



## Groove rider

Pro-Ject's 2 Xperience SB DC turntable puts vinyl in a spin

## Sonic boom

Acoustic Research returns with superb hi-res portable



# Hi-Fi Choice

PASSION FOR SOUND

Issue No. 397

May 2015

**WIN!**  
Musical Fidelity  
Merlin 1  
system worth  
£1,300

# Drive time

Six sensational standmounts make neat beats under £1,000

## High Exposure



Revised amp ups flexibility but how does it perform?

# 30

PRODUCTS ON TEST:

B&W, Denon, KEF, Quadral, Sony, Tannoy

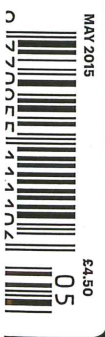


## Design for life

Leema's stunning mini system with the mighty big sound

## Head rush

Oppo HA-2 headphone amp & DAC for music on the move





**DIFFERENT STROKES**

The Motion 15 is not exactly what you'd expect a MartinLogan loudspeaker to look like. Normally suppliers of exotic electrostatic panelled loudspeakers, the type of driver has changed in this entry-level offering, although the principle has most certainly not. MartinLogan believes that electrostatic panels have a wonderful speed, delicacy and lightness of touch – and a ribbon tweeter can also offer some of these advantages, while being a little less expensive to implement. It certainly has advantages over dome tweeters such as transient response and low distortion, although trouble comes when trying to marry it up to a conventional coned mid/bass unit – as its characteristics are so different. With a high sensitivity this speaker certainly goes loud for a small amount of power, but transistor amplifiers with good current drive will sound best.

**Hi-FiChoice****OUR VERDICT****SOUND QUALITY****LIKE:** Translucent treble; delicate midband; fast bass**VALUE FOR MONEY****DISLIKE:** Limited low-frequency extension and power**BUILD QUALITY****WE SAY:** Small standmount with high-end sound**EASE OF DRIVE****OVERALL**

# MartinLogan

## Motion 15 £898

Famous for electrostatic panel designs, this company also does innovative box loudspeakers as well

**DETAILS****PRODUCT**

MartinLogan Motion 15

**ORIGIN**

US/China

**TYPE**

2-way floorstander

**WEIGHT**

5.4kg

**DIMENSIONS**

(WxHxD)

173 x 290 x 242mm

**FEATURES**

- 26 x 36mm ribbon tweeter
- 133mm aluminium bass unit
- Quoted sensitivity: 92dB/1W/1m

**DISTRIBUTOR**

Absolute Sounds

**TELEPHONE**

020 89713909

**WEBSITE**

absolutesounds.com

**A**n American company best known for its high end electrostatic and hybrid panels, a conventional box loudspeaker like this isn't really a core MartinLogan product – yet it still remains arguably the most interesting design here. In the States, the 15 is sold as both a two-channel and a home theatre speaker. It feels a quality product, with a solid cabinet and a choice of piano black, piano white or black cherrywood finishes. Most notable, though, is the use of a ribbon high-frequency unit, which is unusual at this price and normally the province of more expensive items.

Called the Folded Motion Tweeter, it is a 26 x 36mm driver with a 133 x 44mm diaphragm, which takes care of midband and treble duties from 2.7kHz upwards. Below this, a 133cm coned mid/bass driver handles the lower end of the spectrum, via its black, long-throw aluminium cone. The crossover uses a custom air core coil and low DCR steel laminate inductors with polypropylene film capacitors and low DF electrolytics. The steel grille attaches magnetically to the cabinet, which has a black anodised brushed aluminium baffle.

**Sound quality**

Marrying a ribbon tweeter to a moving coil drive unit isn't always easy, but the Motion 15 has a smooth response and no nasty audible response peaks. It auditions extremely well, being blessed with a delicacy

and airiness that no rivals here have. The cymbal work on *Ding Dong* is there in all its glory, immediately showing up every other design. The same goes for *Made In England*, which is a grittier and more modern digital recording that's carried smoothly and intimately; the vocals in particular shine through with remarkable translucency. It has a dramatic and insightful sound that reminds me of how flawed conventional metal dome tweeters can sometimes be.

But this is a small speaker and cannot transcend its own physical limitations. It sounds more lightweight than several, lacking bass extension compared with the larger KEF and Quadral. Not only does it not go as low, but it doesn't have that sense of effortlessness either. However, although it may not be prodigious, its bottom end is lithe and tuneful; even thumping dance tracks prove great fun. The bass seems to reap rewards from that clarity in the midband and treble, scything through the muddy mix and adding real zest to the proceedings. That tweeter is great with the snare drum pattern, reproducing it really fast and also tracking the dynamic accenting better than almost all here. The result is that the Motion 15 is quite captivating to listen to, diving head first into any type of music and really enjoying itself. It images extremely well too, as *The Last Emperor Theme* highlights – setting up a decently sized three-dimensional soundstage ●