

# BOUND TO LISTEN!

Sometimes the smallest things make the biggest noise – and Canton’s new Reference 8 K can certainly not be accused of being closemouthed.

People who are sensitive to esotericism sometimes claim that the soul of a craftsman is reflected in his products, so that one can read his character from them. Opinions on such teachings might vary, but anyone who has ever been able to listen to music with Canton’s head developer Frank Göbl - we recently had the pleasure - will soon understand why the speakers, made near Frankfurt in Germany, can do what they do. Nothing better could have happened to us on this rainy April day than to forget the grey dreariness with a listening session lasting several hours at “moderate” 120 decibels.

Mr. Göbl delivered his brand-new Reference 8 K that afternoon, which was presented just in time for the HighEnd. We were given the opportunity to take an exclusive look at them a few weeks before all the trade fair hustle and bustle. Mr. Göbl told us that, exceptionally, the 8K is in a way a product specifically requested by and made for retailers. The models of the Reference series were so well received there that they repeatedly called for a small floorstanding loudspeaker, which is priced between the compact 9 Series (around 2600 Euro) and the 7 K (around 5200 Euro). And voilà: here it is!

## Volume...

Of course, the new, almost one meter high column cannot only play breathtakingly loud. The bass and midrange drivers were



refined with tungsten instead of the aluminum typically used by Canton. This allows them to form a huge stage even in whisper-quiet operation, while precisely positioning the instruments, always garnishing them with some creamy and delicate tones. With T+A's PA 1000 E, everything appeared extraordinarily three-dimensional and stimulatingly smooth. But why should we bore you with such details?

The Reference 8K has unmistakably been designed to give its auditorium powerful full-body massages. After working our way through several listening-test CDs to warm up, and having been quiet impressed on the way, we ended up on "N.I.B." from Black Sabbath's debut album - a song that only unfolds its real magic just below the mentioned 120 dB. We fired it in a high bit version using T+A's superb MP 1000 E. Although the 8 K is a proper dwarf compared to the top model 1 K (around 22.000 Euro), it threw the accentuated and impulsive chords of Tony Iommis' Gibson SG incredibly dynamic, lively and with almost brute force to our chest. Its efficiency of an impressive 87 dB on T+A's 220-watt amp probably played a major role in this spectacle.

The solid gold-plated terminal of the 8 K. Note the opening between cabinet and base... ▼



In addition to the exemplary fluent and agile playing style, we were particularly impressed by the superb stability of the low bass reproduction, which reaches down to the 33 Hertz spheres: even at levels near the limit, we could not elicit any sound disturbances, not even secondary noises from the bass reflex ports built into the foot of the 8K. This might be, in large parts, due to the uncompromising design of the cabinet, which was adopted without adjustments from the larger "Refs". Internal struts were used to additionally reinforce the already sturdy sidewalls, while the top and bottom were designed to be extremely robust with a thickness of more than two centimeters. Each of the two faultlessly manufactured beauties receives signals via a generously dimensioned and completely gold-plated bi-wiring terminal and weighs 30 kilograms.

... but classy!

Of course, volume isn't everything. The real fascination of the new "little" Reference lies in its outstanding combination of fine detailing, a perfect sense for rhythm and its unshakably clean reproduction: while Mr. Iommis relentlessly threw his crushingly heavy guitar riffs at us, the 8 K managed with playful ease to draw an incredibly deep and sharply outlined stage into the listening room. Ozzy Osbourne's voice stood irremovably in the center of action, revealing filigree details and that wonderfully warm, spherical echo effect that is characteristic for many of the album's songs. In the soli, the duplicated guitars scattered throughout the panorama seemed to break the boundaries of the stage. No less impressive was the reproduction of electronic material such as the abyssal-low "Within You" of Gus Gus' superb album Arabian Horse, whose intelligently used compression effects made our listening room pump.

If you are looking for a speaker that can make you forget space, time and everything else around you, the 8K is a great choice! And when the neighbors knock on the door with torches and pitchforks, just turn it up a little more - The Reference will thank you!

Carsten Barnbeck

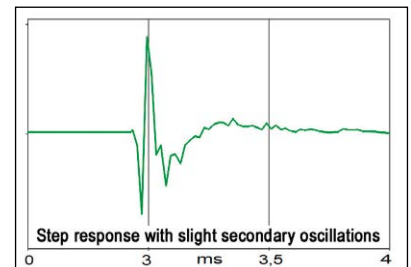
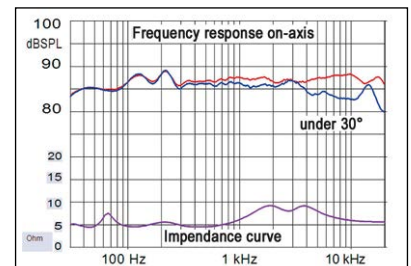
◀ ... This is part of the airflow concept of the reflective opening in the bottom of the speaker.

CANTON REFERENCE 8K

Around 4000€  
 Dimensions: 26x99x36 cm (WxHxD)  
 Warranty: 5 years  
 Contact: Canton  
 Tel.: +49 6083 28730  
 www.canton.de

Outstanding workmanship, excellent level stability, melodious and round timbres as well as the rhythmical and captivating timing make the smallest Reference floorstanding speaker a superb music companion, that masters entertaining as effortlessly as audiophile detailing.

MEASUREMENT RESULTS



DC resistance	4 Ω
Minimum impedance	4,5 Ω at 440 Hz
Maximum impedance	9 Ω at 1900 Hz
Sound pressure level (2,83 V/m)	86,2 dB SPL
Power for 94 dB SPL	14,4 W
Lower cut-off frequency (-3dB SPL)	33 Hz
Distortion factor at 63/3k/10k Hz	1,0/0,3/0,1 %

LAB COMMENTS

Everything is simply perfect: the impulse response is sharp, while the impedance curve and the largely linear frequency response show no abnormalities. The voluminous speaker reaches down to 33 Hertz and should be positioned with appropriate distance to the wall.

STEREO-TEST

SOUND QUALITY 81%

PRICE/PERFORMANCE



OUTSTANDING