Alexia Under Scrutiny

MARTIN COLLOMS EXAMINES THE ALEXIA, WILSON AUDIO'S LATEST FLOORSTANDER

Excluding subwoofers and home cinema components Wilson Audio's core stereo range now comprises seven loudspeaker systems, from the adjustable 'shelf or stand-mount' *Duette* (*HIFICRITIC Vol? No?*) to the latest version of what began as the *X1 GRAND SLAMM* (which I reviewed for *Stereophile* 20 years ago), morphed into the *Alexandria*, then finally the recently introduced *Alexandria XLF*, which sells for no less than a quarter of a million (pounds or dollars!)

In between we've had three versions of the successful one-box *Sophia* floorstander (*Vol? No?*), the '*Watt-Puppy*' two-boxers (currently called *Sasha*) (*Vol? No?*) a market leader for the concept over 20 years, and the *MAXX* tower, now in *MkIII* form (*Vol? No?*). These are now joined by the much heralded *Alexia*, a good bit taller than the *Sasha* and with greater bass enclosure volume, but still a tidy and shapely design that's smaller than a *MAXX III*. While I have used and owned many speakers over the years, I seem to have turned to Wilson Audio more often than not, including the beloved *WITT*, several generations of *Watt-Puppy*, and currently a *Sophia 3*.

Having successfully completed the in-house development of new mid and treble drivers for the *Alexandria XLF*, proprietor David Wilson decided to try and downsize the unusual strategy of combining different size bass drivers in one enclosure, first seen in the *X1* some 20 years ago and continued in the *MAXX* series. Could those new mid and treble drivers create superior performance in a relatively compact system? Would this be a step up from the *Sasha* (or rather, a step down from the MAXX)? In fact this project seems to have finally crystallised as a reduction of the *Alexandria XLF* itself.

The low frequency driver differences across the range are as follows: *Sophia* has a single 10in (240mm), *Sasha* uses a pair of 8.25in units (equivalent to an 11in, 264mm), *MAXX* has a 10in and a 12in parallel (15in/380mm equivalent), while the *SLAMM* and *Alexandria* combine 12in and 15in drivers to provide a massive 18in/457mm equivalent. The latter three models' 'differential low frequency tuning' involves the inherent engineering properties of the dissimilar bass drivers and complex acoustic loading. The idea is that the smaller bass driver blends more easily with the midrange, while the pair as a whole shares power over a wider low frequency bandwidth, reducing coloration and extending the bass response.

So now we have the £48,000/pair *Alexia*, also differentially tuned with 8in and 10in bass units (equivalent to a 13in/330mm driver). Weighing a total of 256lbs (116.12kg), Each *Alexia* comes in three sections, comprising a well spiked floor coupled bass