

Piega Classic 3.0 | Stereo speakers | £900

The Piega Classic 3.0 speakers feature a rear-firing port, which uses the rear wall to add bass emphasis



Piega's quality is unheard of

FOR Authoritative sound; excellent build and finish

AGAINST Sound could do with a bit more bite



Never heard of Piega? We wouldn't blame you, particularly if you live in the UK. This Swiss speaker manufacturer was founded back in 1986, but over the decades its presence in the British market has been sporadic at best. That's a shame, because the company makes some hugely capable designs, and has specialised in ribbon drive units from the beginning.

Look at the current range and you'll find not only in-house ribbon tweeters but also clever coaxial designs that couple tweeter and midrange in a single array - a bit like a ribbon version of Tannoy's celebrated Dual Concentric drivers.

The Classic 3.0s are the entry-level of the company's portfolio, but that doesn't make them any less appealing. They're chunky boxes, standing 34cm high and 21cm wide, with a lovely finish - the deep gloss lacquer puts most rivals to shame. You have three options: piano black, piano white and the polished Macassar ebony of our review sample. There's substance here too. That cabinet feels immensely rigid, and is made with obvious care.

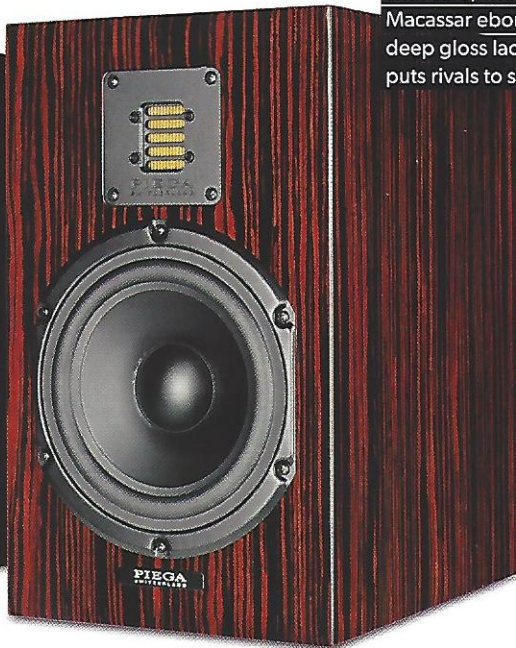
Firm foundations

The technical highlight is that tweeter. Engineered in-house, it's coupled to an 18cm mid/bass driver. As is typical, the low-end is tuned by a rear-firing port, so the sonic impact of a nearby wall is emphasised over a sealed box design. Cable connection is through a sturdy pair of binding posts.

The Classic 3.0s are capable of a surprising amount of low-end output. In our test suite they sound most at home well away from the rear and side walls - we think a metre or so away from these should work well in most rooms. A pair of solid stands is essential too, if you want to hear what these speakers can really do.

The same goes for partnering kit. These Piegas are insightful performers with a good balance of resolution and dynamics, but they will manage to display that only if the electronics are right. Consider partnering them with the likes of the Rega Elex-R amplifier with Naim's CD5 si CD player or Cambridge Audio's Azur 851N streamer as source, and we're sure you'll find plenty to like.

Once they're given a day or so to bed in, we can't help but warm to these speakers. They're not perfect but there's enough quality here to keep us listening for hours.



The cabinet is made with care, while the Macassar ebony and deep gloss lacquer puts rivals to shame

We start off with some large-scale classical music in the form of Dvořák's *New World Symphony*. Here the Piegas impress by generating a sound full of authority and scale. They have a meaty low-end that digs surprisingly deep for a speaker of this size. That bass heft gives a firm foundation for the rest of the sound to build from. There's a solid dynamic punch and the ability to float a pleasingly expansive sound stage populated by nicely layered instruments.

Tonally, things aren't wholly neutral - the bass is a little over-confident, while the mid and higher frequencies are happy to take a back seat. These traits don't go too far though, and it's pretty obvious there's little to complain about when it comes to articulation and insight.

Cultured sonic balance

There's fine integration between the drive units, which results in an informative and fluid midrange, something that comes to the fore with vocal-led material such as *Bang Bang Bang* by Tracy Chapman.

The Piegas revel in the texture and nuance of Chapman's passionate voice, while building a convincing instrumental backdrop around it. There's a fine level of detail throughout, coupled to a firm grasp of the song's insistent rhythm track.

That ribbon tweeter is a lovely unit, delivering the sort of speed and precision even the best dome designs merely hint at.

KEY FEATURES



Ribbon tweeter



Single wire



18cm bass driver

There's less body to treble sound than we're used to, but the compensation is a sea of low-level detail that's usually left unheard by most alternatives.

Move to the likes of *Yeezus* by Kanye West and the Piegas sound a little less comfortable. They're organised, insightful and pack a solid low-end kick, but sound a little laid-back when it comes to attack and dynamic punch at mid to high frequencies. The result is still an enjoyable sound, but one that isn't as exciting or entertaining as rivals such as Revel's Concerta2 M16 or ATC's SCM11s manage.

Make no mistake, these Piegas are capable speakers. They have a cultured and authoritative sonic balance that has plenty of appeal, and, even if they aren't the last word in excitement, they are still easily worth an audition.

WHAT HI-FI? says

Rating ★★★★★

SOUND	★★★★★
COMPATIBILITY	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★

VERDICT The Piega Classic 3.0s are capable of some impressive sounds, but are up against some tough competition

USE IT WITH

Rega Elex-R £925

This Award-winning amplifier delivers a combination of detail, dynamics and crisp timing no price rival can better