

Tested by XXXXX

You might think metal-cone speakers arrived in the 1980s, but the idea goes back a lot further than that. The original inspiration for E J ('Ted') Jordan's metal cone drive units came as long ago as 1952, when he heard one of the original Hugh Britten-designed GEC 8in metal-cone loudspeakers. The history of hi-fi might have been somewhat different had GEC not decided to pull out of audio loudspeakers altogether. As it was, Ted went on to a distinguished decade in charge of speaker design at Goodmans, leaving in 1963 to set up Jordan Watts.

Since then, he's been developing and building his own small, full-range metal drive units, which have been enthusiastically taken up by hobbyists and hi-fi specialists as well as large-scale industrial users.

CRUCIAL CONES

According to Jordan, the usual attempts to make ultra-rigid metal speaker cones behave like a perfect piston are just doomed to failure. By contrast, a crucial Jordan feature is the advanced cone profiling, which refines the intended flexing behaviour of the thin metal cone to achieve an extremely close match between the cone and air load characteristics. Because the driver is full-range, the usual problems of a crossover are also eliminated.

For the Subliminal S1R, MJ Acoustics uses a modified version of the JX92S driver, now built

for Jordan in Denmark by the all-conquering Tymphany/DST combine. Based on Jordan's published VTL quarter-wave transmission-line design, the cabinets are exceptionally well made and finished. Inside, partitions form a compression chamber and a folded transmission line nearly 3m long, its mouth underneath at the left.

SOUND QUALITY

Positioned as instructed, toed-in with axes crossing in front of the listener, the S1R quickly came to life with that 'crossoverless' immediacy and excellent imaging. On *Money Jungle*, I was struck by the fabulous realism of Max Roach's cymbals. The S1R is clearly transparent enough to reveal the signature and shortcomings

of any electronics you connect it to, and I was soon experimenting with amps and cables.

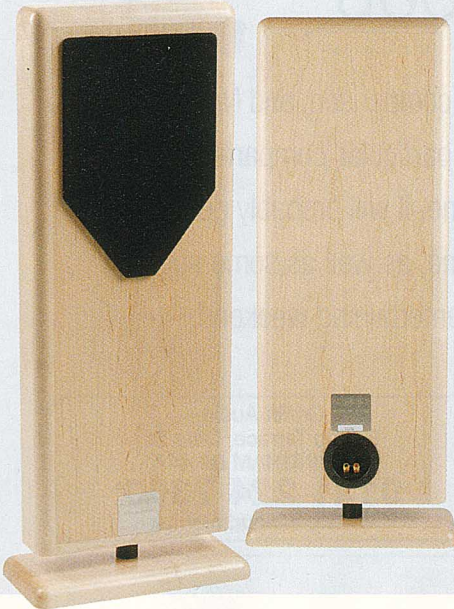
In the process, I found myself listening to what looked like one of the most ludicrously unbalanced systems ever assembled, using the Rega Apollo CD player and MF kW pre and kW 750 power amplifier.

It might seem absurd to apply a 750W power amplifier to a single 4in drive unit. But the experiment proved that the S1R really can deliver the kind of bass you'd expect from the spec. With the effectively limitless power reserve of the kW 750, the little Jordan driver really shows that it is no ordinary metal cone. With lesser amps, the speaker can produce bass, but can seem to lack weight and conviction, such that on certain kinds of music you might even find yourself hankering for the usual, more obvious and even bloated bottom-end to be had from conventional loudspeakers.

The S1R made me listen with a far less jaded ear to the Jennifer Warnes' *Famous Blue Raincoat*, and in fact I couldn't take it off. 'Joan of Arc', a dark song even by Leonard Cohen's standards, came over with amazing power. Words can't describe just how electrifyingly metallic the slide guitar sounded on this track – just as it should do, of course. ☺

FOR:
Realism,
transparency,
immediacy,
build quality

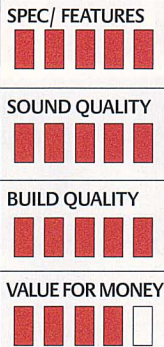
AGAINST: Not a criticism,
but you do need a
decent amp



Hi-fi news
Verdict

MJ ACOUSTICS
SUBLIMINAL S1R £1995

For plasma addicts, this speaker is intended as a welcome and well-crafted alternative to the usual aluminium poles, but the fact is that you really won't hear them at their best if placed flat against the wall. Toe the speakers in as directed, that imaging snaps into place and a slight but detectable quack in the midrange all but disappears. And you really do need a decent amplifier. There have been other Jordan VTL-inspired transmission-lines, from Carolina Audio (USA) and Konus (Bosnia) for example, but even Jordan calls MJ's 'the best version yet' and it's hard to believe that any could be as nicely built as MJ's. Even the badges are a work of art. A fine speaker, room-friendly and surprisingly satisfying.



Hi-fi news 19/20 OVERALL RATING

Manufacturer's specifications

POWER HANDLING	100 watts
NOMINAL IMPEDANCE	6 ohm
DRIVE UNIT	single 4in Jordan full-range driver with 'molecular vibration' technology
SENSITIVITY	88dB for 1W at 1m
FREQUENCY RANGE	40Hz-22kHz
CABINET TYPE	transmission-line
DIMENSIONS	980x356mmx104mm
BASE	swivel action with M8 spike receptacles
FINISHES	Maple, cherry, light oak with black grilles (other grille colours available on request)

Contact numbers

UK DISTRIBUTOR: MJ Acoustics
TEL: +44 (0)8707 445080 **WEB:** www.mjacoustics.co.uk

Review system breakdown

SOURCES Rega Apollo CD player
AMPS Arcam A32, Musical Fidelity kW Pre pre-amplifier, Musical Fidelity kW750 power amplifier
CABLES Chord Siren interconnects, Chord Odyssey speaker cables

We Listened to

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| MILES DAVIS
Kind Of blue
Columbia
480410 2 | DUKE ELLINGTON/
CHARLES MINGUS/
MAX ROACH
Money Jungle
Blue Note
CDP 7 46398 2 | LADYSMITH BLACK
MAMBAZO
Long Walk To freedom
Heads Up
HUSA 9109 |
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