



"You can't see past a pop star's image" An intimate chat with David Sylvian



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Hi-Fi Choice

PASSION FOR SOUND

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Keep on running

Revival Audio's Sprint 4 floorstander doesn't look like a game changer, but the proof is in the listening as **David Vivian** finds out

There are two models in French newcomer Revival Audio's Sprint range, a two-way standmount and a 2.5-way floorstander. So much for the element of surprise. All right, attention grab had already been landed with a thump by the company's grand and extravagantly old-school Atalante 7 Evo, a knowing but beautifully executed throwback to the days of studio-inspired large boxes totting an enormous (381mm) bass and monitor-grade dome midrange driver, the cabinets resting on sturdy,

stubby stands – all for a cool £9,390, thanks very much. In contrast, the Sprint 3 and Sprint 4 could hardly be more mainstream or pointedly value aware in two of the most crowded and competitive hi-fi speaker market sectors. No retro niche appeal shielding, here, the dramatically more affordable Sprints are bravely squaring up to a ton of well-established, keenly priced talent.

At first sight, there doesn't seem much to set the Sprint 4 tested here apart from the mid-market floorstander crowd populated by the

likes of B&W, KEF, PMC, Monitor Audio, Triangle *et al* save, maybe, from what initially seems to be a couple of mild but unusual aesthetic flourishes. Given that the genesis of Revival Audio was the result of engineer Daniel Emonts (Dynaudio, Focal) and former Dynaudio CEO Jacky Lee getting together in 2021 to: "perfect true listening experiences through products of decades-accumulated craftsmanship", there's a little more to it than that.

Most notably, the Sprint 4 has a removeable 'outer' front baffle. It's made from a light, rigid material contoured to offer a degree of wave guidance to each of the three drivers for less diffraction and better dispersion performance. Held in place magnetically, in the manner of a conventional grille, the actual circular fabric covers for the mid and mid/bass drivers are click-attached to the back rather than the front of the detachable baffle. Neat. With the so-called Elytron Acoustic Baffle and circular grilles removed altogether, the look is somewhat stark and, of course, you lose the wave guide benefits. The cabinets are rear ported in two places with foam bungs supplied to tailor bass output.

The Sprint 4 is a 'fire starter' out to generate some real heat from the get-go

Build is decent, if perhaps lacking the 'extra mile' effort the likes of Monitor Audio and KEF go to with finish and detailing. Let's call it comfortably good enough with no rough edges. The outriggers supplied fix to the base corners at a 45° angle to enhance stability and are of good quality and come with well-engineered round-tip spikes which look classy but, for better or worse, are unlikely to pierce into anything solid under a plush carpet. The cable binding posts on the lower rear baffle inspire confidence, too, but just the pair, so no bi-wiring.

Speaker makers have a choice: buy in stock drive units from specialist manufacturers, buy in custom tweaked drivers from specialists or make them inhouse. There are obvious advantages to the latter approach because, as in Revival Audio's case, bespoke tech can be tailored-in exactly as desired. The Sprint 4's 28mm soft-dome tweeter therefore has an Anti-Reflection Inner Dome (ARID) to absorb unwanted

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Revival Audio Sprint 4

ORIGIN
France/China

TYPE
2.5-way floorstanding loudspeaker

WEIGHT
20.6kg each

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
213 x 1,060 x 307mm

FEATURES
• 28mm soft dome tweeter
• 180mm mid/bass driver
• 180mm bass driver
• Quoted sensitivity: 89dB/1W/1m (4ohm)

DISTRIBUTOR
Elite Audio UK

WEBSITE
revivalaudio.fr
eliteaudiouk.com

resonances. Not a unique endeavour, this, or the oft-cited aim to create a diaphragm material for mid and bass drivers that is both rigid and light with good internal damping. RA's solution, here, for its 180mm mid/bass and bass drivers is Basalt Sandwich Construction (BSC), which it claims delivers a: "rapid yet smooth response with impressively tight bass dynamics".

Sound quality

If some special hi-fi speakers can best be described as 'slow burners' that take a while to fully appreciate, the Sprint 4 is much more your 'fire starter', out to generate some real heat from the get-go when fed the right stuff. One word review? Impressive. I'll return to this as it has interesting collateral implications. But for now, having warmed up the Sprint 4 with a few tracks from Bruno Mars' irrepressible *24k Magic* album on CD, I feel strangely drawn to the scene in *Back To The Future* where, at the Twin Pines Mall, radio controller in hand, Doc Brown tells Marty: "When this baby (DeLorean time machine) hits 88 miles per hour, you're going to see some serious s**t".

So, naturally, the first Qobuz stream is Huey Lewis And The News and *The Power Of Love*. And, leaning on a Leema Acoustics Tucana II Anniversary amp's ample power reserves, but staying just the right



Monitor Audio's Bronze 300 7G sets a lofty benchmark at its £1k price point and certainly keeps the pricier Sprint 4 honest with superior levels of midband transparency. Just eclipsing the RA's size, Triangle's strapping, three-way Borea BR08 (HFC 478) isn't quite as room-friendly and elegantly svelte as the Bronze 300, but certainly challenges the Sprint 4's performance with the fine fluency and speed it delivers across a wide selection of music. Both exhibit great verve and energy.



side of too darn loud, the result is pure blockbuster. The Sprint 4 has a full-blooded, muscular presentation that knows how to make the most of the track's relentless hooks, crunchy keyboards, exquisitely timed bluesy riffs and tongue-in-cheek Philly soul harmonies. It's impossible not to engage with the room-filling feel-good vibe and I'm struggling to think of

This is a speaker with a spacious soundstage that images precisely

another similarly priced floorstander that can do a better job of communicating the uplifting impetus of the song.

The listening session moves on and I find myself choosing more up-tempo material than not. In danger of anthropomorphising a loudspeaker, I can't shake the sense the Sprint 4 is straining at the leash to show what it can do on a large stage. And, as I hinted previously, it's impressive stuff. The Sprint 4 is a deeply saturated primary colour kind of speaker with the bottomless energy of the Duracell bunny. Whatever it's fed, the speaker sound bigs, authoritative, dynamic and highly dramatic.

It does the usual textbook 'hi-fi' tropes with confidence, too, as you might expect given the Dynaudio-rooted credentials of Revival Audio's founders. As such, the Sprint 4 has a spacious soundstage and images precisely. Bass is taut, articulate, extended and powerful. Even the most densely layered and tonally contrasted jazz concoctions of Pat Metheny are rendered in an organised, separated, clean and clear fashion. Midband

openness and clarity are well served, too, if quite forward in structure – at least when combined with a front end as potent and performance orientated as Chord Electronics' Hugo TT2 (HFC 468) DAC and Leema's Tucana II Anniversary integrated amp. So 'impressive' indeed wins the day. What seems to have been sacrificed in realising this are a few degrees of finesse, nuance, balance and timing acuity – qualities more easily identified in lower-priced towers such as Wharfedale's £500 Diamond 12.3 (HFC 491) and Monitor Audio's £1,000 Bronze 300 7G I have to hand for comparison. Neither of which, it should be noted, expresses itself with quite the big-lung largesse of the Sprint 4.

Conclusion

Some speakers set out to be good all-rounders, others with a more 'shaped' skillset place the emphasis on entertainment. The Sprint 4, while immensely likeable and never wrong-footed by genre, does cleave towards the latter and succeeds fully in the endeavour. I don't think it will float everyone's boat, but what it does, it does extremely well ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★	LIKE: Well-structured, full-on sonics; imaging; bass performance
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★	DISLIKE: Not the lightest touch sonically
BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★	WESAY: A likeable tower with bags of power and flair
EASE OF DRIVE ★★★★★	

OVERALL

