



Continued from overleaf

The tweeter also integrates seamlessly with the Kevlar driver to provide an excellent midrange. Spin the tuneful jazz of guitarist John Scofield's *Time On My Hands* set, and the instruments are delivered with superb subtlety and nuance.

A biwirable design, (and it's worth taking advantage of this facility for the extra air it brings to the sound), the 8.3s are also flexible about positioning, thanks in part to those front-firing ports. Do experiment though: with just a slight toe-in the Wharfedales provide a wide and cohesive image, with good focus and excellent musical realism. Meanwhile, a sensitivity of 86dB/W/m and 6ohm impedance means any similarly priced amp will drive them easily.

As for build and finish, these are very good speakers for the money. True there's a clear 'lip' on the front port where the pieces are joined, and this spoils the look a bit – especially when recent speakers from the likes of B&W have shown that reflex ports can be designed to look good as well as aid bass response. Otherwise, the vinyl wrap is well applied, and the slightly industrial look to the front fascia is well designed, too.

In short we have nothing but praise for these superb speakers in strict sound-per-pound terms. Compare them to designs costing five times the price and some slight thickness in the lower mid range is apparent,

but remember that the Diamonds cost just £200. For detail, dynamics and all-round musicality they deliver the goods. And that holds true whether it's jazz, some post-rock or pounding bass grooves.

Ah yes – that bass. We can't possibly finish this test without a word or three on the 8.3s' performance down low. Spin Zero 7's *Simple Things* set and the music's smooth style is conveyed intact, yet the basslines underpinning those easy grooves rattle the ribcage, such is the sheer extension offered. What's more, it all sounds both taut and punchy.

At the entry-level sector of the speaker market it's often the case that a good stand-mounter on well-chosen sturdy stands will deliver a more convincing all-round performance than its floorstanding counterpart. But in this case, the 8.3s deliver everything of which the 8.2s are capable – and then some. The added bass afforded by the bigger cabinets is impressive, never sacrificing accuracy for wooliness. What's more, the Wharfedales perform with gusto but never lose control. Rhythms are precise, dynamics have real sweep and voices are delivered with good presence.

If you're on a tight budget, but have your heart set on a pair of floorstanders, don't hesitate to put the 8.3s on the auditioning list. They're superb and will suit a variety of systems, to boot.

Wharfedale

Diamond 8.2 £150

For Refined and insightful performers; build; value

Against A hint of thickness in the upper bass area, that's all

Verdict ★★★★★

An excellent performer that is good enough to bring a shine back to the Diamond name

The Diamond range has been a massive seller for Wharfedale for almost two decades. Indeed, the company claims the Diamonds have been Britain's best selling speaker range since 1982. But even Wharfedale wouldn't claim the last couple of generations have been class-leading designs.

However, with this, the eighth generation, hopes are high. The solidly built cabinet is fitted with a Kevlar mid/bass driver and a high quality silk-dome tweeter.

Biwired and positioned close to, but not up against, a back wall these speakers produce a

staggeringly good performance for the money. Considering their position right at the bottom of our price band, the 8.2s' superbly refined presentation is a treat. Vocals are handled in a wholly convincing manner with the likes of Bonnie Prince Billie's *Ease Down The Road* set coming through in a full-bodied manner. Rhythmically things are tight too.

Low frequency performance is equally adept, combining plenty of weight and speed. The Diamonds can deliver a grand symphony such as Bruckner's *No. 7* with authority, and dance or pop with plenty of punch.

Considering their price the 8.2s perform superbly. Our only criticism is a slight thickness in the upper bass which robs the 8.2s of the openness of the B&Ws or Monitor Audios here.

Still, this shouldn't detract from Wharfedale's achievement with the 8.2s. These speakers are a credit to the Diamond name.



The smart, refined 8.2s put Wharfedale back in the race in the budget sector

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