

Q Acoustics 3050i £649



LOCATION LOCATION

The 3050i's tweeter is decoupled from the baffle via a compliant suspension system to isolate it from harmful resonance. Vibrations from the twin mid/bass drivers above and below – which can impair the performance of the tweeter – are effectively blocked, allowing the tweeter to perform with dramatically reduced interference. As for the main drivers themselves, their cones are precision formed from impregnated and coated paper and teamed with a newly developed, low-hysteresis, rubber surround. QA believes that a coated paper cone provides the optimum balance between stiffness and self-damping, which means it can accelerate without flexing and stop very accurately without unwanted resonances. Low-profile binding posts have been used at the back, which means the 3050i can be positioned very close to a rear wall even when banana plugs rather than spades or bare wires are used.

DETAILS

- PRODUCT**
Q Acoustics 3050i
- ORIGIN**
UK/China
- TYPE**
2-way floorstanding loudspeaker
- WEIGHT**
17.8kg
- DIMENSIONS**
(WxHxD)
310 x 1,020 x 310mm
- FEATURES**
 - 1x 22mm soft-dome tweeter
 - 2x 165mm mid/bass drivers
 - Quoted sensitivity 91dB/1W/1m (6ohm)
- DISTRIBUTOR**
Armour Home Electronics
- TELEPHONE**
01279 501111
- WEBSITE**
qacoustics.co.uk



Acoustics can count itself among a small band of speaker makers that are consistently impressive.

It's as if the company would have to be handed a set of instructions describing how to put a foot wrong.

Such is the case with the 3050i, which doesn't look much different to its predecessor. It is (there are dubiously desirable shiny surrounds for the drivers), but the main ambition is better sound. There are degrees of trickle down involved and when the donor is the flagship Concept 500 (HFC 426), that has to be good news.

Principally, the update involves something called P2P Point-to-Point bracing, which, according to QA, supplies 'internal support in areas of the cabinet that need stiffening, including an extra precision-cut damping panel'. Cue 'more focused, accurate and low distortion fidelity', says the company.

The 3050i is an elegant tower with two rear-firing bass reflex ports and twin 165mm mid/bass drivers sited above and below the 22mm soft-dome tweeter. The usual terminal panel cut-outs have been removed to improve structural integrity and the cabinet also features rear outrigger plinths for stability.

Sound quality

Right away, the 3050i sounds convincing inasmuch as it doesn't get in the way of the music. It has a big-boned, warm and comfortable presentation, an openness and supple agility that goes with the flow and, while it doesn't overlook the small stuff, it doesn't overcook it either. Detail, focus and intelligibility are all fine but sound properly integrated with a warm, natural balance. In the broadest terms, the 3050i delivers scale, authority and sumptuous bass with graceful ease.

Lump's soundscapes are nicely defined, the 3050i conjuring deep bass and crisply formed minutiae at the same time in the same expansive space, suggesting not just fine transparency but excellent dynamic discrimination. Diana Krall's duetting with Bryan Adams is nothing short of exquisite. Dusky vocals, understated ivory tinkling and satiny massed strings melt into an achingly beautiful whole that – more than any other speaker here – is mesmerising. Although Adams' raspy diction is marginally clearer on the F303, the subtle wash of violins and cellos way back in the mix that gives the song its emotional tug is more gorgeous here. Undoubtedly, the Krall and Wright tracks play to this speaker's strengths, but the fact is it doesn't seem to have any chinks in its sonic armoury and it nearly always lays bare the spirit of whatever is played.

And so it proves with the revved-up low-frequency effects on *Propaganda* as the 3050i again exhibits the rare ability at this price to nail the fine line between resolving detail and being able to fully encompass the musical momentum of the whole ●



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

- SOUND QUALITY**
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Hugely likable warmth, body and punch with scale, fluency and authority
- VALUE FOR MONEY**
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Performance can occasionally lack a little zip
- BUILD QUALITY**
★★★★★ **WE SAY:** Not for nothing is this the speaker against which others are judged
- EASE OF DRIVE**
★★★★★

OVERALL

