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Exploring Frontiers of Sound™

THE RAMBUNCTIOUS BABY

The Thiel CS.5 Loudspeaker



By Dayna B, *The Hi-Fi Hussy*

The floorstanding \$1,350 Thiel CS.5 loudspeaker is the littlest Thiel to stand on its own and, just like a lot of baby brothers, it has got an *attitude*. “Hey! Look at me! I can play too!” And can it ever. Standing nearly as tall as its prodigious sibling—the CS1.5—the CS.5 is a two way design featuring a 6.5 inch woofer and one inch metal tweeter.

Good looking? *Oh yeah!* It dresses up as nicely as the whole Thiel family in a classy *to-die-for* wood finish. The CS.5 is not only beautiful to look at, it’s beautiful to listen to! Sure, it won’t go as low (It’s voice hasn’t changed yet), but it’ll go loud!

Starting off with Clair Marlo’s *Let It Go* (Sheffield Lab CD-29) there was a nice sense of “air” to the vocals. Timbral and dynamic shading was so good, the emotion of the music just poured out. Both piano and cello were full and resonant. Detail was good without sounding analytical. When, however, passages became difficult, the highs

tended toward hardness. Don’t get me wrong, though. It never actually became brittle sounding. It just lost its smoothness.

On Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* (Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Skrowaczewski, Mercury CD 432 004-2), the soundstage was wide and nicely layered. The CS.5 produced an excellent soundstage that was limited only by its compressed stage height. The accuracy of tone and timbre allowed easy identification of all instruments in the symphony, even during complex passages. During the “Death of Tybalt,” the brass had just the right amount of bite for the mood, not to mention the instrument. And the midrange

THIEL CS.5 LOUDSPEAKER

TONALITY	75	Upper bass has a slight emphasis, no low bass. Instrumental timbre is exceptional.
DYNAMICS	75	Treble compresses slightly during demanding peaks. Excellent microdynamic resolution brings back the realism of the performance.
RESOLUTION	82	Tonal resolution is very good indeed! Good detail without harshness.
IMAGING	80	Excellent image separation and focus. Never wavered. Large “sweet pot” where imaging and accurate tone can be enjoyed by many.
TIMING	79	Harmonics are so well stacked upon the fundamentals that, in most cases, the deep bass is not missed. Very good rhythm and pace which leads to musical involvement.
OVERALL	77	If you want a high quality speaker with a wide listening area, the CS.5 will do it.

was full, providing instruments with a satisfying amount of body. Low bass? Get a life—you know better than to even ask. Thiel only specs the CS.5 down to 55Hz. Overall, however, the CS.5 realistically recreated the musical event.

Dynamically, the CS.5 was impressively responsive on Massenet's *Ed Cid* (Klavier Records KS 522—vinyl, of course). Castanets came through clean and woody, with fast initial attacks and equally quick releases. Cymbals had precise leading edges and appropriate shimmering decay. The string section? *Smoooooth* during the soft passages, with some loss of refine-

ment during demanding passages. The timing was excellent, though, with fundamentals tightly bound to their harmonics, resulting in finely focused instrumental images.

Enter Queensryche's *Promised Land* (EMI E1-30711). The Thiel again displayed its excellent transient response. There is, however, a slight tonal rise in the upper bass. This distortion was not obnoxious, but noticeable. Given the lack of extension in the mid and low bass, the slight rise helps fill things out. Actually, many might think this a plus for most "modern" music, adding a bit of extra bass punch. Is this a

good Rock speaker? You bet! It can get rowdy with the best of 'em.

Okay, so the CS.5 is not perfect. You'll *never* hear a perfect speaker. Hey! If you are even considering buying a pair of speakers for \$2,000 or more, give this little beauty a listen first. It could save you a lot of money. Rock on!

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