

Subjective Sounds

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It says Thöress on the fascia, with an *umlaut* over the 'ö', hardening it but suggesting the British spelling should be Thoeress. However you want it, this German brand is named after founder and principal Reinhardt Thöress, and is based in Aachen, on the Western border of that country.

I'd not encountered the brand before, but it was brought to my attention by Greg Drygala, our Jazz music reviewer of Polish extraction who runs an import operation called G Point Audio. Since we only live about 30 miles apart, Drygala does have a habit of dumping stuff for me to try, and so it was with the Thöress equipment: a phono stage (which I love); an integrated amplifier (which I never got to try) and a pair of speakers (which I also got to like a lot, even though they were unusually ugly and were actually labelled *Genuin Schallwandler* rather than Thöress).

I therefore wrote to Reinhardt Thöress to find out more about the speakers. It turns out that Genuin Audio is a German distributor, and the speaker was originally intended to be badged and sold that way. Plans have changed, however, and what used to be a *Genuin Schallwandler* will now become a *THÖ 1D8*. At around £6,000/pair they're never going to be cheap (or indeed pretty), but these speakers are amongst the best all round performers I've encountered.

I'm not able to give the *1D8*s a full review right now, as they have gone off to do a show somewhere. However I did spend some weeks listening to them, and also took the trouble to make my usual measurements. As I recall, the *1D8* combined a 200mm main driver (from established German maker LPG) with a 25mm Morel soft dome tweeter, within a rather bulky but quite low mass floorstanding enclosure. The bass/mid driver was apparently 'double transmission line loaded', with an exit through the speaker's base.

Measurements under far-field in-room conditions reveal an unusual combination of a generous sensitivity (around 93dB) alongside a reasonably decent amplifier load that stays above 6ohms at low frequencies, and 4.5ohms above 1kHz. The bad news is that the bass and lower midrange (below 500Hz) is distinctly uneven, and the low bass (below 45Hz) is largely absent (indicating quarter-wave rather than TL line loading perhaps?); the good news is that the output is much smoother and flatter above 500Hz.

What this means in practice is that the *1D8* has a sensitivity that's sufficiently high to give the speaker real dynamic expression and grip, yet it manages to do so alongside decent bass extension and an unusually good overall balance. In fact I'd go so far as to state that it has many of the advantages of a speaker system based on a single full range drive unit, yet manages to avoid most of the pitfalls of that breed. It is, in short, an excellent allrounder (which makes its rather unprepossessing appearance all the more galling).

My system is set up to make loudspeaker listening and comparisons relatively easy, but I was also very taken by the performance of a very elaborate valve-based Thöress phono stage, known as an *Enhancer* (*Entzerrer* in German). I never got around to exploring the numerous equalisation options, which I'll try when it returns, but even with all three set to RIAA it sounded truly excellent, which is the main reason I want it back! (The bad news is a pricetag equivalent to around £6,500.) What is certain is that the Thöress brand is capable of delivering a very serious standard of performance indeed.