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Rogers LS3/5a Classic 15 Ohm Loudspeaker Review

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Encountering a legend

After 44 years of presence on the market and an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 pairs of speakers produced, the legendary BBC design continues to live and fill the souls of numerous audiophiles with beautiful music.

The roots of one of the most famous speakers in the history of the hi-fi industry goes back to the early 1970s, when the British media outlet BBC developed model LS3 / 5, designed to deliver natural and neutral sound in the confined space of a reporter van or cabin. The compact LS3 / 5a was soon derived from these compact monitors, and in 1975 production was outsourced to several island companies, including Rogers, Spendor, Harbeth and later KEF, and some of these manufacturers are still licensed today. In the middle menu, Rogers has changed several owners since its founding in 1947, from founder Jim Rogers to Wo Kee Hong Holdings in Hong Kong. However, this did not particularly affect the direction of the company, which is still committed to the BBC's LS3 / 5a and LS5 / 9 models today, with announced special stands for these speakers and an upgraded version of the E20a tube integrated amplifier.

The classics are immortal

As the archetype of the modern speaker, the LS3 / 5a Classic features a proper square shape, with no designer accessories to make it more attractive. This is precisely what makes up its visual charm: a simple, small box whose shape is fully functional in function, but made in perfect proportions and refined with natural materials. Unlike the prevailing mediapan today, the cabinet of this speaker is made of 12mm millimeter Russian birch plywood with angular solid wood reinforcement in the interior. All of this is lined with beautiful walnut, olive or rose veneer, and you can get virtually any other finish at extra cost, including the RAL color palette.

The epitome of simplicity and simplicity, the LS3 / 5a Classic on the back does not even contain the usual speaker terminal panel, but only single four-mm banana connector connectors with silver-plated contact surfaces. In addition, a large label with basic speaker information is located at the top of the back, and that's all. Excluding the edges, the entire front surface is covered with black cloth. The manufacturer points out that it is a fabric called tygan, which in no way affects the sound during reproduction, which

has made it highly regarded in the audiophile community. The masks are removed by pulling the strap in the lower part, after which it becomes clear that these speakers are simply not intended to be mesh free, and that their removal is only provided when servicing or replacing the canvas. The black front around the bezel is equipped with Velcro strap, which is sealed and used to secure the mask, while the speaker units are visible with screws, damping material and even wires. Therefore, masks are removed only if necessary, because they are an integral part that completes the aesthetics.

In addition to the details described above, speaker units are located under the masks. The two-system topology comprises a 19 mm high-pitched membrane made of polyester foil (mylar), with a mid-tone-subwoofer unit below it. The mid-bass diaphragm is 110 millimeters in diameter and is made of a patented polystyrene compound called bextrene. Inside the case is a switch, which the manufacturer claims was made on a single-layer fiberglass fiberboard with copper lines. The crossover is made by hand, using metal capacitors and a silver binder when soldering, and the cutting frequency is set to three kilohertz.

When looking at the technical characteristics, as expected, a modest extension of the lowest tones is displayed. The frequency range is de-clarified in the range of 80 hertz to 20 kilohertz, while sensitivity values and nominal impedances are also uncommon for today, at 82.5 decibels and 15 ohms. Translated, in practice, this means that these small speakers are relatively heavy to drive, and stable and strong amplification is required for optimum startup.

The magic that lasts

Before describing the sound, it should be emphasized that the LS3 / 5a Classic are compression boxes. In addition to the small size, this makes it even easier to position, so these speakers should not be a problem even in a really cramped space - after all, imagine the inside of a van and everything will be clear to you. Joking aside, the LS3 / 5a Classic are in this respect, some of the most appreciative speakers we have come across and in a room setting will have just a few inches from the back wall to allow air to flow behind the boxes. On the other hand, the physics are unrelenting, and the limitations of these speakers are visible at the very sight of their dimensions and a modest volume of 10 liters, so they should not be placed in too large rooms. In our living room, measuring 20 square meters, the little legends did very well; even better than some well-known contemporary rivals. Precision bordering on spectacle, with a perfectly clearly recreated two-channel image, is very quickly evident in the playback. The stage is well developed in width, slightly less in depth, but we were especially surprised by the stability at high volume - with a good enough amp, there will be no sign of narrowing the image and compressing the tone. The downside of this feature is the complexity of the rest of the system: namely, in order to maximize their performance, the LS3 / 5a Classic is looking for equally capable and relentlessly solid teammates.

“The notes are clear and neutral, so the naturalness of the play is rarely high.”

The next great quality of these speakers is the tone-balance: the notes are clear and neutral, so the naturalness of the playback is rarely high. This is especially noticeable mid-range, dominated by beautiful, lifelike tones. The vocals are presented with an

abundance of finesse, although by today's standards there may be more, but the LS3 / 5a Classic is replaced by expressions - that of dynamic presentation and great musicality. In addition, the intercommunication of the speaker units is one of the characteristics in which these speakers continue today front, delivering a fluid and complete sound image without the impression that anything is missing.

While playing tracks with heavier bass, it is impossible not to notice the limitations of the speakers tested in this section. Still, this can hardly be taken for granted, because it would be like resenting a small car for being small. Their purpose and the idea behind the design are simply such, and the solution exists and is called - the larger model on offer. Let's go back to the bass: as deep as they go, the LS3 / 5a Classic delivers perfectly timed bass that blend seamlessly into the rest of the picture. The top basses are very agile and precise, so a truly infectious rhythm emerges from these boxes, with macro and micro dynamics that maintain consistency regardless of volume. Only the deepest bass are left hint, but the positive, on the other hand, is that the image is cut so that the LS3 / 5a Classic doesn't even try to reproduce what they can't.

Short story time

Instead of a conclusion, we can only confirm that the flow of time is very much a relative thing. In the case of the speakers tested, it runs very slowly and allows them to be unrivaled, neutral to the extreme, and very competent in many other fields after almost half a century. Unless you insist on the deepest bass, it's only up to you to provide them with just as much of the rest of the system, a smaller to medium size room and - most importantly - quality music production, and the LS3 / 5a Classic will reciprocate your music for all time.