

The Neeper Perfection One Loudspeaker

Anthony Kershaw

These new speakers, from Denmark's Kim Neeper Rasmussen, came to my attention via the Canadian distributor [Audiophilia advertiser - Ed]. I look forward to the phone calls from these folks: '...come on over, I've got something you might enjoy listening to'. Invariably, they are right. Distributors stake their reputations and dollars on finding the best and most sellable gear. The ones I know are very choosy. As such, the Neeper's 'advance copy' was not exaggerated.



The speakers are striking in a postmodern way and feature sleek lines, gorgeous finish and superb workmanship. They come in three finishes, including the ultra funky Namibia Rift. Mine were stunning in Rose Burl. The pretty metal accoutrements are all top quality, binding posts, plates and spikes. Rasmussen, ex of Gamut, has taken time to develop his first speaker enclosure to eliminate standing waves (the cabinet went through eight prototypes!), and he uses only the highest quality Scan Speak drivers, highly modified for Neeper (one ring radiator and two 5 1 / 2 bass/midrange wood fibre, cone drivers). He also uses van den Hul wiring, WBT binding posts, etc. All the good stuff.

Rasmussen details his crossover as a 2 1 / 2 way electrical higher order filter with acoustically soft slopes. He goes on to say '...while normal higher order crossovers have a tendency to "ring" on some dynamically complex signals found in music, the Perfection One crossover is designed to

effectively suppress ringing, so that the filter does not "sing along." Although there are 22 components in the crossover, only a few are directly in the signal path. Large 14 AWG air coils are employed to reduce DC resistance and custom ClarityCap SA series capacitors made especially for Neeper Acoustics are incorporated in the high frequency section.' Lots more of the good stuff!

Speaker placement was easy. I had them firing straight out into the room, 3 feet from the side walls, 4 from the back. This placement gave me a wide soundstage and very precise imaging. The instruments of the orchestra were beautifully laid out front to back. The raised brass in the Chicago and London halls sounded to great effect.

The first listen was in the distributor's showroom. The speakers were camouflaged somewhat by some huge JM Labs and other wonder designs. No matter, I had my eyes closed as the music started. In about a Nano second, via a dynamite Mahler 2, I recognized the quality of the drivers. Effortless and very smooth, with ultra loud volume. By the first movement's end, I was falling in love with the sound. No, I'm not a pushover! Not only was the sound filling a fairly large room, it seemed to have an effortless way with dynamics. The crescendos kept getting louder and louder with absolutely no implosion. I sneaked a peek at the electronics, Audio Research 210 monoblocks and a fancy new 3 box dCS digital front end, the Scarlatti. No preamp. The speakers were partnered by equipment of very fine fettle.

The musical game over, the Perfection Ones were revealed. I was surprised at the size and the sheer volume of refulgent sound they produced. The shape intrigued and the brief introduction to the sound had me wanting to start the review ASAP. Sadly, I only had a brief time with them in review. Too many ears waiting in line. The short audition was no problem, though, as they reveal their magic very quickly. No matter the genre, the Perfections enjoyed the music and allowed the listeners to hear superb inner detail, near-flawless balance and accurate timbres, both vocal and instrumental.

The previously mentioned Budapest Mahler *2nd Symphony* is a cracker -- well played with a mainstream interpretation and a superb recording. Dynamic shifts are huge. Conductor Fischer gives all that Mahler asks, and he asks a lot! During the fun and games at the distributor's place, I heard this recording directly in comparison with a speaker 4 times as large and 6 times the price. Sure, they were superb, but the Neepers held a magic all their own.

I think the primary benefit of Rasmussen's design is the accurate timbres of instruments. Back at the distributors, the huge speakers sitting behind the Neepers played beautifully, and relayed the hall exquisitely well, but the Perfection Ones grabbed my attention with superlative grasp of instrumental sounds. Flutter tonguing on the flute was heard with rolled 'Rs' and the extra air needed to support that technique. Ghost notes on

Wayne Shorter's tenor sax (from Power of Three), hard to hear on mere mortal speakers, were there in spades. What a cool sound. And Renee Fleming's heavenly soprano was captured in a perfect position in the hall when singing Tchaikovsky with the Solti and the LSO (Decca).

These are the second 20G speakers I have reviewed this year. The quality of both jumped out at this listener. They looked great, had very well engineered cabinets, superb crossovers, and are lifetime speakers. The magic of the Perfection (what a title, oh the arrogance!) is a blend of musicality, cohesion, and accuracy. Accuracy. Ah, the old chestnut. More audio blood has been spilled over that word than most others. But here, it really does apply. I didn't listen to lots of different genres during the brief review period. Basically, a little jazz and a lot of orchestral. But, the sound of the orchestra in all its glory was very accurate to my ears. Lots of space between the instruments, great ambient retrieval, big soundstage and specific imaging. Symmetry and harmony in all their audiophile relevance.



The Perfection Ones are priced at US\$20,000. Serious money for the serious enthusiast. There are other speakers around for that price which also do a superb job of replicating music at a very refined level. That said, the Neepers are very special speakers and in comparison with others below and above their price point, are worthy of their retail price. They sing the music so beautifully and handle dynamics so effortlessly. And they get vocal and instrumental timbre right, which only adds to the magic.

The Neepers will suit audiophiles and music lovers with all but the largest rooms. They'll need some attention with electronics. They sound wonderful with both solid state and tube gear, but the crystal clear speakers will only highlight shoddy equipment downstream. Make sure you hear them at a dealer in a well set up room. They'll be damn hard to leave behind. Highly recommended.

[It is with great pleasure that we award [The Audiophilia Star Component Award](#) to the Neeper Perfection One Loudspeaker. Congratulations! - Ed]

Manufacturer's Comment

Thank you for your very serious review of the first product under my own brand!

In the growing market for High End speakers, many brands claim to make the best products in the world. Of course, not all of them can be the best and who is to judge which is actually the best? Hi-Fi, no matter how hard some would try to tell you otherwise, is largely down to personal taste. It is not difficult to build a speaker with flat frequency response. With the right tools and training, it can literally be done in an afternoon. But to build a speaker that reveals the soul of recorded music is an entirely different

matter. I can see from your review that we seem to have very similar tastes in sound.

My ultimate goal was to create the most 'complete' product on the market, one that combined design, the best materials and, of course, the highest possible performance. I truly believe that there is no other loudspeaker quite like the P1.

Regarding the name Perfection One; it is not arrogance. No, I don't think they are "perfect." Nothing really is. But everything in these speakers has been designed and developed by me, a 'crazy' perfectionist. And for the first product under my own brand, I couldn't really come up with another name. They are the first speakers I have created where I could devote myself 100% and do everything exactly the way I wanted to. Everybody told me that the speaker you reviewed would be impossible to build - too difficult to develop, too expensive to develop and way too expensive to produce.

I thank you very much for being the first to confirm that I proved them wrong!

*Best Regards
Kim Neeper Rasmussen*

Specifications

Bass/midrange: Custom made 5 1 / 2" Scan Speak Wood Fiber
High Frequency: 1 1 / 2" Scan Speak Ring Radiator
Cabinet: Patented Hornflex technology, bitumen damped
Crossover: 2 1 / 2 way higher order, non resonant
Frequency response: 30 – 50 KHz
Sensitivity: 87 dB/ 2.83 V RMS
Nominal Impedance: 4 ohms (min 3.8 ohm)
Recommended Amplifier Power: 70 – 300 Watts
Dimensions HxWxD: (drawing) 100 x 19.5 x 46 cm
Weight: 30 Kg (each)
Warranty: 10 years

Manufactured by Neeper Acoustics Inc.

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Source of review sample: Distributor loan

Price: USD \$20,000

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