



Diamonds glitter once more

Wharfedale Diamond 8.3

Loudspeakers £200



For Bass, midrange, treble – in short, everything's right

Against Nothing

Verdict Superb floorstanders that deliver great sound on a budget

They say diamonds are forever, and this certainly seems to be the case with Wharfedale's speakers of the same name, first introduced way back in 1982 and quickly becoming Britain's best-selling range.

In recent years the Diamonds have been eclipsed by rivals from

the likes of KEF and Mission, but with the new 8 series the company is pulling out all the stops to restore the marque's classic reputation.

The bookshelf 8.1s proved to be a superb solution for a very small room when we reviewed them back in April, while the 8.2 stand-mounters are also top notch (see July's *Supertest*). And that brings us to the 8.3s.

A floorstanding design, the 8.3s are essentially the 8.2s in bigger cabinets, so we're looking for an equivalent performance with a touch more weight and scale. Lots of people are attracted by the idea of floorstanders, but remember that it's harder to make a good floorstander than a good standmounter,

especially at £200 (see *Should You Floor It?* panel). So how do the 8.3s shape up?

They share the same drivers with their smaller siblings, the 8.2s – a 16.5cm Kevlar mid/bass driver partnered with a 25mm silk-dome tweeter. The tweeter is the same as that used in the rest of the Diamond range – not to mention the more expensive Pacific series – which is handy, given that it's a stunning design, delivering sweetly smooth and detailed treble that carries all the necessary bite without ever hardening into "ouch" territory. Load up Mogwai's *Rock Action* set, and the epic ambience of tracks like 'Sine Wave' sounds

truly awesome, guitars and drums exploding into an intricately rendered acoustic.

Continued overleaf

SHOULD YOU FLOOR IT?

The Diamond 8 series offers essentially the same model in two versions – the 8.2 standmounters and 8.3 floorstanders. So which should you go for?

There's an upside to floorstanding speakers and a downside. A bigger cabinet will allow greater reach into low frequencies – floorstanders literally go lower, but the bigger the cabinet, the more chance there is of the cabinet colouring the sound by resonating at certain frequencies. So sometimes it's a choice between more bass from the floorstanders or better bass from the standmounters.

When auditioning floorstanders, don't just be impressed by a wall of low-end frequencies. If you want to enjoy your speakers in the long run, make sure they provide true punch and precision from deep basslines.

And in the case of the 8.3s, Wharfedale has done a great job of combining the extra weight with accuracy – ensuring that these floorstanding designs are true stars at the price.