

BEST LOUDSPEAKER

ATC SCM11 £849/PAIR

ATC's biggest professional speakers are used by movie, recording and broadcast studios all over the world, but the company's no-compromise 'monitor' design approach is just as rigorously applied to the smaller models. Although the SCM11 stands just 380mm tall, it weighs a substantial 8.5kg. The 150mm



main drive unit uses ATC's new CLD (Constrained Layer Damping) cone with an integral 45mm soft dome, crossing over at 2.8kHz to a new

25mm neodymium-magnet tweeter. In a group test, SH reported that: 'Here was a speaker that instantly displayed a more convincing bass performance on any music you tried... the foundation for a neutral, uncoloured sound from top to bottom. This design will prove its worth in long-term listening.'



AVALON NP EVOLUTION 2.0 £2000/PAIR

A winner last year, this versatile American speaker miraculously fought off all comers once again. Though part of a home cinema range, the Evolution 2.0 was designed 'with the more classical attributes of imaging and centre focus in mind,' and can be viewed as a standalone design for two-channel music listening. Standing 890mm



tall, it uses a proprietary composite dome tweeter plus two 5.25 inch (135mm) Kevlar-

coned bass/mid units. In his September 2006 review, MC wrote: 'Again and again I was drawn into the musical event. Much inner truth was revealed, musicians played together and worked together with considerable commitment and empathy.' Despite a little box coloration, the NP Evolution 2.0 excelled in timing, time coherence, and in transparency.



BOWERS & WILKINS 802D £8000/PAIR

Speaker manufacturers in search of an ideally rigid tweeter diaphragm have offered us aluminium, titanium, ceramics and beryllium. When the time came to revise its Nautilus 800 series, B&W leapfrogged the competition by using pure synthetic diamond, the most rigid material possible. This has kept the 802D



far enough ahead to win our vote again this year. In his Sept 2006 review, AH wrote: 'B&W

has taken a seriously good speaker in the N802, and turned it into something sublime. I would point to the 800D as B&W's crowning achievement in pure performance terms. But that speaker commands a £5000 premium over the £8000 for the 802D, so I will go on record as saying that the 802D is the best-value high-end speaker in the world.'



BEST SUBWOOFER

REL T1 £600

REL prefers to talk about Sub Bass systems rather than subwoofers. REL's origins pre-date the home cinema boom as founder Richard E Lord was initially concerned with making the best-sounding bass extender for music systems. However,



Lord took exceptional care over sound quality and provided comprehensive adjustments to match the bass correctly to the main system, and REL's

fortunes soon took off with those of the AV business. Current REL models maintain the tradition of excellent build and finish, and this clearly still applies to the low-cost 'T' series. With its Ultra Long Throw 10in driver powered by a 300W Class AB amplifier, the affordable T1 gets a hearty thumbs up.



MARTINLOGAN DESCENT i £2350

Perhaps it's not surprising that MartinLogan should know how to make an excellent subwoofer. After all, the company had spent more time than anyone on the difficult art of sonically matching conventional cone woofers to electrostatic



drivers. Intended, obviously enough, to complement the Ascent main speakers, the three-driver Descent still suits most large-ish loudspeakers, providing

alternative phase settings to help with room matching as well as the more usual level and roll-off controls. Back in 2002, KK described the Descent as 'the most musical, system-enhancing subwoofer in my experience.' Since then, the Descent has morphed into the Descent i, and this even more sophisticated design receives our vote here.



VELODYNE DD-18 £2995

Yes, we know, it's five pound under budget for the category, but the winner here could not be passed over. Velodyne describes its Digital Drive (DD) series as 'The industry's first microprocessor-



controlled, all digital, high-gain servo controlled subwoofers...' and indeed this company has single-handedly pioneered the concept of on-board parametric equalisation, with

excellent results. Reviewing the baby DD-10 back in 2005, KH concluded: 'Recommended, if you want the best.' Velodyne's technology allows the subwoofer's response in any room to be measured and digitally corrected. When it comes to subwoofers, bigger is usually better, and in this case that means the DD-18 is the sub of choice.

