker could benefit enormously from such a functioning tweeter design where all drivers work according to the same principle as well as being made of the same material. It is not exactly stop-the-press news that consistency in design has a lot of advantages.

A Reversal of Trend

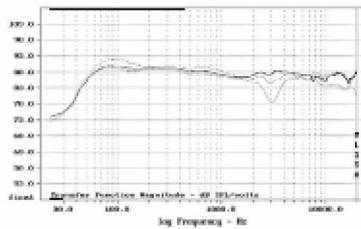
From the Laboratory

In-room-measurements reveal the beautifully balanced and overall slightly decreasing frequency response of the new Avanti 5. A result which certainly contributes to the joy of listening to the loudspeaker. The cone tweeter, effortless in its performance, is on-axis and remains so over the entire acoustic range. At a 45 degree angle, directionality can be observed which is inevitable with any driver of this kind. The Avanti 5 could be angled towards the listening place, however such a toe-in is not strictly necessary. It comes as a vintage 4-Ohm loudspeaker with a minimum of 3.7 Ohm at 88 Hertz. Excellent work!

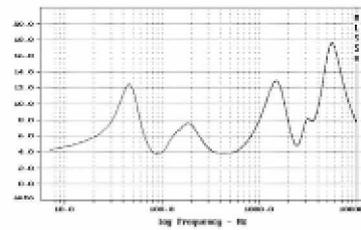
Frequency Response: on axis, horiz. 30°/45°



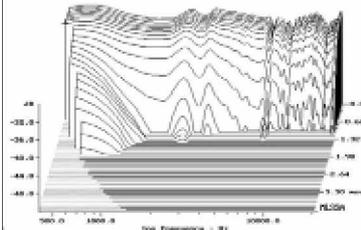
Frequency Response: on-axis, vert. -10°/10°



Impedance: Audio Physic Avanti 5



Cascade: Audio Physic Avanti 5



Between 200 and 500 Hertz the midrange drivers below work in parallel where the upper midrange driver takes over until 2,800 Hertz. Unlike the previous generation, the back of the aluminium diaphragm is not dampened with a silicone ring that is fitted to the notch. With the newly developed membrane geometry, such a step is no longer necessary. In addition, weight can be saved. All this culminates in the production of a small, lightweight and therefore fast diaphragm capable of reproducing high frequencies as well as providing enough

surface for lower frequencies. I have over the years listened to a number of loudspeakers where the tight performance suffered from the distribution to several drivers. However Audio Physic has a long standing experience in this field and the occurrence of adverse effects is rather improbable. The four side-firing 7" aluminium woofers supported by bass reflex ports pointing towards the floor provide a generous bass foundation.

To achieve tight control of the eight woofers we decided, for the first test run, to hook the loudspeaker to the Musical Fidelity KW 550, a veritable high-performance 800 Watt amplifier which so far has not allowed any loudspeaker to express its own opinion. The sound performance had virtually nothing to do with what I had previously been used to when reviewing former Audio Physic loudspeakers. I heard music unhindered by the loudspeaker's direct attempt to wrap me in sound or confuse me with its ostensible firework of details. Quite to the contrary: the new Avanti 5 produces a very open, spacious and incredibly laid-back sound. At first, it might perhaps seem a bit reserved or even slightly unobtrusive. However compared to the KEFs which perform in a similar manner, the sound of the Avanti 5 is more relaxed, subtle and discreet.

The well-known and stunningly recorded account of Mahler's Symphony No. 2 by Riccardo Chailly and the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam was intended to give us some idea on the loudspeaker's ability to present a holographic soundstage. And we were truly amazed at how easily every single instrument could be located. The positioning was probably not as focused as with the KEFs, however the spatial image was much wider, deeper and atmospherically charged. The loudspeaker from Britain was capable of exactly reproducing the instruments as well as providing punch and vitality, whereas the Avanti 5 breathed life into the room creating the impression of an enormous orchestra gathered on the wide stage of Amsterdam's famous concert hall. The sound of the reverberation does not stick to the instrument, rather it can be heard as it unfolds in the room.



[Caldera]

A caldera (Spanish meaning cauldron) is a bowl-shaped volcanic crater formed by the collapse of land following a volcanic eruption.



The dome serves as a dust cap whereas the diaphragm is the surrounding cone: the new Audio Physic tweeter.

All this takes place in a very laid-back, natural and by no means attention-grabbing manner where everything merges into a sonic texture and nothing is singled out as an individual sonic event.

The incisive vigour of the bass drum, fresh from hell, of the following Scherzo never fails to separate the wheat from chaff – in terms of loudspeaker. In one case the drum is reproduced with a rich width and depth, in the other case it has a precisely defined punch and articulate sound. Both aspects are difficult to achieve. The new Avanti 5 is perfectly capable of delivering the full range, without any effort, attitude or particular kick. The drum is just there and sounds as a drum is supposed to sound. Congratulations! The loudspeaker has successfully passed the test. I would like to add that the accurate reproduction of timbre and texture can be enjoyed over the entire frequency range where voices and acoustical instruments come through with breathtaking authenticity.

Audio Physic Avanti 5

WxHxD	24 x 111 x 42 cm 9.4" x 43.7" x 16.5"
Warranty	10 years
Distribution	Audio Physic GmbH Almerfeldweg 38 59929 Brilon Germany
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Next we put Al Jarreau's "This Time" album into the CD player for the simple reason that probably no other recorded song contains as much terrific hissing as the "I can Recall" track. How will the tweeter cope with that? The answer is surprisingly simple: The tweeter had no problems. It precisely reproduced the overmodulation of the microphone, the hissing was clear and direct with no trace of being pressurised or suffering from system inherent problems. The little cone passed the test with the highest distinction by just being itself and showing what reproduction is all about without rounding off the edges or losing its footing. Indeed a very special driver came into being here.

I enjoyed the listening session all the more because the music just flowed through the Avanti 5 with every song it played. The loudspeaker is capable of producing smooth transitions from one tune to the next while at the same time giving precision and meticulous attention to detail. Listening to it is an emotionally engaging and immersive experience. At first sight it is may be possible to underestimate the Avanti 5 because the loudspeaker does not loudly advertise the full potential of its talents. Instead it wins you over, for once and for all, by the fact that there are very few "imperfections". A top-class loudspeaker for true audiophiles.

RESUME I would never have expected this: an Audio Physic loudspeaker capable of knocking me off my feet without attempting to wrap me around its little finger. The Avanti 5 has a very low reaching bass range and simply delights in playing while offering an extremely wide soundstage. With the newly designed tweeter we are now eagerly anticipating the upcoming facelift of the other Audio Physic models. The Avanti 5 is a loudspeaker which completely immerses you in the music, making you forget that it is there despite its large size. Only very few loudspeakers are truly capable of achieving this, therefore such a quality cannot be valued highly enough. And the "cone tweeter project" seems to have succeeded, bringing forth a tweeter that cannot be heard.

by Stefan Gawlick



[audio physic]
no loss of fine detail