

SYSTEM AUDIO 1130

The relatively small Danish speaker specialist, System Audio, is a well-established operation which was founded in 1984. It made one previous appearance in *Hi-Fi Choice* when British cable specialist The Chord Company brought in the company's tiny 905, which quickly gained a Recommended flag in *HFC* 148, although unfortunately the distribution arrangements eventually came to an end.

Now a rather larger selection of System Audio speakers is becoming available in the UK, courtesy of speaker stand specialist Atacama Audio. And they're not all stand-mounts either. The 1130, the subject of this review, is just one of five floorstanders in the line-up, which includes some of the most elegantly slim examples this reviewer has ever seen.

The 1130 is the slimmest, smallest and least expensive of the floorstanders, with a box that's just 13cm wide — only fractionally wider than a CD jewel case. That fact alone will, I suspect, count far more with buyers than the observation that £499 is a pretty substantial price tag for a vinyl-clad box. It is at least a decent quality woodprint, and the detailing is nicely handled too, with a proper plinth to improve the stability. We haven't quoted the weight, because the review samples arrived with a substantial amount of SoundBytes mass-loading already fitted in the separate lower chamber intended for such a purpose. Since this is strongly recommended in the manufacturer's literature, and certainly ensures



◉ The System Audio box is just 13mm wide: about the size of a CD jewel case!

“ Stereo images are exceptionally well formed, and the sound is refreshingly free from unpleasant ‘boxiness’.”

they'll never get knocked over, I guess it's fair enough.

A slim front view might be what the public wants, but, unless you mount a bass driver in a side panel, it does restrict the size of the main drivers. The 1130's minimalist front view provides room for two main drivers with just 70mm cones in 110mm cut-down frames, and these operate d'Appolito-style above and below the 19mm tweeter. Twin terminals permit bi-wiring or bi-amping, while twin ports give those little main drivers an extra helping hand in the bass.

Despite its compact dimensions, the in-room, far-field trace shows the 1130 should give optimum results when placed clear of room boundaries. The frequency balance is very good overall, if slightly uneven, and characterised by a rather pronounced presence suckout centred on 2kHz.

SOUND QUALITY

Although the 1130 is quite obviously no bass excavator, it has very real strengths elsewhere — enough to pick up a 'best-of-the-day' ranking from the listening panel. The bass may lack the weight and loudness capability of

larger rivals, and does show a slight tendency to thump and 'hang on', but it makes up for these limitations with decent drive and timing, and excellent bass-through-mid coherence.

Stereo images are exceptionally well formed and focused, and the sound is refreshingly free from unpleasant 'boxiness'. It's very even-handed and polite — perhaps a little too polite at times, as the presence band is slightly pinched and hooded. In other respects the midband is impressively free from colorations, while the top end is clean and well judged, if a little detached.

CONCLUSION

It's good to see System Audio back in the UK, not just because the company makes some fine-sounding loudspeakers, but also because they offer a real alternative to the mainstream in style and presentation. The 1130 is not the ideal solution for those who like their Prodigy loud, but for most normal purposes it deserves warm Recommendation. **PMe**

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★

BUILD ★★★★★

VALUE ★★★★★

PRICE £499.95

Super-slim, super-smooth, and a very involving experience, but not ideal if you like your bass deep and loud.

■ **THREE YEAR GUARANTEE**

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THE LAB REPORT

Both System Audio's lightweight 11cm bass/mid drivers work into their own reflex-loaded enclosure and both are precisely aligned. The relatively narrow ports give a high-Q resonance at 61Hz which matches the equally sharp driver null and impedance minimum seen on the load trace. The latter shows a 35 degree shift in phase angle through the 3.4kHz crossover region where the impedance also drops to 5.4 Ohms. Other minima of 3.7 Ohms (250Hz) suggest the 1130 is not a doddle to drive, despite suggestions to the contrary.

The bass, meanwhile, though not the most extended of the group, should indeed sound appropri-



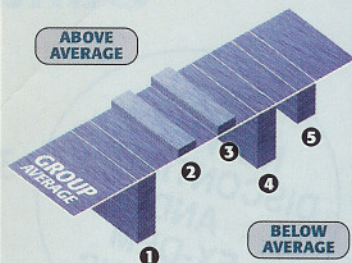
◉ Low impedance minima mean the 1130 is not as easy to drive as it looks.

ately 'colourful' thanks to its dominant (1-2 per cent) 2nd-order distortion. I'd also advise against mounting the 1130s close to rear walls to avoid aggravating a 100-300Hz emphasis. The mid and lower treble look very well integrated, particularly through the crossover region (see above) but there is a 'sting' at 16kHz that may or may not be a source of irritation. Certainly, if this sort of peak were at 10kHz and not 16kHz then the 1130 would sound obviously brighter. The 88.6dB sensitivity is close enough to System Audio's 89dB specification while peaks of 105dBA should be possible. **PMi**

HOW IT COMPARES

There will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE | -40% |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS | 5% |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS | 5% |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | -35% |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION | -20% |



SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	88.6dB
■ Average Impedance	7.39 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	43Hz