



HIGH VALUE LOUDSPEAKER OF THE YEAR

Neat Acoustics Ekstra | Reviewed in Issue 174



Part of the requirement for a 'high value' loudspeaker is 'what it does for the money' as opposed to simply how much a loudspeaker costs. Just as the Neat Acoustics Iota loudspeaker line was created to bring the design of the Motive models to a smaller, more affordable form-factor, so the Ekstra floorstanding loudspeaker takes the performance of the company's highly praised and distinctly high-end Ultimatum range and makes it more affordable for a wider audience. What could be a better example of 'high value'?

The new design uses the same configuration first used by Neat in the Ultimatum XL6. The top section is sealed off from the lower, and incorporates two sealed chambers, operating as a two-way infinite baffle loudspeaker. A 50mm ribbon-type tweeter and 134mm bass/midrange unit are both mounted on a specially profiled sub-baffle, attached to the main cabinet via a de-coupling polyethylene membrane, while the lower, ported, section of the Ekstra houses two more 134mm bass drive units. One unit is located on the bottom panel, facing the floor, while the second is located internally, directly above the first, in a sealed isobaric arrangement, handling only low frequencies and acting as an integral subwoofer system. The low-Q port is specially tuned to enable close to wall placement of the speaker in most rooms.

Unlike many loudspeakers, Neat Acoustics are designed almost solely by ear, listening to music rather than test-tones. While this makes the Ekstra more aligned to some musical genres, it also makes for a speaker that sounds consummately musical and enticing. This is a loudspeaker designed for those who listen to a lot of music, rather than someone who wants to analyse the sounds they play, and if that sounds like you, it's hard to find a loudspeaker that fits the bill better than the Neat Acoustics Ekstra unless you double the price of admission. Now that's value for money!

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