

Scherer Evince loudspeakers

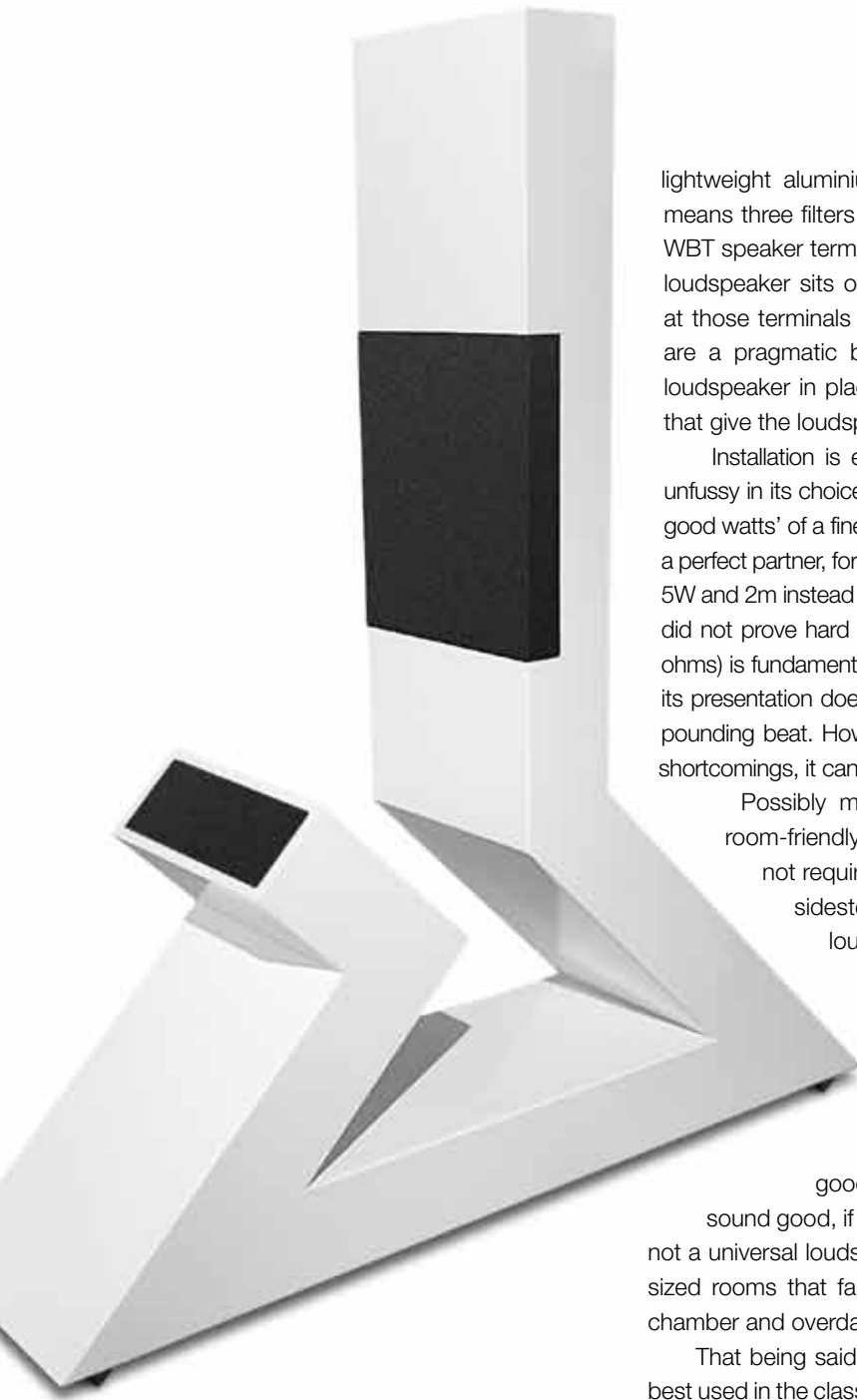
by Alan Sircom

There are some loudspeakers made for the common man, with universal appeal in sound quality and design. Thomas Scherer's designs are diametrically and deliberately opposed to that 'common man' approach. His company's top Evince model sets it apart from the pack in looks and concept, and it sounds all the better as a result.

A visually striking piece of industrial design, the Thomas Scherer Audio Engineering Evince is a transmission line design. Where most transmission line loudspeakers fold that line many times within a conventional box loudspeaker, Scherer makes the nature of the transmission line a full feature of the cabinet, having it form the base and angled front upright of the design. The net result is a loudspeaker that looks something like a flattened out, inverted question mark, rather than a rectangular box. With a cabinet made out of Scandinavian birch ply and treated to a 'titanium which GetaCore mineral finish with contrasting black grilles over the drive unit and the end of the line, so the Evince isn't the loudspeaker for those who are seeking a classic loudspeaker to blend into the environment. That being said, someone with a more modern minimalist home will relish the form-follows-function nature of the Evince.

Scherer suggests this layout of placing the termination of the transmission line physically in front of the main driver places its output in phase with that of the main driver. While true, this shouldn't be taken to imply the transmission lines of rival designers necessarily terminate out of phase. However, the means whereby a transmission line can terminate in phase and inside a rectangular cabinet requires a more complicated internal labyrinth, and this has typically been difficult to create without the





lightweight aluminium cone drive unit a close secret. A full-range driver means three filters but no crossover to speak of, and a single-wired set of WBT speaker terminals built into a recess along the base of the Evince. The loudspeaker sits on four RDC cones, but don't take this to mean getting at those terminals can be done without lifting the loudspeaker. The cones are a pragmatic balance between armour-piercing spikes that lock the loudspeaker in place and some of the more ambulatory support solutions that give the loudspeaker free movement.

Installation is easy on several levels. The Scherer Evince is charmingly unfussy in its choice of partners, going more for quality than quantity. The 'few good watts' of a fine sounding Class A amplifier like the Sugden A21SE proved a perfect partner, for example. Scherer measures the Evince's 90dB sensitivity at 5W and 2m instead of the more common 1W at 1m rating, but the loudspeaker did not prove hard to drive and its rated impedance (between four and eight ohms) is fundamentally benign. The Evince may not be a universal choice, and its presentation does not sit comfortably in systems defined by sheer force or pounding beat. However, as it also does not ruthlessly expose any upstream shortcomings, it can be used in a surprisingly wide range of systems.

Possibly more importantly, the Scherer Evince is also extremely room-friendly. That last sentence is two-tailed: the loudspeaker does not require fanaticism in placement, and it is somehow capable of sidestepping many of the iniquities of a bad room. The Evince loudspeakers are best a metre or so from the walls, with a mild toe-in, but obsessive-compulsive installation techniques are not called for. Moreover, given the bold looks, this is the kind of loudspeaker that might wind up in a modernist glass-walled 'space' rather than an acoustically treated listening room. As such, its relatively limited interaction with the walls is a very good thing. The Evince manages to remain flexible enough to sound good, if slightly dry, in treated rooms too. Once again though, it is not a universal loudspeaker and it is arguably best used in small to medium-sized rooms that fall in that 'goldilocks' spot between glass-walled reverb chamber and overdamped musical mausoleum.

That being said, it creates a relatively small sweet spot in the room. It's best used in the classic Cardas installation positions, and off-axis performance places the centre of the image to the nearest loudspeaker to the listener. However, the nature of that transmission line means the speaker works like an open baffle at low frequencies and bass gets out of step. This is not unique to Scherer, and is a function of all transmission line loudspeakers to a lesser or greater extent; having the line extend far to the front of the speaker puts the Evince in the 'greater' camp, though. Ultimately, how big a problem this is depends on how frequently you have a room full of listeners, and to a lesser extent how critical those other listeners are, but if you are thinking of using the Evince for a spot of audience participation or panel listening, you might be disappointed.

A fast, full-range loudspeaker driver generally has terrific speed of attack, but sometimes at the expense of dynamic range and frequency extension. A

► powerful modelling software now used by top loudspeaker designers.

A loudspeaker needs to be more than just an interesting cabinet, however. Both the Evince, and its more conventional sealed-box Elation stable-mate, use a single full-range, long excursion 125mm drive unit as transducer. This is not an off-the-shelf unit (most companies take the soft option and go with a Jordan driver in this case), but Scherer is keeping the maker of the



► transmission line generally has terrific dynamic range and bass extension, but sometimes at the expense of speed of attack. Putting the two together either results in something very good, or something very, very bad. Fortunately in the case of the Evince, it's the former.

The addition of a transmission line gives more bottom end extension, but this is not a full-range loudspeaker. It has very good upper frequency extension (although if you are used to zingy metal dome tweeters, you might dispute this) and technically bass down to around the lowest F# on a piano keyboard, but many may find the Evince blurs more than those last eight or nine semitones. However, in the sort of rooms for which this loudspeaker is intended, deep bass can be more of a burden than a benefit.

How this pans out in the listening chair is an extremely coherent, uncoloured performance that balances neatly between the 'honest, yet dull' sound of some monitors and the 'stand by for blast off' nature of many domestic models. I didn't find myself tailoring the output to match the loudspeaker one jot, which is always the sign of a good design. Jazz, vocals, orchestral, rock, even dance music all fared well. If your definition of

'orchestral' is 'the 1812 Overture, at real world volumes' or 'the Who at ear-threat levels' defines your rock music needs, the Evince will take you most of the way there, but lets you know when to save your hearing by not driving sound into threat levels.

Imagery in particular is extremely good through the Evince. This is a loudspeaker that creates an excellent soundstage, especially when it comes to image depth. Image width is good too – excellent in fact – but it's that depth of soundstage that keeps you enthralled. Play anything from the 1950s/1960s jazz canon (such as Dexter Gordon's *Go* [Blue Note]) and this live stage appears between and behind the loudspeakers with such a sense of 'being there', you start coughing from all the cigarette smoke.

Most of all though, it's that coherence from top to bottom, which wins the day; voices are 'in the room' accurate, whether bass baritone or soprano, a nylon-strung guitar sounds consistent across its whole neck (which is more difficult than it sounds) and the sense of effortless freedom from the constraints of the box become clear. Surprisingly, faced with such 'rightness' of tone, many well-versed in conventional loudspeaker sound will revert to type, but a select few will see the future of their loudspeaker journey – and it's shaped like an upside-down question-mark.

We keep saying the Scherer Evince is not a universal loudspeaker, and run the risk of damning a fine product with faint praise as a result. Instead, take the statement at face value. Many of the best loudspeakers are not the ones with universal appeal; instead, they are the loudspeakers that engender disinterest in the many and passion in the few. This is what the Evince does so well, both in look and sound. If you are done with conventional box loudspeakers, but still want the dynamic range of boxes coupled with the speed and clarity of panels, the Evince can convince. +

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Type: floorstanding speaker with a full-range driver in a transmission line enclosure enclosure.

Driver complement: One 125mm full-range, long excursion drive unit.

Inputs: Single-wired WBT Nextgen connectors

Crossover frequency: Not applicable

Frequency response: 42Hz – 23kHz

Impedance: 4-8 Ohms

Sensitivity: 90dB/5W/2m

Dimensions (HxWxD): 220 x 944 x 873mm

Weight: 25.5kg/each

Finishes: Titanium White GetaCore, other finishes and colours on request.

Price: £10,000/pair

Manufacturer: Thomas Scherer Audio Engineering

URL: www.highend-design-loudspeaker.com

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