



Homegrown hosannah

THEOPHANY 6.1 SURROUND SOUND SPEAKERS \$10,600



theophany *n. pl.* the·oph·a·nies
An appearance of a god to a human; a divine manifestation.

After intimating that your product akin to “a divine manifestation”, you’d expect lightning bolts to come coursing from the heavens to send such an arrogantly blasphemous piece of hardware spinning into the bowels of hell, if there wasn’t more than just a little truth to the claim, of course.

The reason you may not have yet heard of the Theophany Loudspeaker is an obvious one - they’re new. This Christchurch gang has been banging away for the last three and a half years prepping their loudspeakers for the international market. They are designed, manufactured and assembled completely here in Godzone, with Arvus Loudspeakers handling the custom neodymium drivers.

As you can see, the speaker cabinets look absolutely stunning in their Rimu veneer, but if that really isn’t your style you can get them in almost any wood finish you like.



Upfront you’ve got two M5b ported main speakers capable of 220W RMS each, while out back are three S3s producing 170W RMS each. But the crown jewel is the stunning centre speaker (C5), which sports

three five-inch drivers and twin tweeters to produce a stunning 200W RMS at 28hz-30khz.

The woofer caused a few giggles from passers by; it really is offensively huge, dominating in both appearance and audio output (occasionally to its detriment!) You definitely won’t have any digestion problems after giving it a run.

Enough techno-gibberish, how do they sound? Pretty top-notch, I reckon. Testing the setup’s movie surround output was an absolute pleasure. *Terminator 3* (DTS 5.1) and *Star Wars III* (Dolby Digital 5.1 EX) both gave me an auditory assault - the car chase scenes in T3 were exceptional, providing clear directional sound and gut wrenching bass. The THX space battle scenes in *Star Wars* were incredibly clear and powerful, without a hint of distortion even at the highest volumes. It wasn’t all raw power though; *Alien’s (Quadrilogy)* (Dolby/THX 5.1) various suspense scenes were so believable I just about made a mess every time a chain clanked or a valve creaked. I most certainly noticed detail never heard before, and that primal fear returned as surely as the first time I saw this flick. These speakers really do create a stunning sense of space, without any murkiness or a hint of that ‘hollow’ feeling you can get from lesser arrangements.

Through all this mayhem, the centre channel was smoothly outputting dialogue and other subtleties perfectly - at no point in this entire review did that ‘little’ box become drowned out in any way - it is one of the best this reviewer has heard.

DETAILS

CONTACT

theophanyloudspeakers.com

SPECIFICATIONS

SHELF (S3) X3

- 2x 5-inch drivers,
 - 1x 8-inch passive radiator,
 - 1x Tweeter
- POWER HANDLING:
180W RMS
EFFICIENCY:
89db * 8ohm nominal
RESPONSE: 27hz - 30khz+

CENTRE (C5) X1

- 3x 5-inch drivers,
 - 2x Tweeters
- POWER HANDLING:
200W RMS
EFFICIENCY:
93db * 6ohms nominal
RESPONSE: 28hz - 30khz+

MAIN (M5B) X2

- 3x 5-inch drivers,
 - 1x 8-inch woofer,
 - 1x tweeter
- POWER HANDLING:
220W RMS
EFFICIENCY:
91db * 6ohms nominal
RESPONSE: 27hz - 30khz+

SUB (SUB3) X1

- 2x 8-inch drivers,
 - 1x 12-inch passive radiator,
 - 1x240amp
- OUTPUT: 240/350W
RESPONSE: 23hz - 120hz (variable)

- State-of-the-art Neodymium drivers developed by Arvus Loudspeakers.
- Curved form: rigid, inert, eliminates standing waves.
- 5-year guarantee

PLUS

- Kiwi-made
- Choose your veneer!
- Outstanding centre speaker

MINUS

- Sub a bit too overpowering
- Very occasionally unnatural sounding in 2-channel
- Have to pay extra to get speaker grilles.

VERDICT

Heavenly

Aesthetics	92%
Performance	94%
Price Value	84%
Features	96%
Functionality	95%
Overall	

92%

Moving onto surround music, the Theophany’s again astounded. *Stop Making Sense* (DVD-video 5.1) from Talking Heads was crystal clear with great highs (although sometimes the sub proved to be a bit much and had to be toned down) and if anything, the system exposed weaknesses in the recording!

Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots (CD 5.1) by the Flaming Lips, was undoubtedly the best I’ve heard it - finally a system to do justice to this directionally heavy, schizophrenic, but fantastic recording.

As you can imagine, at this point I was already counting out my pennies and we hadn’t even given it a run in two-channel yet - these guys did start out two channel specialists you see!

For all you musical bogans out there, your days of 2.1 are gone; the bass output from the floorstanders alone was more than enough to ensure the subwoofer was permanently unplugged.

The gruff screams and guitar wails of *The Stooges’ Funhouse* (re-mastered) were flawless and accurate,

if a tiny bit scratchy. Sigur Ros’ epic *Takk...* and Mum’s whimsical *Finally We Are No One* was rich, full and most importantly warm. The densely packed layers of lush strings sounded superb, although I did notice the occasional bout of murkiness when testing the uber-produced white noise of My Bloody Valentine’s *Loveless*.

While admittedly a pre-digital recording, it sounded a bit more reedy than I would’ve liked. These are of course the etchings of a reviewer straining to find fault with a system that otherwise left me grinning.

All up, this kit is an absolute ripper. If you think I’m being soft on Theophany just because they’re a bunch of Kiwis, think again. The quality of output at this price is more than enough to match the big international players, if not give them a bit of a fright.

The divine ‘Theophany’ tag is well deserved in this reviewer’s opinion, but if listening to such a top package is indeed a sin, then fire me up a cauldron Beelzebub, I’m ready for a spa. ■ ALLAN SWANN



