

A good loudspeaker creates the illusion of being at a musical performance and lets you hear the emotional message that the performer has woven into the music.

At first this might seem to be the wrong answer, particularly if you are of a technical bent. Some designers might say, "The magnitude and phase should be so and so." or "The cumulative spectral decay must exhibit x dB of clean decay in the first y milliseconds". For Orpheus, there are a myriad of measurements and assessments which must be performed before the loudspeaker is approved for shipping. Above and beyond all the measurements, the final decision on each pair of speakers is always made after intense listening sessions.

You can actually tell a lot just by looking at the speaker. If certain features are not attended to you will not get very close to the sound you are looking for. When you look at the speaker, does it use more than one driver of each type? Two drivers sharing the load will not go into overload as easily as one and will be more dynamic and more natural sounding than one.

If you rap on the side of a speaker with your knuckle and it produces no sound or a dull tuneless thud then it is adequately braced. If the speaker sounds like a tympani then it will colour the sound. There is more to this than meets the ear though. Some manufacturers have gone to huge lengths to control cabinet resonance and then ignored the matters of crossover design and driver selection.

Some manufacturers claim that by using cheap drivers, crossover components and cabinets that they can get speakers that sound as good as yours but cost a lot less. The reason why expensive drivers cost so much is because they sound better. If they didn't no one would buy them. The same thing can be said of inductors, capacitors, resistors, wire and cabinets. Why would we bother to develop customised drivers in all of our speakers if no one can even see the stuff? The answer is that we do it because it sounds better. If you want the best speaker you need to use the best components.

Yes, you can definitely hear the difference. We experience hundreds of different sounds in different places, every single day. We can hear the mosquito hovering around our ear, the siren driving down the next street, the voice of a friend saying hello and the list goes on. For each sound, within a split second, we can tell what it is, where it is and whether it is a threat of which can be ignored or welcomed. These same skills let us instantly hear the rightness of an Orpheus loudspeaker. The French Horn in that recording sounds exactly like the French Horn you heard last week at the concert, the phrasing of the pianist's performance is absolutely compelling; like the real thing.