HI-FI WORLD AWARDS 2010

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COMPETITION

MARTIN LOGAN ETHOS speakers

INSPIRE ECLIPSE SE12 turntable

PIONEER BDP-LX53 Blu-ray player

EXCLUSIVE!
> FLETCHER AUDIO OMEGA POINT 5 TURNTABLE
> DESIGN BUILD LISTEN PICCOLO DIY KIT
> DARTZEE CTH-8550 AMPLIFIER

12 PAGE VINYL SECTION SEE PAGE 98

JANUARY 2011

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10 PAGES OF LETTERS - THE BEST WINS A PAIR OF KEF iQ30 LOUDSPEAKERS! (UK ONLY)
Welcome to the latest and greatest Hi-Fi World Awards special!

We're delighted to bring you the best products we've reviewed over the past twelve months, across no less than fourteen different categories.

So please be upstanding for the following exceptional hi-fi products...

**TURNTABLE:**
- Palmer 3

**TONEARM:**
- Funk FXR II

**CARTRIDGE:**
- Benzwood SL

**PHONO STAGE:**
- Emille Allure

**DIGITAL:**
- Marantz KI Pearl CD

**TUNER:**
- Micromega FM10

**INTEGRATED:**
- Musical Fidelity AMS35i

**PREAMPLIFIER:**
- MF Audio Classic II

**POWER AMPLIFIER:**
- Icon Audio MB845/II DSS

**FLOORSTANDER:**
- Tannoy Definition DC10T

**STANDMOUNTER:**
- Elac BS243

**SYSTEM:**
- Naim UnitiQute

**CABLE:**
- Tellurium Q Black

**ACCESSORY:**
- Jays V-Jays
STAND MOUNT SPEAKER
WINNER: ELAC BS243

For those reviewers ensconced in their audiophile ivory towers, a sub-
£1,000 speaker can be a shocking thing. If you listen to Martin Logan electro-
statics at ten times the price as a matter of routine, putting up with the vagaries of a budget box boooing and booming is a pretty unsavoury expe-
rience! With this in mind, it’s rare to find a reasonably priced loudspeaker
that isn’t holed below the waterline, so to speak, by variously poor cabin-
nery, weak drive units or simply its box-loudspeaker-with-moving coil-
drivers orientation...

It was with great relief then, that we auditioned the £1,000 Elac BS243,
only to find an exceptionally cough sounding small standmounter. It’s no
fluke either: Elac’s use of their JET ribbon tweeter is the hifi equivalent
of a turbo charger; it magically wipes away so many of the pitfalls of small
speakers by using a superbable, crystalline transducer that wouldn’t disgrace a
speaker at several times the price. It’s a great device and all it has to do is
integrate well with a decent mid/bass driver and a solid (285x170x232mm)
cabinet for big audio dynamite. Fortunately, unlike certain other
ribbon/moving coil drive unit pairings, Elac have got it right; the JET tweeter
integrates smoothly with the Elac Crystal AS-XR aluminium sandwich
mid/bass unit and the cabinet doesn’t draw attention to itself either.

Hooked up to a beefy transistor amplifier (if it’s valves you’re running
they’ve got to be particularly punchy) and a decent front end, the Elacs
really take your breath away. They’re far more sophisticated than is
expected at the price, with none of the squawking, screeching and booting
of many sub-£1,000 standmounters. The BS243’s inherently transparent
nature, allied to realistic three dimensional imaging, rhythmic alacrity
and extended, delicate and sparkling treble make them an essential
audition for those looking for grown-
up transducers that take up a small
space. They proved an unexpectedly
pleasant surprise, and as such are
worthy winners of an already hotly
contested category.

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