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Listening Experience



Audio Physic: Spark



A Piece of Audiophile History



by Marco Kolks

Loudspeaker: Spark by Audio Physic

Audio Physic has dedicated itself to uncompromising music reproduction for over four decades. Under the motto “Nothing But Music,” the company develops speakers in Brilon, Sauerland, that have always been renowned for their extraordinary resolution, finest craftsmanship, and emotional directness. The manufacturer has revised its original Spark model: more compact than a floor-standing speaker, more mature than a classic bookshelf model, yet equipped with technologies from its in-house reference class.

At first glance, the Spark conveys its ambition: elegant proportions, excellent build quality, and flawlessly fitted surfaces. The glass paneling not only looks modern but also serves an acoustic purpose—minimizing resonances and efficiently dissipating vibrations. The speaker is both a piece of furniture and a technical sculpture.

Yet, as is often the case, the true potential lies hidden within. The Spark draws directly from the design principles of its bigger sister, the Cardeas, a high-end speaker. At its core is the HHCM SL midrange driver, which operates without a spider (centering device), achieving remarkable pulse fidelity. This unusual

construction allows kinetic energy to be transferred to the diaphragm without delay—precise, controlled, and free from fatigue in the sound, according to Audio Physic.

The bass is driven by a 180-mm driver with Double Surround Technology delivers not only controlled but also surprisingly deep bass, without sounding bloated.

Product:

Spark

3-way compact speaker with bass reflex enclosure

Drivers:

Tweeter: HHCT III (39 mm)

Midrange: HHCM SL (150 mm)

Woofer: Double Surround (180 mm)

Specifications:

Impedance: 4 Ω

Frequency response: 40 Hz to 40 kHz

Sensitivity: 88 dB

Accessories: Black glass panel included, stands optional

Finishes: Black, white (each with glass surface), various wood veneers

Weight: 18 kg

Dimensions (W/H/D): 20/48/37 cm

Warranty: 5 years

Pair price: From £5,995

Manufacturer:

Audio Physic GmbH

Almerfeldweg 38

59929 Brilon, Germany

Phone: +49 (0)2961-96170

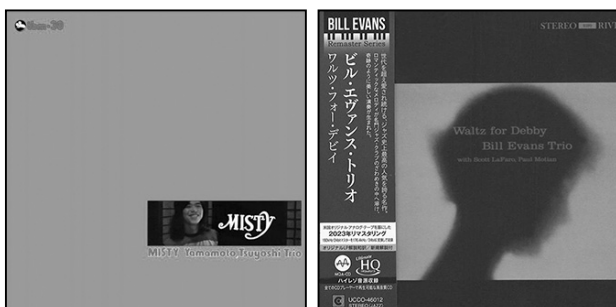
Email: info@audiophysic.com

Website: www.audiophysic.com

The bass is supported by a carefully damped bass reflex system with ceramic foam, which suppresses airflow noise and cabinet resonances.

The drivers, by the way, are in-house developments by Manfred Diestertich, the chief developer. He uses a 39-mm cone tweeter (HHCT III), a 150-mm midrange driver (HHCM SL), and an 180-mm double-surround

woofer with ceramic-coated aluminum diaphragms. He avoids using spiders (centering devices), allowing the diaphragms to respond with exceptional precision and speed—this applies to the bass range as well. Here, the drivers feature Dual Surround Technology. The cabinet construction follows the proven Multi-Sandwich Principle: a combination of glass and high-strength ceramic foam. >



Sound Tip:
Tsuyoshi Yamamoto

Misty

Impex / HDCD

This is the trio's second album. Imagine it's past midnight, you're sipping a glass of the finest whiskey, and an outstanding jazz trio is playing just for you—Tsuyoshi Yamamoto on piano, Isoo Fukui on bass, and Tetsujiro Obara on drums. That's the feeling this music evokes.

*The FIM Super Audio CD includes an additional HDCD encoding on the CD track. The album is now being re-released in a new digibook packaging. As one of the most sought-after titles from the Three Blind Mice catalog, *Misty* (1974) is a true classic and a staple in the collections of audiophile jazz enthusiasts.*

The remastered reissue by Impex Records—a double LP at 45 RPM on 180-gram vinyl, remastered by Tohru Kotetsu—brings the

recordings from Tokyo's Aoi Studio and Yamamoto's highly musical, melodic playing to life once again.

Sound Tip:
Bill Evans

Waltz For Debby

Universal / UHQ-CD/MQA-CD

*“Waltz For Debby” is the second album recorded during the 1961 Village Vanguard sessions. While the first album, *Sunday at the Village Vanguard*, focuses on Scott LaFaro's solo work, *Waltz For Debby* is a portrait of the trio—Bill Evans, Scott LaFaro, and drummer Paul Motian. Evans reveals a different side here compared to his work with Miles Davis; his style is noticeably more emotional. The trio's interplay is impressive.*

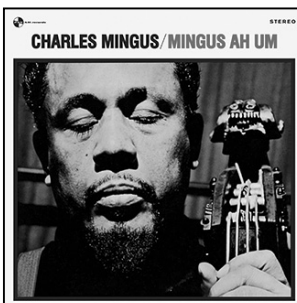
UHQCD stands for Ultimate High Quality Compact Disc, a joint development by Japanese CD replication company Memory-Tech and Audio Quality CD Company from Hong Kong. Unlike conventional CDs, UHQCDs are not pressed from polycarbonate but cast from a photopolymer and cured with UV light. To protect the softer photopolymer from scratches, an additional layer of high-purity polycarbonate is applied.

> The cabinet construction follows the proven multi-sandwich principle: a combination of glass, high-strength ceramic foam, and honeycomb chambers that guarantees a high level of rigidity and resonance-free performance. The crossover is equipped with specially developed components, including capacitors with copper foam contacts. These are tiny details, but essential for Audio Physic to ensure

the sound flow is as lossless as possible. All in all, the Spark is not a “small” speaker, but a consistently well-designed high-end system in a compact format.

Listening Experience

Even during the break-in phase, it becomes clear that the Spark, mounted on the solid yet elegant stands from Liedtke >



The combination results in significantly reduced reflection of the laser light inside the CD and a precise edge transition between the CD's pits and lands. UHQCDs are 100 percent compatible with conventional CD players. Musically, the result is a sound strongly reminiscent of analog master tapes.

The discs offered by Universal Japan are additionally MQA (Master Quality Authenticated) encoded. Anyone who outputs the digital signal from their CD player's digital output or the previously ripped data stream from their music server to a suitable MQA-DA converter can generate a 24-bit signal with a sampling frequency of up to 352 kHz from the CD data. While the first UHQCD series from Universal Music Japan relied on the DSD data of previous SHM-SACD releases, with increasing popularity, albums that had not previously been released as SHM-SACD are now also being released.

Typically, the Universal Archive master tapes are reconverted to DSD and then post-processed with the appropriate MQA encoder.

This makes UHQCDs ideal for music lovers who want to get as close as possible to the sound of the recording but don't own an SACD player.

Sound Tip: Charles Mingus

Mingus Ah Um

Pan Am / LP (Remastered), 180g Ltd Edition Critics debate whether Ah Um or The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady is the definitive Mingus album. What's certain is that this 1959 recording presents Charles Mingus as a composer and bandleader in a relatively straightforward yet accessible manner. The individual tracks are diverse yet consistently engaging.

With "Better Git It in Your Soul", a gospel-inspired opener, "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat", a slow tribute to the recently deceased Lester Young, and "Fables of Faubus", a musical parody of the Arkansas governor, three tracks alone became jazz classics.

> Metalldesign, are really exceptional speakers. Their reproduction is three-dimensional, dynamic, and of rare clarity. Voices are vividly projected in the room, instruments are effortlessly separated, and even the smallest background noises are resolved with striking ease.

The Spark's insensitivity to positioning is striking: even when placed close to a wall, the sound remains stable and convincing. This is an advantage for smaller rooms that should not be underestimated. With greater distance from the wall, the soundstage expands further in depth and the airiness increases. Yet even in suboptimal positions, the Spark still conveys a feeling of freedom.

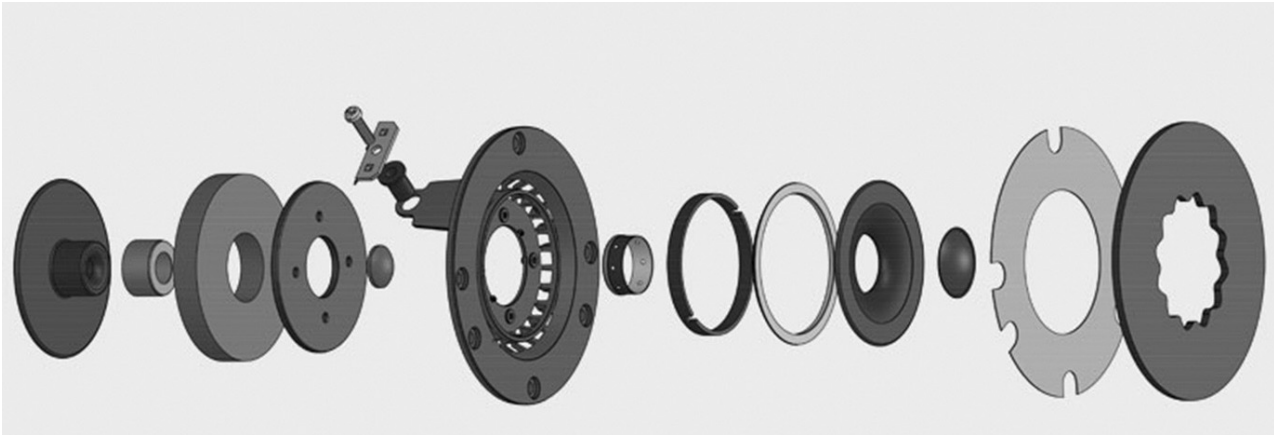
The very first piano bars (Tsuyoshi

Yamamoto Trio, Misty / Three Blind Mice Reissue) make the heart race. The attack is energetic, the overtones float freely into the room, and the decay of the strings remains audible down to the finest nuances. The double bass is elastic, driving, and possesses just the right blend of warmth and contour. Fretboard noises are presented not as a disturbance, but as part of the musical pulse. The drum brushes are airy, silky, yet precise, while the bass drum, like a gentle fist, makes the rhythm physically tangible. The Spark transforms the living room into a Japanese jazz club: intimate, authentic, electrifying.

A legendary live recording (Bill Evans Trio, Waltz for Debby / Village Vanguard, 1961), known as much for its naturalness as for its acoustic challenges. The Spark reveals all the magic: Bill Evans' sparkling runs float in the room like glass drops, never harsh, always fluid. Scott LaFaro's bass possesses a physicality that goes far beyond what one would expect from a compact speaker. Particularly fascinating: the integration of audience noise. Clanking glasses, muffled conversations, the quiet scraping of chairs. The Spark incorporates all of this not as an interference, but as a vibrant backdrop that perfects the illusion of "being there." You're sitting in the middle of the Village Vanguard, not two meters away from the musicians. The density and ferocity of the recording by Charles Mingus (Better Git It in Your Soul, Mingus Ah Um, 1959) are a nearly unsolvable >

The bass reflex port with a grille in front is located at the top of the rear panel. Flow noise is inaudible thanks to the use of ceramic foam. The crossover frequencies are 200 Hz and 2,800 Hz. The crossover components and chassis are manufactured according to in-house specifications. The internal wiring is from Audioquest, and the connectors are supplied by WBT. It doesn't get much better than this.





The exploded view shows the structure of the HHC-T-III cone tweeter.

> puzzle for many speakers. The Spark, however, solves it masterfully. The brass section resonates with mellowness and radiance; every trumpet and every saxophone has its clearly defined place. The drums push forward powerfully without losing balance, while Charles Mingus' bass grounds the music and simultaneously drives it forward. The Spark manages to convey the eruptive energy of this session without slipping into chaos. Instead, a clear, powerful structure emerges that pumps the vitality of this music directly into the bloodstream.

As impressively as the Spark shines on audiophile recordings, just as remarkable is its ability to make even less perfectly produced music enjoyable. Even old pressings or digitally "thin"-sounding albums benefit from the warm, colorful tonality. Instead of ruthlessly revealing mistakes, the Spark always puts the musical flow at the forefront. There is also good news in terms of level stability: Despite its compact dimensions, the Spark plays confidently in medium-sized rooms without appearing strained.



Of course, it doesn't replace full-fledged floorstanding speakers; that's physically impossible, but for music enjoyment at the highest level, its performance is stunning.



To match the Spark, Liedtke Metalldesign offers optional stands that complement the look, are solid, and deliver outstanding sound. A team that simply belongs together.

Conclusion: With the Spark, Audio Physic has achieved a rebirth that is far more than a nostalgic gesture. It is modern, innovative and uncompromisingly musical. Its sound combines transparency, dynamics, and emotionality in a way that is rarely found in this class. Its true strength is particularly evident in jazz recordings: The Spark conveys the intimacy of a club, the energy of a session, and the authenticity of a live experience: transported directly into the living room. Anyone looking for a compact speaker that delivers a performance in small

to medium-sized rooms that is otherwise reserved for floor-standing models should definitely listen to the Spark. It is not a “lifestyle” product, but a serious tool for music lovers and, at the same time, a piece of audiophile cultural history.

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Included:

Analog turntables: Clearaudio; Innovation Compact;

Tonearms: Clearaudio Unify;

Cartridges: Flair by Phonosophie; Volpe by Walter Fuchs

CD player: Phonosophie Impuls 2 and Power Control 3,

Preamplifier: Phonosophie Bi-Control 2 and Power Control 3;

Phono stage: Phonosophie and Power Control 2;

Power amplifier: Phonosophie Bi-Stage 4/4;

Integrated amplifier: Symphonic Line RG 10 MK IV Reference;

Speakers: Audio Physic Midex, C5 MK II by Ascendo; Cables (NF/LS/MAIN); NF: Phonosophie, Klang und Kunst NF 3 S12; TMR Ramses

Phono cable: Phonosophie,

Speakers: Phonosophie LS 4, Phonosophie bi-amping adapter, Bastanis Epi log, Artkustik, Klang und Kunst LS3 S12,

Mains: Phonosophie

Mains plugs: Phonosophie

Digital filters: Phonosophie

Power supply accessories: Power Animator and Optimizer from Artkustik, Phonosophie wall sockets AG, Phonosophie fuses and fuse holders;

Power filters: Phonosophie;

Base accessories: Racks from Phonosophie;

Analog accessories: Animator chips from Phonosophie, blue light source from Phonosophie, power fuses (fuse box) from Phonosophie;

Room tuning: Corner pyramids from Phonosophie, Room Animator MK II from Artkustik, Phonosophie chips on windows and glass frames of the pictures; Phonosophie energy spheres;

Other accessories: Pyramids, clips, caps (all from Phonosophie)