





# Unheard-of!

A two-way coax driver with an AMT tweeter: this combination would already spur curiosity in a loudspeaker. In this headphone it leaves us bewildered. With excitement.

**Author:** Christine Tantschinez

It's one of those marketing puns which we stumble over at first, followed by hesitation and finally a knowing smile. "Simply amasian" is displayed on brochures, packagings and web sites as a sales message next to the actual brand name Obravo. At first glance we come within a whisker of sneering at the evident misspelling of "amazing", but swallow down the nasty comment last-minute, because our brain does get its act together and recognises the context. Ah, amasian! Like Asia. I see. Not bad at all, hehe. Roughly translated this is probably supposed to mean "amazingly Asian". Anyway, this pun allows us to draw certain conclusions. To begin with, Obravo is obviously an Asian brand, strictly speaking from Taiwan, and belongs to a company named Stymax International. Visitors to the corresponding website will find the typical order menu by an OEM manufacturer of audio electronics and soon also a name behind it, David Teng. And yet we are musing about a second message within the message: does David Teng show self-mockery by purposefully satirising the cheapo image of his fellow countrymen and thus smugly taking the

wind out of all Far East phobics? Clichés against "Made in Asia" often survive longer than fermented eggs, sadly irrespective of the true product quality.

The fact that Teng has rather serious ambitions with Obravo and in particular with the headphone flagship HAMT-1, is clear from the first glance. Not because of the unusual design or the brown velours pads in the most wonderful 1970s style. Looking past the covering into the headphone earpiece, one will stare straight into the folded yellow eye of a ribbon tweeter. Yes indeed, there it is, an Air Motion Transformer!

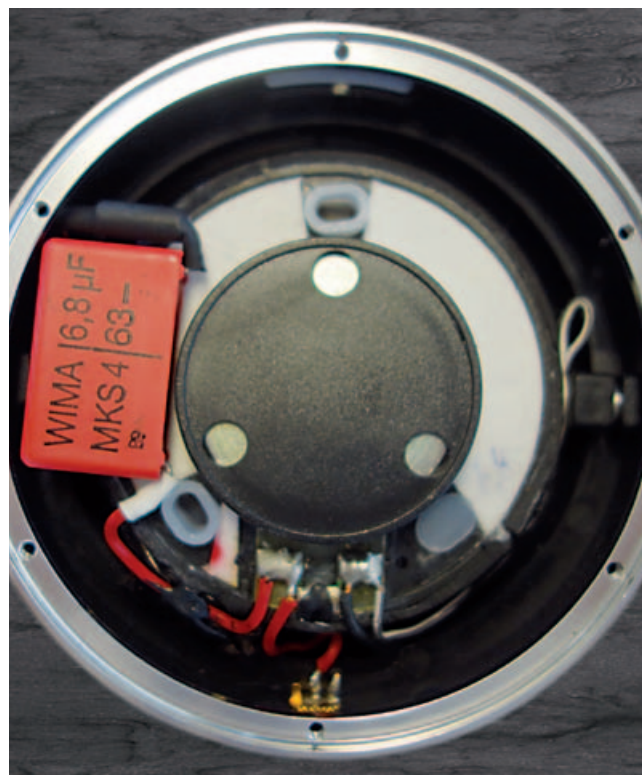
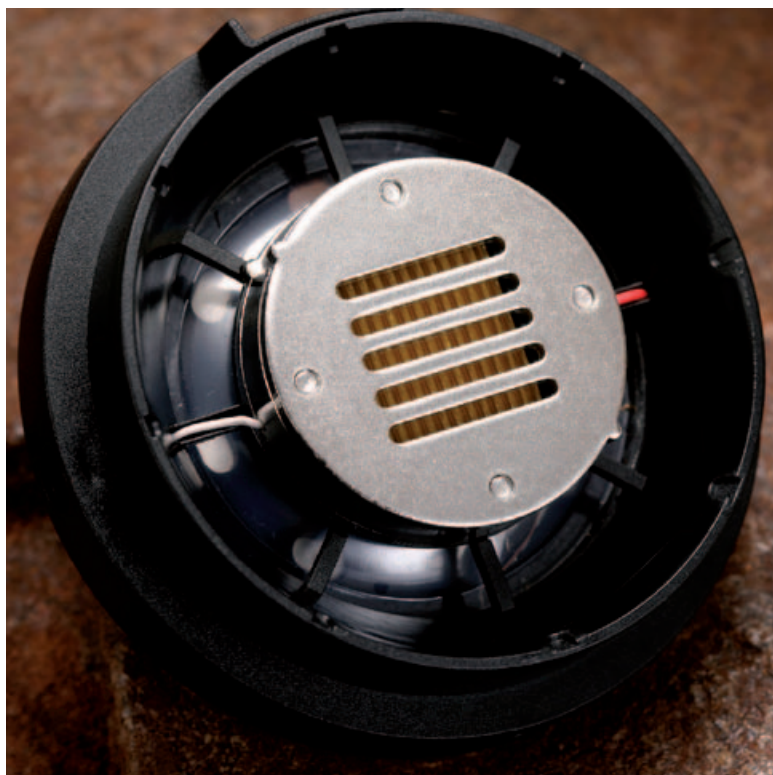
The German physicist [Dr.] Oskar Heil developed the principle and patent of the Air Motion Transformer already in the 1960s [in 1964], which was diligently evolved later in diverse variations under the most fanciful names. Yet they all have one thing in common: the fabulous trick of getting sound to vibrate faster than a dome or a cone can do. The diaphragm is no longer moved back and forth in a simple piston-like motion, but compressed like an accordion. When the spaces between the folds become narrower, the air contained therein is squeezed out, and when they balloon out again, it is sucked in. Relatively small

**Form follows function: large aluminium shell, velours pad and wood cover are not just ornament. The latter also allows to access the driver.**

motions drive relatively more air – the ideal precondition for a high efficiency and faithful transient behaviour. In other words: the Air Motion Transformer can do loud and fast.

Sounds like a good idea for an audiophile headphone with a precise and stable high-frequency range, but also like a bunch of problems for the designer. The tweeter employed in the HAMT-1 with its overall diameter of 40 millimetres already ranks among the tiniest specimens of its kind, yet is still big enough to give any product designer a hard time. Plus the driver definitely needs low-end sup-

**Eye of the tiger: clear view of the unique two-way coax driver with the typical accordion diaphragm of the Air Motion Tweeter. The three bass reflex ports located on the rear can be regulated as required using the included silicon plugs.**





port and the headphone therefore a multi-way design – in the cramped headphone earpiece this is a delicate affair full of acoustical traps. It speaks volumes that so far there's only a handful of successful implementations of the idea worldwide. And now a maker, from Taiwan of all places, hits the scene and claims to have made it?

Good thing that Teng has not been dealing with Air Motion Transformers only since yesterday. For several years his company has successfully built high-quality mini two-way loudspeakers with proprietary tiny AMT tweeters or wireless speakers with modified ribbon tweeters. Then came the idea for the headphone. Which still took more than two years to realise – with various prototypes whose sonic fine-tunings tended to conjure up all Far East clichés. But true to the “simply amazing” motto they kept working very painstakingly, listening, improving, crafting and experimenting.

The extravagant design of the AMT-1 is not an end in itself, but positively follows the function. The deep, omnidirectionally rotating earpieces are the ideal home for the coax sandwich made of the AMT tweeter and the 57 millimetre neodymium woofer, the first and so far one-of-

**The cables on the headphone are detachable and hence replaceable. But there is hardly a reason to do so: solid workmanship, long enough and, above all, manufactured inhouse.**

a-kind in a headphone. The wooden cover is no visual gimmick, but sound-relevant – and can be opened like a speaker chassis with an Allen key to adapt the three bass reflex ports of the woofer to taste by means of the included silicon plugs. Under acoustical aspects even the velours pad has its “raison d'être” – clearly prevailing over the

smooth leather variant in the sonic fine-tuning process. And certainly it feels softer and cosier to the ear. Generally, the HAMT-1 is surprisingly pleasant to wear, despite its dimensions and, in particular, its impressive weight of 543 grammes. The size of the earpieces turns into an advantage: they surround the ear instead of pinching them, and at the

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A dream for all who want to have it all even on the move

„It's like listening to music over a large system – no matter where you are”



Deal: the Obravo comes to the customer in a properly styled little alu case. On board it has the sound tuning kit, the detachable 3.5 m [11.5 ft.] cable with a 3.5 mm mini jack plug and an adapter to 6.3 mm jack.



The Obravo HAMT-1 is a low-Z design and loud enough to deliver a great sound even on feeble portable players. But it can still get better with the HPA-1 mobile headphone amplifier (350 EUR). Small, lightweight, dressed all in aluminium and with a self-explaining ease of operation.

same time they seal off unwanted ambience noise. Nothing, absolutely nothing shall disturb our delightful listening. And this no matter where, by the way. With 56 ohms impedance and a good efficiency the large headphone will play even on the smallest smartphone, if need be. Although the idea of dragging around a full pound of headphone in your luggage may seem strange at first – who has heard it just once, will do exactly this in the future without batting an eye. No matter how neutral, transparent or dynamic the performance of a headphone has been until today, there still remained the sensation of a headphone – the music was sort of popping like a bullet straight through the ears and into the brain. The large magneto- and electrostatic models from Audeze or Stax also create the necessary room, they still let the music breathe before it reaches the sensory cells, yet they are confined to the home system for their sheer size and energy requirements. And now we have this OBravo HAMT-1 which doesn't sound like a headphone any more, but like the world's most personal mobile stereo gear. No matter how fast and solid the highs may sound, how precise the localisation may be and how

deep the lows may reach – the OBravo showcases not just the individual elements of the music, but its soul in an equally natural and cool manner. When in the Pink Floyd classic "Money" the cash registers and coins are tingling to the blues beat, this evokes already such a mighty and effortless scenery as if you were sitting in your favourite armchair vis-à-vis of two large speakers. The further the song progresses and the more instruments join in to the catchy bass line, the more it becomes clear: things can simply never get too turbulent or too dynamic for the OBravo, the highs remain impressively unimpressed by all these buzzing low-range activities. And although the coax driver is making quite some low-end splash, the sound never drifts off towards the warm and cosy side. Those who do feel overwhelmed by the bass either haven't broken in long enough – Robert Ross from the German distribution providently specifies 200 hours (!) of warm-up time which he personally grants to each exemplar, whenever possible – or can give it the finishing touch with the tuning kit. Although this very combination of nimble swiftness and powerful low-end accompaniment is exactly what's written on it: simply amazing! <



## Test-CD Pink Floyd „The Dark Side Of The Moon“

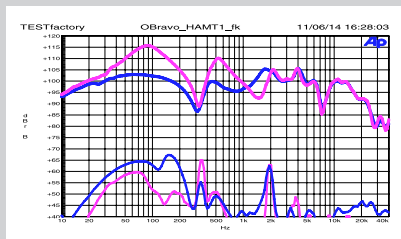
The record which could get on your nerves with its legendary sound gimmicks – when played over the wrong system or headphone. Definitely a piece of audible chronicle.



## The author Christine Tantschinez

AUDIO's vice editor-in-chief has been in the editorial team for ten years and a proud mom for one year – appreciating more than ever an audiophile headphone for her rare leisure time hours. That way promenades with the sleeping child simply become even more beautiful.

## Frequency Response



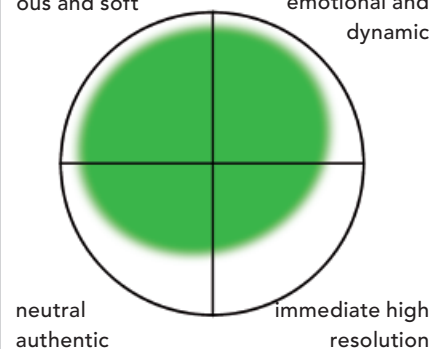
We measured the oBravo both with completely closed reflex ports (blue line) and with all ports open (magenta). The latter shows a bass boost around 80-100Hz, accompanied by an increase around 500Hz. Overall, this headphone measures exceedingly well and is almost distortion-free.

## OBravo HAMT-1

Warranty: 2 Jahre  
Weight: 543 g  
Finishes: Polished aluminium and wood, velours leather

## AUDIophile character

effortless spacious and soft      gripping emotional and dynamic



## AUDIophile potential



## Recommendation

A surprising headphone, for it does not put itself into the focus of attention, but the music. Superb highs, damned good bass.