

# Focal Electra 1027 Be

Focal's stylish Electra Be models bring down the entry price for speakers with beryllium tweeters

PRICE £4,000 per pair CONTACT Focal-JMLab UK, PO Box 4287, Coventry CV4 0BS ☎ 0845 660 2680 @ www.focal-uk.com

Focal has used its latest 1000-series generation of upmarket Electras as a vehicle for a new and less costly type IAL (short for Infinite Acoustic Loading) beryllium dome tweeter. At the same time, the company has introduced a striking and original new style and presentation. Focal's Electra 1027 Be looks altogether more assertive than its predecessors, emphasising the engineering content by highlighting the shiny, full-width, cast-alloy tweeter front plate.

Launched alongside a two-way 1007 Be standmount, this 1027 Be is a three-way floorstander, priced at £4,000 per pair, and featuring a continuously vertical front panel with a strongly convex horizontal profile. Front, top, back and plinth are all finished in high gloss black – the top actually incorporates a piece of glass – while the shaped sides are real wood veneered, in either deep red finish Signature or a much lighter Classic alternative.

The ultra-thick and heavy front baffle is as much as 50mm thick. It's shaped internally to avoid reflections and cavities, and externally to create smooth and wide lateral distribution. The enclosure is heavily braced internally and tapered front-to-rear to spread out internal standing waves. This very solid build is confirmed by a total weight of 33kg.

The drivers comprise twin 165mm bass units, port loaded. These operate in parallel with a somewhat different single 165mm midrange unit. All three cone drivers use Focal's proprietary W-sandwich diaphragms, combining woven glassfibre and a structural foam, but the two use different formulas to suit bass or midrange duties.

Lastly, there's a 25mm inverted beryllium dome tweeter, mounted at seated head height between the upper bass unit and the midrange driver. Beryllium is an exceptionally stiff and light metal that extends the response and break-up points well into the ultrasonic region, above the limits of human hearing, and a major investment in tooling has helped Focal bring down the production cost of this tweeter. The speaker feels reassuringly stable on its substantial spikes, and comes with just a single pair of high-quality WBT terminals.

## SOUND QUALITY

The in-room far-field measurements indicate that the Electra 1027 Be works best when located well clear of walls. The measured performance looks generally satisfactory here, with a good overall frequency balance, decent sensitivity (albeit 2-3dB shy of the claimed 91dB), and solid extension well

down into the deep bass. However, under far field conditions, there's some loss of output around both crossover points, and the impedance stays quite low throughout the bass region. All of which means this isn't an easy load for the driving amplifier.

**“Stereo imaging is excellent and it's virtually impossible to pin-point the two speakers.”**

First impression was that the Electra 1027 Be has a noticeably bright and light sonic character, with a beautifully sweet and sparkling top end, suffused with the finest and

most delicate detail. The top end here is entirely seductive, showing that the new IAL tweeter development is very successful, but it does also tend to draw attention to itself, rendering background FM radio a little more audible than usual, for example.

This slightly bright character is that much more obvious because the bass end is rather dry. While the bottom end as a whole is both even and fairly well extended, it also sounds a little understated, with a slight lack of ultimate grip, authority and punch. Tonally speaking, a little more warmth and richness would have been appreciated, rather than the slightly cool overall effect that is evident when playing the sort of discs where the bass end is the prime mover. But this is a mild criticism.

One reason for the dry bass is that box coloration is exceptionally well controlled, and the fine cabinet control confers an impressive freedom from midband coloration and boxiness. It's also refreshingly free from nasality. Stereo imaging is excellent and it's virtually impossible to pin-point the precise locations of the two speakers, partly because the central image is so well focused.

In the presence zone, the upper midband and lower treble where human hearing is most sensitive, there's usually a compromise between maintaining vocal openness and avoiding aggressiveness. The Focal Electra 1027 Be handles this particularly well, with just sufficient restraint to allow the system to be played loudly without unpleasantness, yet it also proved well able to maintain good voice diction when playing the system at whisper quiet levels. **HFC**

Paul Messenger

See HFC 276 (February 2006) for our original review of this product



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