

Right Angle

Adam Smith isn't obtuse about Tangent's brand new HTD-100 standmounting loudspeakers...

It would seem that we need to dispel two loudspeaker myths when considering these little fellas. Myth number one is that hi-fi loudspeakers cannot be this small. Well, the ALR Jordan Classic 1s reviewed last month are even smaller and were true hi-fi products, so that's that one dealt with. Myth number two is that real hi-fi speakers cannot be bought for £80, so let's see if the Tangents can manage to overturn that one as well.

Tangent are a Danish company and part of Eltax, but they do not currently have a UK distributor. Their products consist of a wide range of electronics, such as the CDP-100 and AMP-100 reviewed back in our October 2006 Issue. These are available through Richer Sounds but currently, the only your friendly neighbourhood branch of Dixons has any Tangent loudspeakers, and they will sell you the HTD-100's smaller brothers, the HTD-40 and 50, or the floorstanding Avantgarde 200s.

The HTD-100s are a two way design featuring a four inch (100mm) bass/mid driver and a one inch (25mm) soft dome tweeter in a diminutive cabinet measuring 220 x 135 x 205mm (H x W x D). Bass output is aided by a rear-firing port and one pair of good quality binding posts permit connection. Heck, the HTD-100s even come with a couple of lengths of very basic 'speaker cable to start you off. OK so it is very thin and not really for hi-fi use but it's the thought that counts!

SOUND QUALITY

After a suitable run-in period I was pleased, and more than a little

relieved, to hear that the Tangents do not try and impress by coming charging at you with an aural battering ram, albeit a small one. The HTD-100s are a well-balanced and competent loudspeaker that more than belie not only their diminutive cabinet size, but their price as well. Bass is surprisingly pacy and agile and even has a decent extension to it. Mounted on good quality stands and positioned within a foot or so of a rear wall to reinforce the port output, bass lines came across with great confidence and there was never a sense that you were missing vast amounts from the lower end. Midrange was pleasingly open and

spacious, with good detail and a creditable soundstage meaning instruments could be placed fairly well. There was, however a slightly artificial tint to presentation, meaning that some singers could come across as a little husky and dry. This same aspect also could tend to make some snare drums sound a tad plastic. This said, the HTD-100s projected well and never sounded uncomfortable.

Possibly the best aspect of the Tangent's performance was their treble. High frequencies from the 25mm tweeter were smooth, sweet

and detailed. In absolute terms, this is not the most incisive unit I have ever heard but it can certainly bear comparison with tweeters on loudspeakers that cost many times more. Tangent have engineered the unit's output well, resisting temptation to add any artificial brightness, and the smooth output seen on the frequency response graph translates into a gentle and polished treble.

CONCLUSION

So, can we dispel myth number two as well? Are these real hi-fi loudspeakers for £80 or not? Well...

"the Tangent HTD-100s produce a thoroughly grown up and enjoyable sound..."

yes! Of course it is possible to be picky about aspects of their sound but for their price this is just plainly unnecessary and rather mean. The Tangent HTD-100s produce a thoroughly grown-up and enjoyable sound and are more than suitable for playing 'spot-the-speaker' style tricks on your audiophile friends.

They also proved to be quite benign with respect to partnering amplifiers, giving equally good results on the end of a 20 Watt valve amplifier and the Class D Flying Mole CS-A3 amplifier, as well as a couple of expensive pre/power setups. For less than many hi-fi enthusiasts spend on a length of cable, it is indeed possible to buy a pair of loudspeakers that befit the term 'hi-fi' and you can do much worse for your first step on the audiophile ladder.

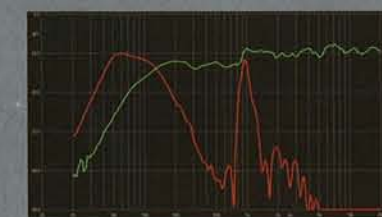
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The first noticeable aspect of the Tangents' frequency response is a change in output level of around 3dB at 900Hz. This will tend to reinforce the midrange and treble compared to the bass, but as the responses both above and below the change point are commendably smooth, this is unlikely to present itself as a 'top-heavy' sound.

Bass rolls off below 150Hz but is assisted by the rear-facing port which is tuned to 60Hz. The location of this allows close to wall placement for bass reinforcement, which is always a handy option for small loudspeakers like this.

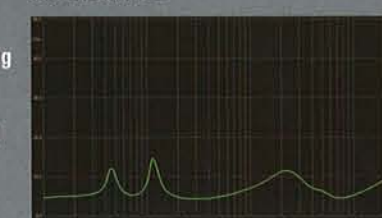
The impedance curve is flat across the frequency range and average impedance measured at 5.7 Ohms, dipping to a minimum of 3.9 Ohms at around 300Hz; as a result, the HTD-100s are a genuine 4 Ohm load. However, combined with a good sensitivity figure of 86dB, a partnering amplifier of 30-40 watts minimum should drive them well. AS

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



Green - driver output
Red - port output

IMPEDANCE



VERDICT **£**
Great loudspeaker bargain - surprisingly competent and enjoyable.

TANGENT AUDIO HTD-100 £80
Tangent Audio
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FOR
- price
- sweet, detailed treble
- pacy and agile upper bass

AGAINST
- midrange a little artificial