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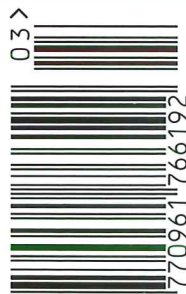
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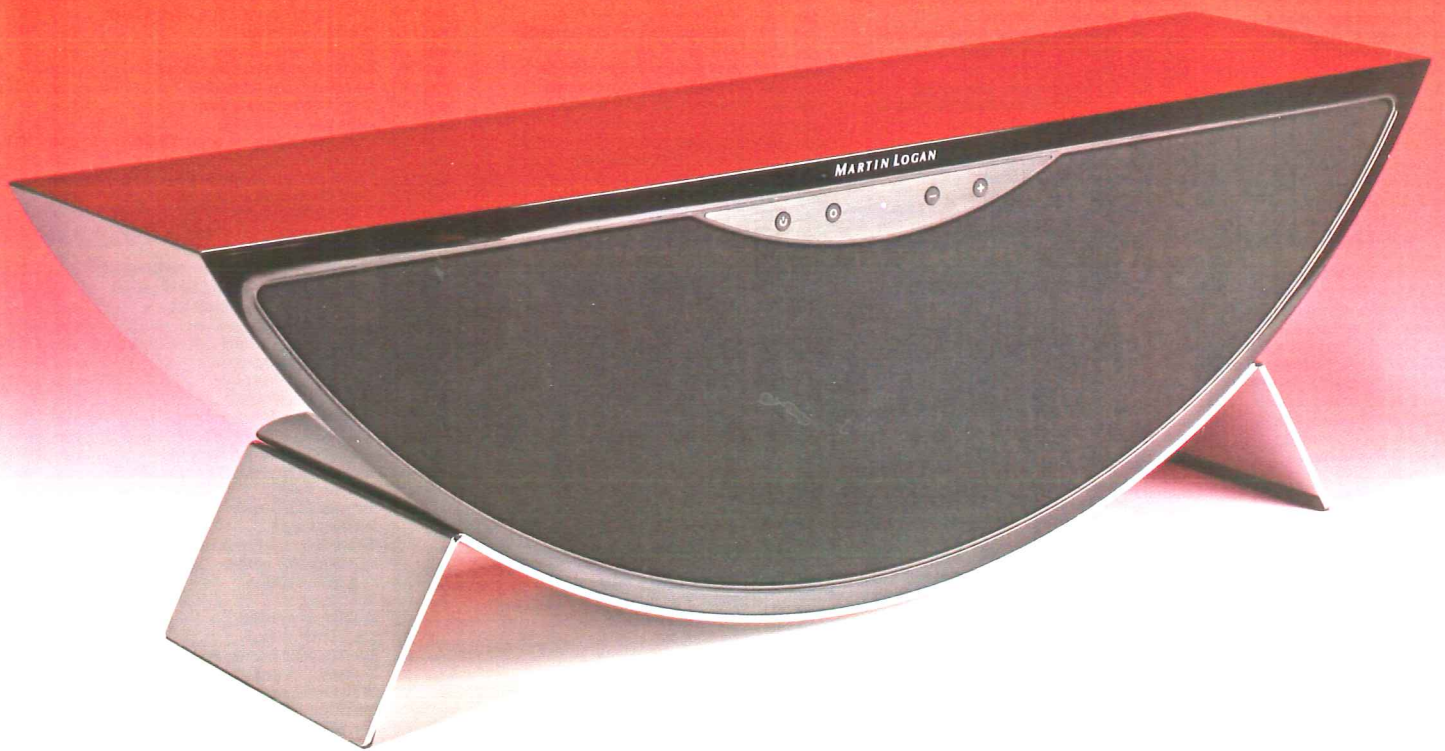
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7 PAGES OF LETTERS - THE BEST WINS A PAIR OF
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Musical Crescendo

Martin Logan's first one-box wireless 'speaker system not only looks good, it sounds great too, says Jon Myles.



Say "Martin Logan" and most of us think of large, impressively-sounding hybrid electrostatics. After all, that's where the company made its name and continues to shine.

The Summit X for example. Judged our Best Loudspeaker in the January 2014 Hi-Fi World Awards issue it has the ability to knock your socks off.

But it's a large and imposing model which demands a large room to give of its best and – at £15,000 a pair – a sizeable wallet to boot.

But the company has also enjoyed great success recently with

its more traditional Motion range of box loudspeakers. These use Martin Logan's proprietary Folded Motion tweeter – a Heil Air Motion type folded ribbon design which the company says gives a closer sonic match to the more expensive hybrid electrostatic models.

Now it's extended that concept into the wireless 'speaker market in the shape of the Crescendo – a one-box Bluetooth/Apple AirPlay system that at £849 is aimed at giving customers a slice of the Martin Logan sound in an affordable and room-friendly package.

And it's certainly one of the most distinctive-looking examples of

the breed. The crescent shaped unit has a gloss black finish (a walnut veneer is also available) and sits on a curved aluminium stand with small control buttons sitting above the black mesh, magnetically-attached fascia grille.

Remove that grille and you reveal a 5"x7" oval polypropylene mid/bass unit and the same Heil-type tweeters as used in the Motion range – except here they are angled slightly outwards



on a sculpted baffle to aid stereo separation.

The woofer is housed in its own ported enclosure – which vents from underneath the Crescendo meaning close-to-wall placement is possible.

Behind these sit a 24bit/48kHz digital signal processing pre-amp and a 100 Watt power amplifier section – with 50 Watts driving the woofer and 2x25 Watts going to the tweeters.

Six input methods are available – wi-fi via AirPlay for Apple devices, Bluetooth 4.0 with aptX capability, wired ethernet, USB, analogue via a 3.5mm headphone-style jack and optical digital. There's also a dedicated subwoofer output on the back for those wanting to add some extra bass power.

The Crescendo can be controlled from the front panel buttons or its accompanying solid aluminium remote which provides source

"the Folded Motion tweeters really do give the Crescendo a delicious top end - helping push the music into the room...."

selection, volume, mute and standby as well as access to bass boost as well as functions such as shuffle track and repeat on Apple devices.

Set-up is easy. Simply plug the Crescendo in and let it find your network (wired or wireless) and then pair it with your chosen devices. My Apple iPhone was up and running and streaming music in a matter of seconds while an Oppo BDP-105D Blu-ray player connected seamlessly via the optical digital input.

SOUND QUALITY

Starting off with Bluetooth streaming via the iPhone and the Crescendo reveals itself to have a delightfully open and airy sound. Violins on Arvo Part's 'Tabula Rasa' have a real presence and timbral quality. Even



Behind the grille a central bass/mid unit is flanked by two of Martin Logan's proprietary Folded Motion tweeters - angled outwards to aid stereo dispersion.

more impressively you can hear the delay and echo of the notes as the various passages fade away.

This is a quality not always heard on one-box loudspeaker systems which can sometimes be lacking in detail. But not the Crescendo which is able to pick out intimate details of tracks with an apparent ease.

Sharon Van Etten's exquisite vocal

warranted. Not that the bass lacks quality or definition – it's more that the Crescendo doesn't have quite the low-end heft of the similarly-priced Naim Mu-So which I reviewed in Hi-Fi World's December issue.

But it more than makes up for that in the midrange and treble where it really shines. Listening to Kairos 4Tet's 'Home To You' and there was admirable separation between Marc O'Reilly's vocals and the delicate, subtly-shaded violin backing which brought out the full atmosphere of the track. Not quite the same spine-tingling effect as you'd get from a full-sized Martin Logan but still enough of the same DNA to make you think that at just £849 the Crescendo may be something of a bargain.

CONCLUSION

Martin Logan's Crescendo has to be viewed as one of the best one-box wireless loudspeaker systems on the market at the moment. Delicious styling is allied to a top-notch sound which benefits greatly from the company's excellent Folded Motion tweeters.

I can see a great many Martin Logan enthusiasts investing in the Crescendo as the basis of a second system, while for others it gives the chance of getting a taste of the company's distinctive sound at a much lower price level. If you are in the market for this sort of system then the Crescendo needs to go right at the top of your auditioning list.

shadings on her 'Tramp' collection have tremendous delicacy while Bjork's 'Human Behaviour' sees the Icelandic singer's voice well to the fore.

Those Folded Motion tweeters really do give the Crescendo a delicious top end – helping push the music into the room in a way that belies the relatively small dimensions of the system. And while the treble is prominent it is never harsh or grating – instead coming over as rather smooth and refined.

Below that bass is taut and firm although perhaps not the most fulsome you've ever heard. Playing TV On The Radio's 'Seeds' and I found myself switching in the bass boost option via the remote to get the full driving attack the music



The rear panel features ethernet, USB, analogue and optical digital connections.

MARTIN LOGAN CRESCENDO £849



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

A top-notch wireless speaker system with a distinctive sound and absolutely gorgeous styling.

FOR

- styling
- refined, airy treble
- range of inputs
- great remote control

AGAINST

- a touch bass shy

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