

LOUDSPEAKERS

ulation – matters of expression and voicing are rendered unambiguously – and an only slightly breathy tone with some material. Stereo sound-staging mirrors the bass in being open, airy and spacious, but the real surprise here is that individual instruments stay anchored firmly in the overall sound picture, without drift, and without producing nine foot wide voices. In this respect the Obelisk readily outshines any omni or semi-omnidirectional loudspeaker I have heard, and comes close to matching loudspeakers with classically sharp imaging.

MEASUREMENTS

The Obelisk is described in the literature as a 6ohm load, but the reality is less optimistic, as system impedance actually hovers around 2ohms over most of the treble, and is certainly responsible for drawing significant amounts of power from the amplifier with music of the right (or wrong) spectral content. Given also the highly exposed nature of the treble, the reason for the Obelisk's sensitivity to the type of amplification used becomes obvious.

The various frequency responses, all made 1/3rd octave averaging, were run using a MLSSA fast Fourier analyser and software, which allows the intrinsic response of the speaker to be separated from the reverberant soundfield within certain limits, broadly affecting the accuracy of the plot only at very low frequencies. The basic (2 meters axial) response, described as semi-anechoic, is shown separately. Differences below about 300Hz are essentially measuring artefact, but above this figure the room helps plug some of the troughs, generally serving to even out a rather peaky response shape.

Although the response shape is erratic, the integrated energy trend is rather more even. Nevertheless, the treble hump is a feature of all the measurements and is very real, as was made abundantly obvious simply by listening to the test signal or by playing almost any kind of music.

CONCLUSIONS

It is seldom that the measurements tie so neatly with the listening; except, that is, the most important feature of all, which is how musically successful, if idiosyncratic, a loudspeaker the Obelisk is.

There are strong echoes of Sonab with these speakers, and more than a hint of Canon's S-50, but the Shahinians overturn most of the compromises and half measures that characterised subsequent as well as previous attempts at omnidirectionality. If you can live with the cliché, the result has to be heard to be believed. ✚

SHAHINIAN OBELISK

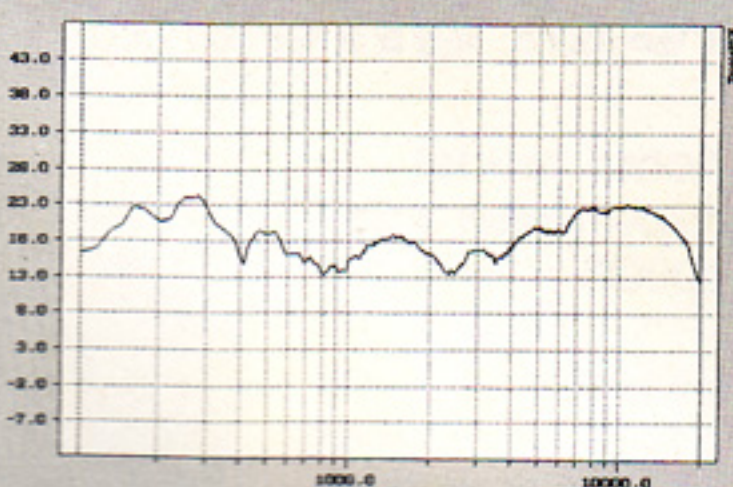


Fig 1. Shahinian Obelisk: overall response, mic 2m on tweeter level, including room reflections (speaker 1m forward of wall) 100Hz-20kHz

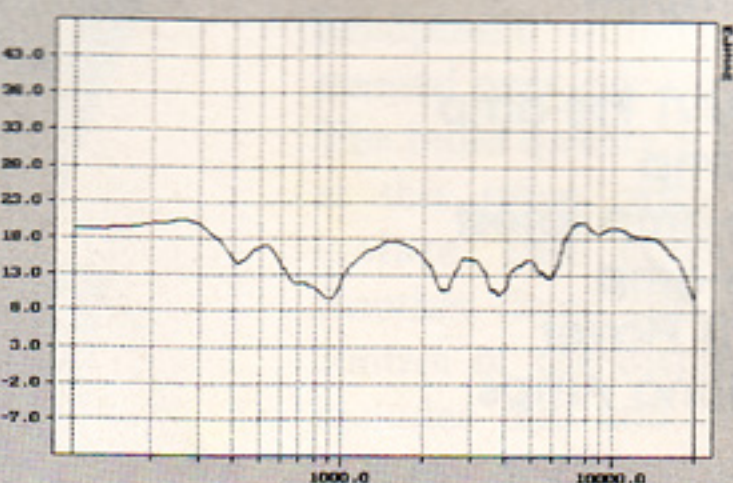


Fig 2. Shahinian Obelisk: as before, semi-anechoic (ie without room reflections). ignore area below 300Hz

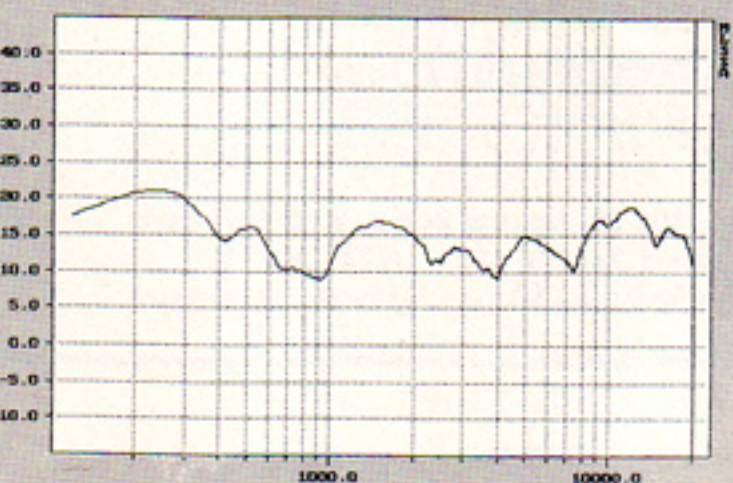


Fig 3. Shahinian Obelisk: as [2], 15° off axis

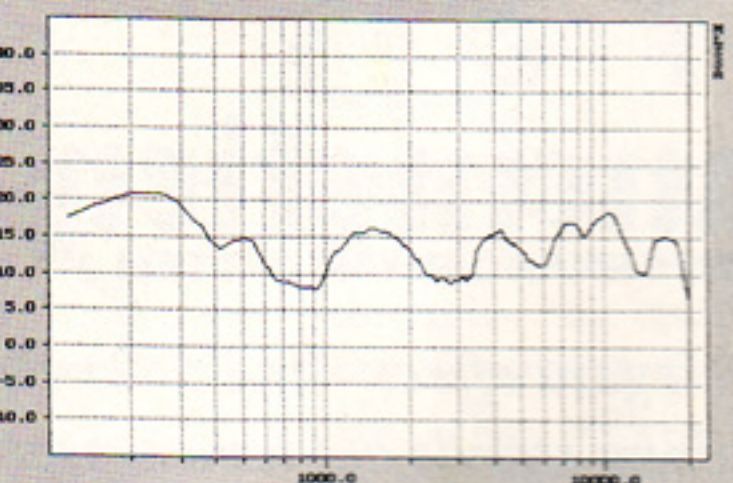


Fig 4. Shahinian Obelisk: as [2], 30° off axis

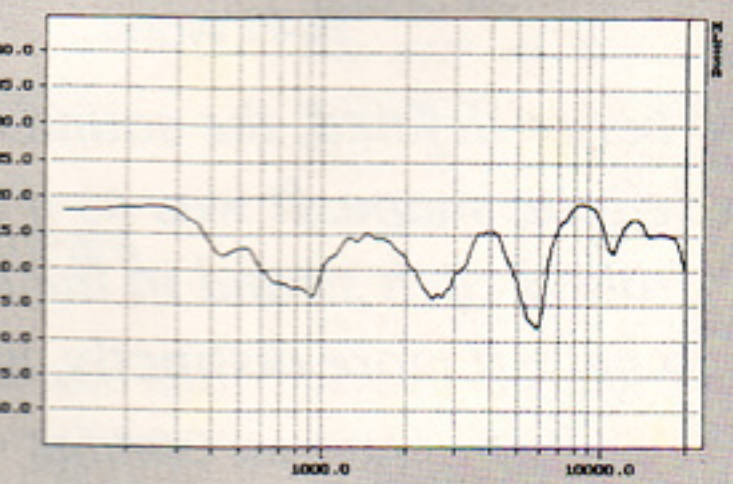


Fig 5. Shahinian Obelisk: as [2], 45° off axis

Off-axis responses are remarkably uniform at 15° and 30° though some deep cancellation notches are beginning to open out at 45°

There has been no attempt at specmanship in the LF region: the knee of the response curve (measured nearfield, and essentially the intrinsic response of the speaker alone) is a modest 80Hz, but the rolloff is extremely slow below this

Test results

Test results	Shahinian Obelisk
Type	3-way, 7 driver omnidirectional
Sensitivity	88dB/watt/mtr (est)
Power handling	150 watts (est)
Impedance	6 ohms (nom)
Weight	26kg
Dimensions (whd, cm)	99x37x31.75
Recommended positioning	Free standing, clear or walls
Base fittings	Castors
Typical price (inc VAT)	£1860

Note: all measurements via MLSSA

Supplier:
Pear Audio,
15 Shawhill Road,
Shawlands,
Glasgow
G41 3RW
Scotland. Tel
(041) 636 0090