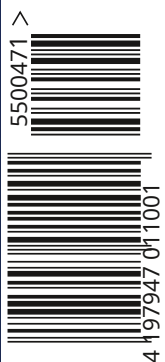


# HIFI-STARS

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Blumenhofer Acoustics two-way horn speaker Genuin FS1 Mk III

## Sound transducer? Sounding works of art!

Horn speakers? Memories of the song "Stairway To Heaven" by Led Zeppelin from 1971 are just coming back to me - one of the legendary titles - along with the music of the Who, Eric Clapton, Deep Purple etc. - that I grew up with... A horn speaker A German manufacturer completely dropped out of the test a few years ago and just "screamed". To this day, the manufacturer claims that it builds the fastest and probably best loudspeakers in the world. Fast in the high/mid range - yes, only the bass didn't even come close back then and the horn screamed unbearably with Led Zeppelin! That was the end of the test with this music track...

The complete opposite of such barkers is Thomas Blumenhofer. A modest, rather reserved person who has been doing "his thing" for almost four decades. Consistently focused on quality, his factory creates sonorous works of art, vulgo: loudspeakers that are impressive in their depth of production. In a nutshell: art comes from skill! At the beginning there is the delivery of wood and only a few people go to the holy grail of the company - the veneer warehouse. I was once lucky enough to get to know this room in the company of the maestro and to this day I am deeply impressed by the exceptionally high number of very special veneers. The test subject - the Genuin FS1 Mk III in question - is a typical case of this. The real wood veneer used here is called Ruster, also known as elm. However, only the standing tree is called elm, while the cut wood then bears the name Ruster (which comes from Old High German). It is a particularly durable, cross-grained wood of irregular growth, moderately heavy and, like oak or beech, is one of our original trees with good strength properties. Unfortunately, there are fewer and fewer of them in our forests - an introduced (so-called elm sapwood) beetle is attacking the local populations - globalization is a reason for this.

eat! This wood must be dried particularly slowly to prevent excessive cracking and deformation during the drying process.

If you look at the speaker housing carefully, you can quickly see the meticulousness and craftsmanship of the manufacturer. Selecting and assembling exactly mirror-image veneers is only ever possible once - so Blumenhofer Acoustics inevitably creates unique pieces. The surfaces are not painted, only oiled - but this is done several times by hand; It goes without saying that only natural (organic) oil is used.

### Constructive

At Blumenhofer Acoustics we speak of "harmonic constructions". At their core there are birch wood laminated panels, which are cut precisely to size in the in-house CNC production and then given the appropriate look by the master veneer. Undoubtedly a considerably time-consuming activity. The test subject has a wall thickness of eighteen millimeters made of birch plywood. The end result is a construction weight of 60 kg per piece. The birch plywood panels consist of at least five layers of glued panels. Cross-gluing creates enormous strength, which equally benefits stability and dimensional stability. It also dampens the resonances. Generally speaking, birch wood is a very homogeneous, dense wood with excellent acoustic properties. In addition, it is just as hard as it is tough and elastic.

With its dimensions of 116 cm x 45 cm x 62 cm (H x W x D), the Genuin FS1 Mk III likes to take up space in the large listening room (from 30 sqm). Nevertheless, the loudspeaker is anything but room-critical, because due to its construction based on the well-proven downfire principle (below radiation), there is almost no excitation of the room.



Starting with the Tempesta 20 model, all speakers at Blumenhofer-Acoustics have switchable impedance linearization, which means that operation with unstable amplifiers is completely unproblematic. I don't need the impedance correction bridge; an 845 triode guides the speakers tightly by hand. Although it can handle 150 watts, this sound transducer with an efficiency of 96 dB (1 W/1 m) at eight ohms is particularly suitable for use with tube amplifiers. The bass chassis of the FS1 Mk III, which has an outer diameter of 40 cm (16 inches), is now made of a hand-made and air-dried, 38 cm paper cone. It has a very powerful magnet in the drive, is hung really hard and is held in place by a sturdy die-cast aluminum basket. This very special woofer is the result of several years of in-house development; its use now provided the name

the Genuin FS1 as a Mk III version. If you were to look deep into the bass reflex channel hidden in the underbody, the expert would be able to see the comparatively expensive Tritec coils and the highest quality Audyn capacitors (selected in pairs) in addition to the extremely robust Isabellenhütte resistors (which are also used in medical technology). Use) recognize components that have been tested across the board for the best sound. Finally, a special material is used for the cushioning. Three very solid spikes with M16 threads ensure that the speaker is decoupled. The attention to detail can also be seen in the self-made cable bridges on the bi-wiring connection. In addition, the loudspeaker can be attenuated by 1 to 2 dB in the treble using a bridge. Something like this can be necessary in today's modern, sparsely furnished rooms with a lot of harsh sound from walls and large windows.



## Errors

Let's come to the extremely important point of time accuracy in music reproduction. While quite a few people are of the opinion that the main focus is necessarily on the tweeters, we have to briefly explain this physically. The human ear processes pitches completely differently. At frequencies of 500 to 800 Hz, the time structure of the different signals arriving at the eardrum is evaluated and used to perceive pitch. Interestingly, our hearing perception follows the musical pitch very closely. However, if the frequencies exceed the limit of 1,600 Hz, our hearing is no longer able to follow this time structure of the ear signals. Here the pitch sensation is derived from the position of the excitation maximum on the basilar membrane (which is the middle of the three cochlea ducts of our ear) of the inner ear by distinguishing between the psychoacoustic quantity tonality, the same acoustic unit of measurement: Mel (from the English "melody") and the Point of maximum vibration amplitude of the basilar membrane is assumed to be linear. The same distances on the basilar membrane correspond to the same differences in tonality and from frequencies between around 800 and 1,600 Hz the two mechanisms described overlap. If you now look at our listening in the hi-fi circle under this physical aegis, then it becomes clear why Thomas Blumenhofer speaks of "harmonies" in his designs: For him, the cleanliness of the low/mid-range chassis is always important! The tweeter - in our case a titanium tweeter dome - can reproduce frequencies far beyond our ability to hear (very few people can perceive the range around 20 kHz). In the case of the Genuin FS1 Mk III, this chassis sits in a multiplex housing (self-designed and manufactured) that is always veneered to match the loudspeaker, on a slide with which the distance to the listening position can be adjusted with millimeter precision - it is definitely worth experimenting here. The adjustment of this chassis is basically simple: at the moment when the bass and treble sounds sound in a psychoacoustically correct manner (no overemphasis on a frequency range), it simply tunes and the reproduced signal literally clicks into place. In the example in the test report, I am sitting at a distance of three meters, the speaker is only slightly angled inwards and the tweeter chassis is at 17 mm on the scale. The rough paint in the HDF



The horn attachment of this component is intentional; it works and supports the tonal spread of the treble. The crossover frequency of the three-inch titanium high-frequency membrane is already at 850 Hz and the low-frequency cellar goes down to a very credible 36 Hz. The low/midrange chassis works linearly well into the midrange frequencies and does not allow any compressive back pressure to arise in the chassis. All in all, this all sounds very exciting - but what does it sound like from the loudspeaker?

### Play in!

The fact is: every new Blumenhofer Acoustics loudspeaker demands patience and more patience from its proud owner - but what do Russian sayings say? "Sterpitsya, slyubitsya!": Who endures — he falls in love! Basically, the following always applies: "The patient will be rewarded...!"

As I write these lines, the Genuin FS1 MK III has already been operated for over 200 hours in the CD player's repeat mode via a Symphonic Line RG14 Mk5 S - a very excellent combination, by the way.



bination. I knowingly point out the fact that a great, well-rehearsed Blumenhofer Acoustics is always sought after - and not "pushed away" because of the price (like so many other loudspeaker designs). The reason for this is as simple as it is understandable: Blumenhofer loudspeakers do not "color the sound" and are - as already noted - always unique. Connoisseurs know this and look for well-preserved specimens, especially if they want to purchase them quickly. Not without reason, because the production of the larger models (series from Genuin) at Blumenhofer Acoustics is sold out on average six months in advance. Simply verbally announcing a major new design (e.g. when visiting abroad) usually ensures that the order is placed immediately without the customer ever hearing a sound or seeing a model in person. Crazy? No, just the worldwide recognition for consistent and correct work! Here the impeccable reputation of its loudspeakers far precedes the company owner.

### Music!

Immediately and without any detours we move on to particularly demanding musical work. Matthieu Saglio with his extremely successful ACT production "el camino de los vientos" ends up in the CD player. The musician's cello sounds right in the first track - an instrument that needs to be played particularly critically. No problem at all for the FS1 Mk III! Cleanly separated from each other, the individual tones are presented extremely expressively. For a better understanding of my following words, perhaps some information about the system at this point. A "TA 845" stereo power amplifier from mfe forwards the signals to the speakers. Before that, the HP300SE/Phono preamplifier from Octave Audio distributes the sounds at a breathtakingly fast rate. Whether analogue or digital, there is no longer any difference in quality for me. Each device in the system is tuned in terms of power supply with selected power cables from Nordost/HMS/Oyaide/mfe/In-Akustik and resonance-absorbing aids from Soundcare. The signal cabling exists throughout the top floor of the HMS house

— the "Suprema". There is a correspondingly sophisticated facility here that has been formed over the last twenty years. The Clearaudio Innovation, which has been working without a doubt for years with the Universal tonearm, also from Erlangen, and a Dynavector Te Kaitora Rua as a pickup, ensures the correct over-amplification on the phono section of the preamplifier.

carrying. High-quality equipment/cables should be offered to a speaker of the caliber of a Genuin FS 1 Mk III. I'm currently listening to track four of the CD mentioned through the open door. Once again this incredibly cleanly played cello, supported by a crystal clear trumpet from the Norwegian Nils Petter Molv er and Steve Shehan on drums with Carles Benavent on double bass. It doesn't help, I have to listen to this piece again... it captivates the listener and almost forces him to listen intensively — this piece is presented in a sensationally clean manner and it is actually unnecessary to point out that, especially when the piano enters, it gets exactly the touch of warmth that a large loudspeaker system can easily display. Now I'm anything but an inexperienced Blumenhofer Acoustics loudspeaker listener - after all, I've been listening to a Genuin FS2 Mk II for several years, but this is incredibly good... Would you like a voice? Please, the next piece shows the reproduction quality of the speaker mercilessly. A male voice reaching over many octaves - here by Camille Saglio. In the duet with the cello it takes your breath away, I need a break - the new bass chassis works extremely well here. Away from the Celtic-inspired pieces of music and towards a harmonica combined with a piano, significantly I immediately recognize a grand piano from Steinway & Sons. Admittedly, I'm looking for mistakes again, but I don't even have a chance. This speaker plays so incredibly loosely and precisely that I'm falling in love with it... Can it also play the Led Zeppelin piece mentioned at the beginning? And how casually he does it! One of the best horn loudspeakers I've heard so far is playing here (!) and that's not a marketing slogan, but a pretty sober realization, because the Blumenhofer Acoustics Genuin FS1 Mk III reproduces shrill guitar tones without complaint and the bass is always correct and Above all, period-correct reproduction is included - something that is precise and deep! Please do not generalize the sound experiences described here, I am simply putting my personal experiences in the respective situation on paper - everyone must form their own impression of these lines...

ZZ-Top is currently spinning their LP "Eliminator" on the turntable - very impressive and above all: it's great fun! Final classical music material also comes in analogue form. Gustav

Mahler's 2nd Symphony in a DECCA recording from 1966 (now in a 180 g new edition from 2002) with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Georg Solti. A brilliant sound appears in front of me. Sopranos, alto voices and mixed choir, flutes, oboes and similar classical sounds in all their splendor, which rise up to a marching tempo, are presented - as the recording is - with great vehemence. In order to come down from this listening frenzy, the SACD by David Roth "Meet You Where You Are" plays. He meets me right here — the voice(s) and the guitar stand ramrod straight on the imaginary stage and are reproduced with super precision by the Genuin FS1 Mk III.

### To the point

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With his factory, Thomas Blumenhofer sets standards when it comes to loudspeaker construction "Made in Germany". No question, such actions have their price, but how often do you find boring large-scale production in this price range...? I like the meticulousness in recognizing the technical connections and it is now known to those in the know: Horn systems from Blumenhofer-Acoustics let the searcher arrive! They are all sounding works of art and somehow I can't shake the thought that it's time to invest in something like this...

Alexander Aschenbrunner

#### INFORMATION

Two-way horn loudspeaker: Blumenhofer Acoustics Genuin FS 1 Mk III Pair price: from 28,800 euros  
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