THOMAS J. NORTON

Elac Adante AF-61

LOUDSPEAKER

German manufacturer Elac had a significant North American presence in the 1960s and '70s, primarily with its Miracord automatic turntables. While it eventually disappeared from the US market, Elac never ceased to be a player in Europe, where it eventually shifted its primary focus from turntables to loudspeakers.

When Elac decided to reenter the US market a few years ago, its success was hardly assured. Faced with hundreds of brand names and thousands of models fighting for attention, it hired veteran speaker guru Andrew Jones to improve the odds. In his previous work, first for KEF and then for TAD and Pioneer, Jones had built a solid reputation on designing well-received, cost-no-object speakers as well as high-value budget designs.

The results have been startling. Beginning with the aptly named Debut line, now in its second generation, and following up with the Uni-Fi series, Elac and Jones have made serious inroads in the sales of budget loudspeakers, reviving not only the Elac name but also an audio market too long smitten with blindingly priced speakers.

Nevertheless, Elac models have followed at higher, if not sky-high, prices. The company's current flagship line, Adante, comprises the AS-61 bookshelf model (and matching, optional, and recommended stands), the AC-61

SPECIFICATIONS

Description Three-way, ported, floorstanding loudspeaker. Drive-units: 1" tweeter, 5.25" midrange, three 6.5" woofers, three 8" passive radiators. Crossover frequencies: 200Hz, 2kHz. Bass function: Interport Coupled-Cavity (bandpass). Frequency range: 39Hz–35kHz. Sensitivity: 87dB/2.83V/m. Nominal impedance: 6 ohms. Power handling: 160W peak (50–160W recommended). **Dimensions** 52.34" (1329.4mm) H with outrigger plate & spikes by 9.6" (243.7mm) W by 15.67" (397.9mm) D with grille. **Weight:** 101 lb (45.8kg). **Finishes** Gloss Black, Gloss White, Rosewood. **Serial numbers of units reviewed** 32104E000011, 32104E000012. **Price** $5000/pair. Approximate number of dealers: 100. **Warranty:** 3 years, 3 Years parts and labor. **Manufacturer** Elac Americas, 11145 Knott Avenue, Suites E & F, Cypress, CA 90630. Tel: (888) 541-0996, (714) 252-8843. Web: www.elac.com.

center-channel, the SUB3070 subwoofer, and our subject here: the Adante AF-61 tower speaker ($5000/pair).

Design

Andrew Jones has used concentric drivers since his early years with KEF, and continues to favor them in all but his least expensive designs. For Elac they first appeared in the Uni-Fi range, and both the stand-mounted Adante AS-61 and the floorstanding AF-61 employ them as well.

In a concentric driver, the tweeter is positioned at the apex of the midrange cone, the latter acting as a waveguide for the former. The main benefit of a waveguide is to reduce the tweeter's dispersion at the low end of its range: Since the midrange driver (or midrange-woofer) typically has restricted dispersion at the top of its range, where it hands off to the tweeter, reducing a tweeter's dispersion in that region can smooth the transition between the two drive-units' outputs. A waveguide can also, but not always, enhance a tweeter's dispersion at the top end of its range. The AF-61's concentric tweeter is protected by a web-like screen, and is crossed over to the aluminum-coned midrange at 2kHz.

That 5.25" midrange drive-unit has a 2" voice coil, which leaves plenty of room inside it for the wide-surround, 1" soft-dome tweeter. To isolate it from the woofers, this concentric driver is mounted at the front of its own separate, sealed chamber with anti-vibration mountings.

While it might appear from the outside that the three-way AF-61 has three 8" woofers, it doesn't. What you see are three passive radiators. Each of these is partnered to its own 6.5" woofer, which operates invisibly, in an internal subenclosure. Together with two ports, that driver radiates into a second, smaller subenclosure that contains the passive radiator. The woofer and its ports never face the outside of the cabinet. Instead, their energy simply activates the 8" passive radiator, the "driver" you see. In other words: Each of the three visible woofers in the AF-61 is one of three separately enclosed woofer "systems," each comprising a 6.5" driver with two internal ports energizing an 8" passive radiator, the latter's diaphragm simply passing all of the bass to the outside.

This arrangement acts as an acoustical filter, limiting the bass output to below 200Hz and eliminating some of the expensive crossover parts that would otherwise be needed to achieve the same low-pass crossover with a conventional network (a high-pass filter is still required on the midrange). It also eliminates audible port resonances. Elac calls this design Interport-Coupled Cavity loading.

This isn't a new idea, but rather a variation of what was called bandpass loading when it was first used, decades ago. It never caught on big, likely because it's somewhat complex and expensive. Regardless of possible savings on crossover parts, a passive radiator together with a more complex cabinet will still cost more than a cardboard or plastic port. But the Wayback Machine tickling the dark recesses of my brain says that KEF did use it in some of its designs, which may be where Elac's Andrew Jones first worked with or became aware of it.

The cabinet structure required for this complex arrangement, with six separate internal chambers, not counting the small chamber for each midrange, makes for an extremely rigid enclosure, as rapping a knuckle on it painfully revealed. A heavy metal base plate, with outrigger corners and adjustable spikes, is also included. In addition, the AF-61s come with magnetically attached metal grilles. I used neither grilles nor spikes. The latter weren't sharp enough to penetrate the carpets that covered my hardwood floors, and if they had been I wouldn't put those floors at risk. I used a single run of speaker cable to each speaker, though biwiring or biamping are possible using each speaker's two pairs of high-quality binding posts. The available finishes are high-gloss black or white, or rosewood veneer (which looks more like dark walnut).

Setup

My listening area measures 21' long by 16' wide, with an oddly sloped ceiling at an estimated average height of 9'. This space is part of an open floor plan, with one of its 21' sides almost entirely open to a kitchen/breakfast area, which in turn opens into a dining room. The acoustic space is therefore far larger than the actual 21' by 16' listening area, which also accommodates the home-theater system used for my work for our sister publication Sound & Vision. That system includes two projection screens, but they're fully retracted when the main attraction is listening to music.

MEASUREMENTS

I used DRA Labs' MLSSA system and a calibrated DPA 4006 microphone to measure the Elac Adante AF-61's frequency response in the farfield, and an Earthworks QTC-40 for the nearfield responses. (I didn't use the grilles.) My estimate of the Adante AF-61's voltage sensitivity was 86.1dB/2.83V/m, slightly below the specified 87dB/2.83V/m. The specified nominal impedance is 6 ohms. Fig.1 shows that the impedance magnitude remains above 6 ohms for much of the audioband, with minimum values of 4.75 ohms at 92Hz, 5.25 ohms at 240Hz, and 5.1 ohms at 9.1k ohms. However, there is a current-hungry combination of 5.3 ohms magnitude and electrical phase angle of –43° at 75Hz (fig.1). This speaker would work best with an amplifier that is comfortable driving 4 ohm loads.

The traces in fig.1 are free from the small wrinkles that would imply the presence of cabinet-wall resonances. However, I did find a mode at 333Hz on the sidewalls level with the woofers (fig.2), and this was also present on the rear and top panels. This is high enough in Q, and sufficiently low in level, that it shouldn't give rise to any coloration.

There are several impedance peaks in the bass in fig.1, these due to the AF-61's unusual low-frequency alignment, in which each of three internally mounted woofers fires into a ported

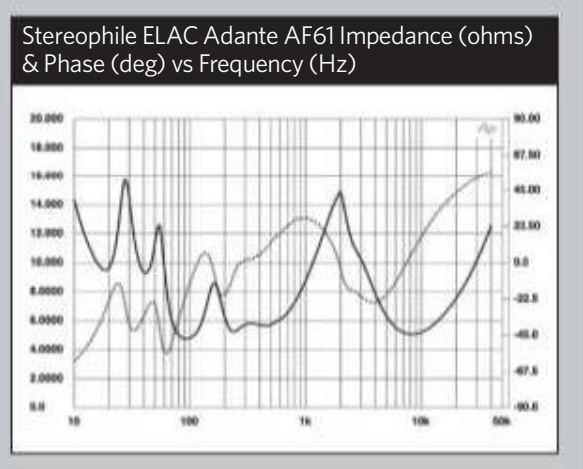


Fig.1 Elac Adante AF-61, electrical impedance (solid) and phase (dashed) (2 ohms/vertical div.).

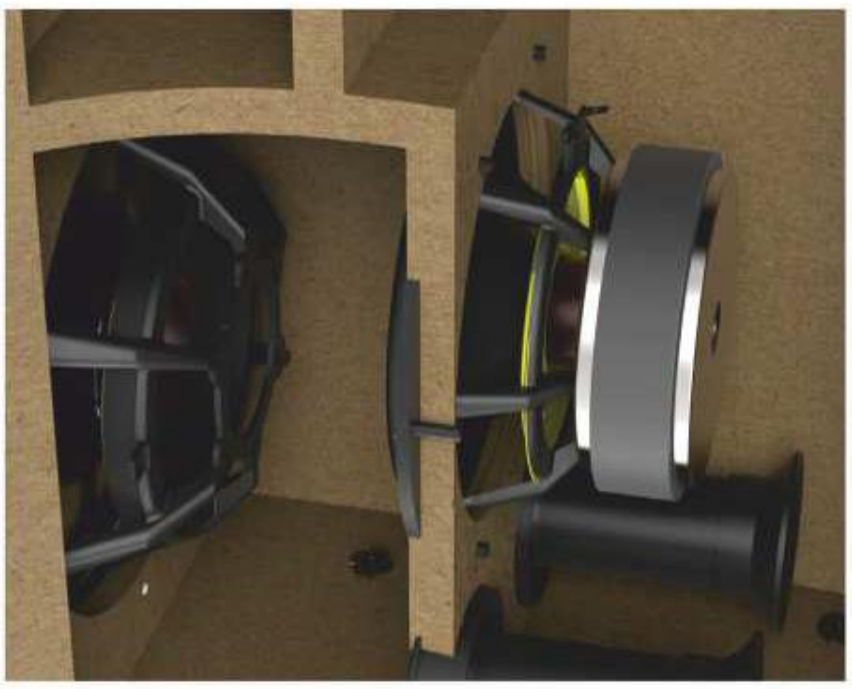
The room is relatively live, but apart from the kitchen, most of the floor area is covered with large, thick rugs. Shelves filled with books, CDs, and videos are on the back wall, several feet behind the listening seats.

I drove the Elacs with two channels (except where noted) of a Marantz AV8802A surround-sound processor, connected to two channels of a Proceed AMP5 five-channel power amplifier. In stereo operation, each of the Proceed's channels is driven by a completely separate power supply and transformer, not just separate secondaries from the same transformer—as used here, it operates as two monoblocks built on one chassis. Proceed, now long gone from the market, was the home-theater branch of Mark Levinson, and 20 years ago, when new, the AMP5 sold for $5000 ($1000/channel), or about $7700/$1500 today, and was specified as producing 125Wpc into 8 ohms or 250Wpc into 4 ohms, all channels driven. Roughly the size of a high-end preamp, the AMP5 is small for a five-channel class-AB power amp but weighs over 100 lb. The source was a Marantz UD7007 universal BD player, connected to the Marantz pre-pro with a coaxial digital cable.

Except as noted, all recordings used were on CD.

Listening

The 52"-tall Adante AF-61s are moderately imposing in a domestic setting. I set them up about 9' apart and 11' from the main listening position, which put their front baffles about 4' out from the front wall. The center of the AF-61's concentric tweeter-midrange is 46" above the floor, considerably higher than the typical seated ear height of 36–37". While my current listening ear height is a bit higher than that, it isn't close to 46". To compensate, I tilted the speakers forward slightly, and toed them in toward the listening seat. According to Andrew Jones, sitting slightly off the center axis on a concentric driver produces the lowest coloration, but I heard no clearly identifiable colorations in my setup.



A cutaway view of one of three bass chambers in Elac's Interport-Coupled Cavity system: Note the 8" passive radiator on the left, the active 5.5" driver on the right, and, below that, a pair of internal reflex ports.

While the initial listening tests were good, there was a distinct lack of impact below about 45Hz, obvious on material I know to have substantially extended bass. This wasn't entirely surprising, as it's also been true of some other speakers I've tested in this very large room. But my Monitor Audio Silver 10s have no problem producing convincing bass from the same positions, nor does an ancient pair of Energy Veritas v2.8s, the latter roughly the size of the Adantes.

When I performed a close-miked measurement of the AF-61s (fig.1 on p.111) using an OmniMic measurement

measurements, continued

cavity coupled to the outside world with a passive radatior.[1] The three radiators behave identically, and the sum of their nearfield responses is shown as the red trace in fig.3. This is crossed over to the midrange unit, whose nearfield response is shown as the blue trace, at the specified 200Hz with what appear to be symmetrical fourth-order, 24dB/octave slopes. The lower-frequency rolloff is also fourth-order, with an approximate –6dB frequency of 40Hz—higher than I would have expected for such a large loudspeaker.

The black trace above 300Hz in fig.3 shows the farfield output of the Adante AF-61's coaxial midrange/treble unit on the tweeter axis. Other than a slight lack of energy in the mid-treble and a small peak centered on 10kHz, the Elac's response is superbly flat and even. The plot of the Adante AF-61's lateral dispersion, normalized to the tweeter-axis response (fig.4), reveals that these on-axis features disappear to the speaker's sides, meaning that, as Andrew Jones told TJN, the perceived treble balance in a normal-size room

1 See my video interview with the AF-61's designer, Andrew Jones, at www.stereophile.com/content/elacs-andrew-jones-talks-loudspeakers.

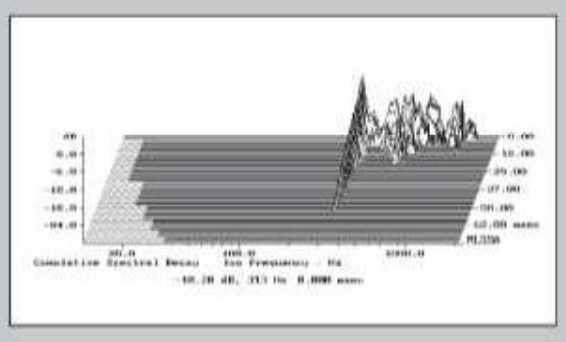


Fig.2 Elac Adante AF-61, cumulative spectral-decay plot calculated from output of accelerometer fastened to center of sidewall level with middle passive radiator (MLS driving voltage to speaker, 7.55V; measurement bandwidth, 2kHz).

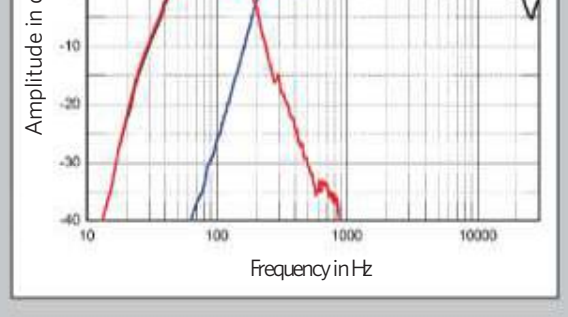


Fig.3 Elac Adante AF-61, anechoic response on tweeter axis at 50°, averaged across 30° horizontal window and corrected for microphone response, with nearfield responses of passive radiators (red), midrange unit (blue), and their complex sum, respectively plotted below 375Hz, 875Hz, and 300Hz.

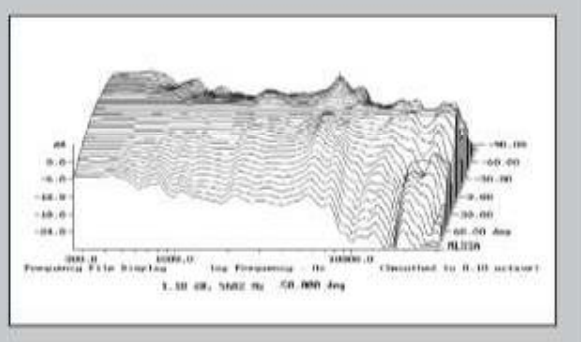


Fig.4 Elac Adante AF-61, lateral response family at 50°, normalized to response on tweeter axis, from back to front: differences in response 90–5° off axis, reference response, differences in response 5–90° off axis.

system from Parts Express (not nearly as sophisticated as the tools John Atkinson uses for Stereophile's speaker measurements, but excellent for basic measurements and setup), the response rolled off rapidly below 50Hz at about 18dB/octave (third-order). I measured all three of the front-mounted passive radiators, and they were essentially the same. Since bass frequencies are radiated from nowhere else on the AF-61, such as a port, these measurements indicates the bass capability of the speaker itself, with no help from so-called room gain. The single driver in Elac's Adante AS-61 minimonitor measured about the same when I reviewed that speaker for Sound & Vision, though the AF-61's three bass drivers' ability to minimize the well-known upper-bass floor-bounce dip (aka the Allison Effect), should offer benefits in overall bass balance and power handling.

When a speaker is designed, certain assumptions must be made concerning the room in which it's likely to be used, particularly the room's size. All rooms affect the bass, including boosting the lowest frequencies—the room gain. The bigger the room, the lower the room gain, which is why a speaker used outdoors typically has anemic low bass. Designers who assume little room gain extend the bass as far as the design's size and budget allow. If a smaller room with a lot of room gain is assumed, the designer will keep the extension in check. I don't know what assumptions Andrew Jones made in designing the AF-61, but given the likely international appeal of the speakers, I suspect a room as big as mine, with little room gain, wasn't high on the checklist.

A closer look at the AF-61's 1 concentric tweeter and its web-like grillework.

I tried a variety of solutions to increase the Elac's bottom end, some more effective than others. Using a 4dB boost on my Marantz pre-pro's bass control helped a little, but also produced additional warmth in the upper bass. This wasn't unpleasant, and would likely appeal to some listeners, but it did reduce the openness of the soundstage. In any case, few audiophile preamps and integrated amps offer bass and treble controls.

I finally settled on two other solutions. After some experimenting with the help of the OmniMic system, I found that moving the AF-61s about 6 closer to the wall behind them enlivened the bass extension a bit without ill effects. I also went the subwoofer route, with Elac's own powered SUB3070, which is designed to mate with the Adante models. More about that below, but for most of my listening I reviewed the AF-61s as most Stereophile readers will use them: without bass boost or subwoofer. But as I've repeated ad nauseam in past reviews: A review can tell you only what a speaker's bass sounds like in the reviewer's room, not in yours.

The repositioning alone didn't exactly peel the paint off my walls with recordings of such bass-heavy material as pipe organs or Kodo-style drums, but neither did it offend with a loose, overblown bottom end. With familiar recordings it was sometimes clear that the bass should have been more

measurements, continued

will be neutral. As anticipated, the tweeter begins to become directional above 12kHz, which might make the AF-61 sound a little airless in large or overdamped rooms, as TJN found in his room. In the vertical plane (fig.5), the Adante's even tweeter-axis balance is maintained across a wide window—just as well, considering that the tweeter is a high 46 above the floor.

In the time domain, the Adante AF-61's step response on the tweeter axis (fig.6) indicates that all of its drive-units are connected in positive acoustic polarity, with the tweeter's output arriving at the microphone before the midrange unit's, which in turn arrives before that of the passive radiators. The output of each unit smoothly blends with that of the next lower in frequency, suggesting optimal crossover design. The cumulative spectral-decay plot on the tweeter axis (fig.7) is generally clean.

The Elac Adante AF-61's measured performance reveals excellent speaker engineering, even if, as Tom Norton found, the speaker doesn't extend as low in the bass as you might expect.

—John Atkinson

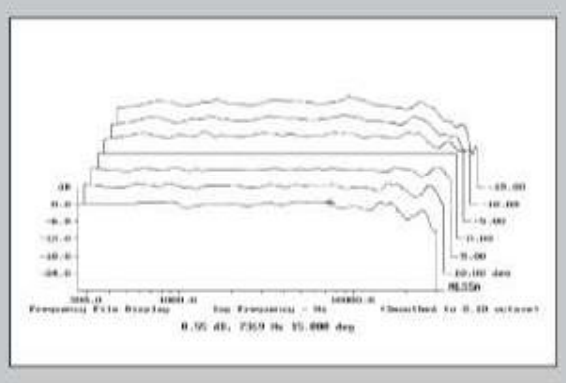


Fig.5 Elac Adante AF-61, vertical response family at 50 , normalized to response on tweeter axis, from back to front: differences in response 15–5 above axis, reference response, differences in response 5–15 below axis.

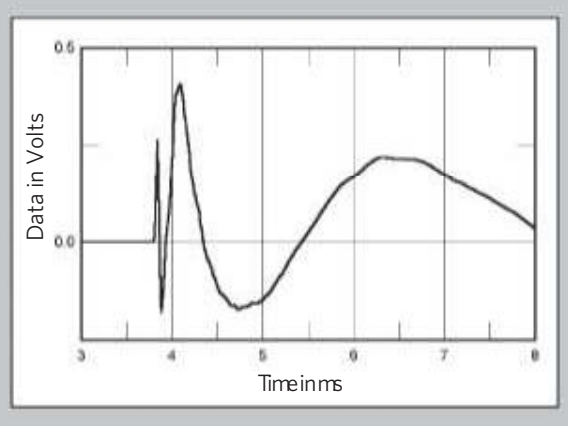


Fig.6 Elac Adante AF-61, step response on tweeter axis at 50 (5ms time window, 30kHz bandwidth).

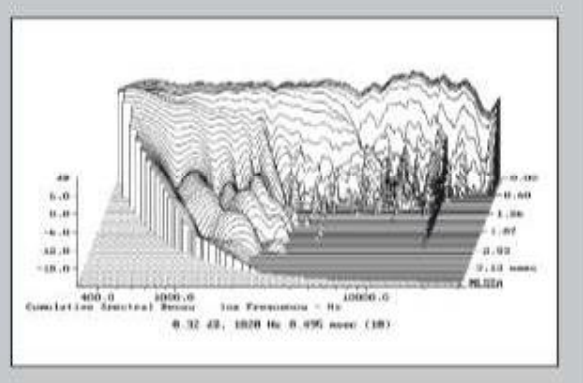


Fig.7 Elac Adante AF-61, cumulative spectral-decay plot on tweeter axis at 50 (0.15ms risetime).

"there," but what I heard was tight and clean, even with the rise between 150 and 200Hz that's characteristic of my room (worse in the right channel than the left, fig.2).

Somewhere in my audio travels I've acquired two sampler CDs released by Danish Audiophile Loudspeaker Industries, aka DALI. They're loaded with superbly recorded tracks, though unfortunately they appear to be out of print (you might find them on eBay at ridiculous prices). No matter—most of the tracks are available on the artists' original CDs, and some even as downloads.

"In Your Wild Garden," from DALI Vol.2, originally released on Danish singer-songwriter Josefine Cronholm's Wild Garden (CD, Stunt 01232), features the singer backed by piano, double bass, and a lightly played drum kit. It sounded superb through the Elacs, with excellent overall balance, a clear, uncolored voice, and treble detail that was simply there, without exaggeration. Nothing was clearly missing. This track contains little deep bass, but what was there didn't sound thin. I might have preferred a bit more air at the very top end, but the highs weren't subdued in any obvious way.

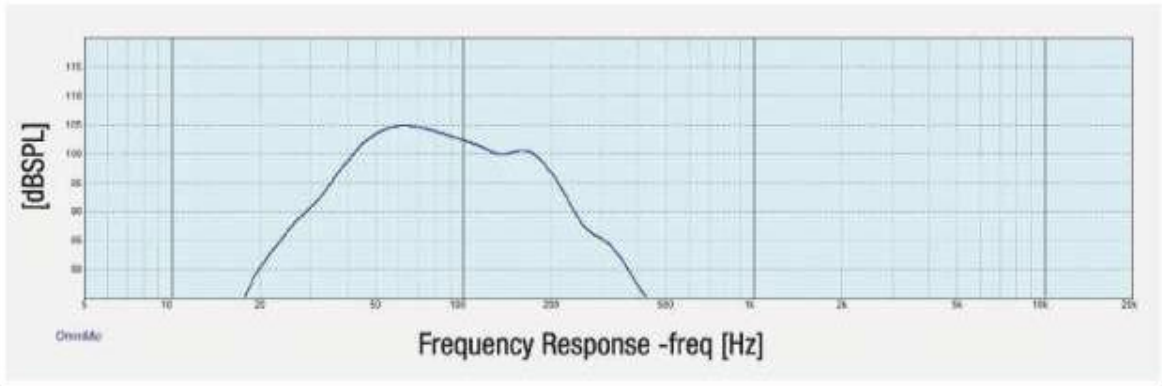


Fig.1 Elac Adante AF-61, nearfield response of passive radiators (5dB/vertical div.).

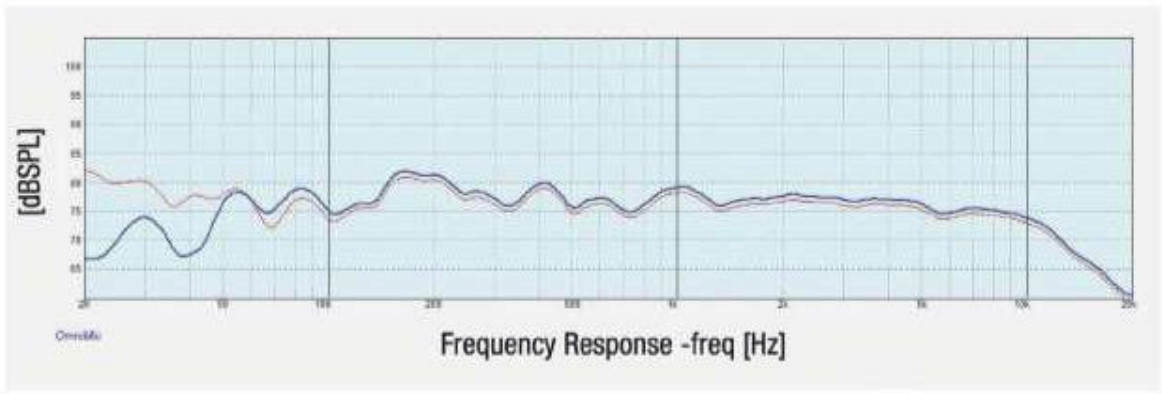


Fig.2 Elac Adante AF-61, 1/6-octave-smoothed in-room response (speakers alone, blue; speakers with Elac SUB3070 subwoofer crossed over at 80Hz, red) (5dB/vertical div.)

The same DALI sampler also included the far more familiar "Train Song," by Tom Waits, here covered by Holly Cole, from her album Temptation (CD, Blue Note 31653), a recording every audiophile is required to hear before earning the Audiophile Merit Badge. Cole's voice was solidly between the speakers, if a little "big," as is common with closely miked pop recordings. The bass lines in the spare accompaniment were less prominent than I'm accustomed to hearing from this track, but were nevertheless well balanced, tight, and completely free of unnatural bloat.

A third track from DALI Vol.2, Elvis Presley's cover of "Fever," originally from Elvis Is Back! (CD, RCA Legacy 88697847402), is a superb 58-year-old recording. It sounded just a little rich and warm through the Adante AF-61s, but in a way that many listeners will find appealing, though this is typically a problem created by the room, not the speaker. Here it was definitely my room's fault: a bump in the response between 150 and 230Hz.

DALI Vol.3 sounded even more impressive through the Elacs, especially several superbly recorded men's and women's voices. It was on this disc that I first discovered the Danish singer Sinne Eeg, whose duo album with Thomas Fonnesbæk, Eeg Fonnesbæk, was one of my picks for the February 2018 edition of "Records to Die For."[1] "My Treasure," from Eeg's Waiting for Dawn (CD, Sinne Music/Calibrated 002), was a rare treasure in itself, with clean but unobtrusive piano, double bass, and percussion accompanying Eeg's rich, expressive, open voice. None of this was shortchanged by the Elacs in any way.

While the bass was uniformly musical and never obviously restricted, I've heard fuller, better-balanced bass from DALI Vol.3 from a number of other good speakers in my room, and not in any exaggerated way. The Elac's sound in this regard might well be a plus for many readers but a minus for others. I also suspect that in a more average-size but not necessarily small, fully enclosed room, this critique wouldn't apply. In short, I found little to complain about with any cut on DALI Vol.3.

The Adantes also performed beautifully on material with complex, high-frequency detail. Percussion-heavy recordings, ultimate bass extension excepted (more on this below), were reproduced with all their fast attacks and fine detail intact, but never with over-the-top brightness. Test Record 3: Dynamics (CD, Opus3 CD 8300) may be hard to find today, but it remains a superb collection of excerpts from the Opus3 catalog, much of it from the late 1970s and '80s. (Opus3 now offers many of its consistently great recordings on both SACD and a wide range of 15ips open-reel tapes, the latter at "if you have to ask" prices.)

The selections on this sampler include panpipes and flutes (from Yuyachifca, Opus3 CD 7902); small groups as on Knud Jørgensen Jazz Trio (Opus3 CD 8401); a children's choir recorded for this sampler; an a cappella male voice (Eric Bibb singing "He's Got the Whole World in His Hand," also recorded for this release); two pipe-organ pieces performed by Torvald Torén: Vierne's Toccata, and a selection from D'Aquin's No I, both heavy on the upper, trumpet-like pipes rather than the deep bass typical of most organ recordings; and much more.

All of these varied tracks were reproduced beautifully by the Adantes. Any limitations of the AF-61s in my room were only rarely evident, and mostly, though not dramatically, with the full-range Vierne organ selection. What came through with all tracks was a rewarding honesty, with nothing ever sounding wrong. When I thought briefly, for example, that the guitars in the Yuyachifca selection sounded a bit soft, I was immediately rewarded when the pan pipes chimed in with their sweet and articulate breath sounds. The jazz trio was crisp and detailed, the pipe organs vibrant in their reverberant acoustic, and Bibb's unaccompanied voice natural and moving.

1 See www.stereophile.com/content/records-die-2018-page-6.

Yes, I'd still like my fetish rewarded for a little more sparkle ("air," if you will) at the very top. But the more I listened, the more that desire faded into the background. It also may be simply characteristic of the off-axis performance of concentric drivers in a large room. But I wouldn't make too much of it, given the obvious benefits of such a mid-range/tweeter arrangement.

Enter Elac's SUB30370 subwoofer

The more I listened to a wide range of music, the less I was bothered by the AF-61's deep-bass performance in my room. My awareness of it came and went, depending on the recording. But since I had on hand Elac's SUB3070 subwoofer, which was designed for use with the Adante models, failure to try it was out of the question.

With a pair of 12" aluminum-coned drivers driven by a 1200W (peak) BASH amplifier in a small but solid and heavy cabinet, the SUB3070's key feature is an auto-equalization function that makes use of an Elac app downloadable to a smartphone or tablet. You position the phone close to the subwoofer and take a reading, then move to the listening position and take another reading. The EQ software automatically accounts for the difference and equalizes the sub's output accordingly, using the fact that nearfield measurements are largely independent of the room, while the readings at the listening position are dominated by it. (The limitations of the microphone in your phone will be the same for both readings and so will be largely insignificant.) The main limitation of this feature is that it can work with only a single reading at the main listening position, not multiple readings at and around it.

The sub can also be adjusted using the eight separate parametric equalizers also accessible through the smartphone app. You can use both the auto and parametric functions together, but most users should find the auto route alone sufficient. For proper use, the parametric feature really requires a separate measuring device, such as the OmniMic mentioned earlier. Without this, it's easy to overdrive the SUB3070 with careless use of the parametric boost, added atop any boost generated by the auto EQ.

The EQ, of course, affects only frequencies below the crossover frequency to the subwoofer (I chose 80Hz). And most audiophile preamps don't offer the ability to deal with a subwoofer, which is best used when both high- and low-pass filters are available. You can drive the AF-61s full range and simply cross over the subwoofer itself at a low-pass frequency selectable in the app, but that could well make it more difficult to blend the outputs of the sub and AF-61s. This arrangement, in which both the main speakers and the subwoofer overlap across a wide range in the midbass, is one reason audiophiles often have problems incorporating a sub, abandon the effort, and become convinced that subwoofers have no place in audiophilia.

But in my room the AF-61s, properly blended with a well-positioned SUB3070, produced a system with sound in another league from that of the AF-61s alone. With some recordings it made surprisingly little difference. But when I played music with deep-bass content, the difference ranged from subtle (eg, a little more attack on a kick drum) to profound (eg, organ recordings with deepest bass). Sometimes I was surprised at how well the subwooferless AF-61s reproduced the bass drum, while with another bass-drum recording all they managed was the sound of the drum head. In the latter case, the deep extension of the drum's body was fully formed only when I added the sub. Chalk this up to the fact that the bass of the AF-61s alone was not only less extended than the equalized subwoofer but bumpier as well—a phenomenon that affects all rooms, and will emphasize some fundamental frequencies while shortchanging others. Again, see fig.2, taken with a single reading at the listening position with the AF-61s alone (blue trace), and together with the subwoofer, high- and low-passed at 80Hz (red). The latter is displaced by 1dB so that both curves remain visible. Otherwise, they overlap perfectly above about 120Hz.

ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT

Digital Source Marantz UD7007 universal disc player.
Preamplification Marantz AV8802A preamplifier-processor.
Power Amplifier Proceed AMP5.
Loudspeakers Energy Veritas v2.8, Monitor Audio Silver 10, Elac SUB3070 subwoofer.
Cables Digital: Kimber Kable AGDL (coaxial, source to AV8802A), Cardas Hexlink (preamps to power amp). Speaker: AudioQuest Rocket 88. AC: Manufacturers' own.—Thomas J. Norton

In the home theater

While using the Elacs as part of a home theater won't be of interest to all Stereophile readers, others will appreciate that they excelled with a wide range of film soundtracks, particularly those with good music scores (a prime consideration for me)—though they were also perfectly fine, with sub, at reproducing the firefights, car crashes, and explosions heard in the superhero saga of the month. There's also an Adante AC-61 center-channel speaker ($4000 each), but here I used a single AS-61 stand-mount ($1250 each), turned on its side and placed on a low stand below the screen. The AS-61 uses the same concentric driver as in the AF-61 above 200Hz, and the match with the AF-61s was excellent.

Conclusions

Yes, I had a few mild critiques of the Elac Adante AF-61, particularly for the need, with some music, in my very large room, of a good subwoofer to flesh out the bottom end, which turned a very good speaker into an exceptional one.

But with or without a subwoofer, I liked what I heard from the Adante AF-61s as soon as I hooked them up. I liked them even better after several weeks of listening. When I went back to check a few last-minute details while writing this review, I found it difficult to listen for only a few minutes and then return to my writing. I wanted to listen longer. I had to pull myself away. If that's not a solid recommendation, I don't know what is. ■