

Wilson Benesch is one of the iconic brands of high-fidelity, made famous by the use of carbon technologies previously reserved for aerospace industries, which the company originally used in the Wilson Benesch tonearm and turntable. But Wilson Benesch also produces specialist speakers, which the British brand manufactures using the same carbon technologies.

The design and manufacture of a loudspeaker's acoustics has obligations dictated by the laws of physics. There are very many parameters that must be taken into account and each manufacturer defines its products by the choices they make. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon that users ignore manufacturer's recommendations, either through ignorance or disregard. A criterion very often ignored is the minimum distance to be observed between the wall and the speakers. Too often, speakers are against or very close to the back wall when they really need 50-70cm or more to express themselves properly. A recent trend among manufacturers is to position the speakers bass-reflex ports on the bottom, which makes the positioning less critical vis-a-vis the back wall. Wilson Benesch, with its Square Series II, furthers the argument by adapting the design of its products to allow for the speakers in this range to be placed in the immediate vicinity of the rear wall.

for the speakers in this range to be placed in the immediate vicinity of the rear wall. The principal load of the Square is carefully managed by a passive speaker located at the rear of the cabinet, which also includes two ports opening in the base of the speaker. Its ideal placement is



anywhere up to four feet from the rear wall. In fact, the back wall distance can very simply adjust the bass level. In our room, we got the best result with the speakers about 8 inches from the wall, but it will of course be adapted to each particular situation. The Square 1 version 2 is a two-way bookshelf speaker that has three speakers and for once, can actually be used on a shelf if required. It is possible to have them near a wall without affecting its operation. However it is still preferable to place the speakers on quality speaker stands.

## Build Quality & Listening

**Construction:** The entire Wilson Benesch range enjoys outstanding finish quality, the first impression you get when opening the box is the varnish and quality of the veneers is impressive. We know that ten species of wood are available as well as black and white lacquered finishes.

The grill is perfectly neutral and offers all the guarantees of rigidity. You can witness the care taken in their manufacture, the speaker cover, which snaps on the front is made of two metal plates perfectly machined and sandwiching an acoustically transparent jersey. This original layout is far from the usual grilles, whereby the aforementioned jersey is more often simply glued in place. Every details of the manufacturing exude: very high end.

**Components:** Wilson Benesch manufactures its own drive units, both bass/mid, to master the ensemble's parameters. On the Square 1 V2, we find the 17cm Tactic and an ultra linear dome tweeter, which in hand is 25mm. The crossover is second order (12dB per octave), consisting of a polypropylene capacitor and air-cored inductor. The ensemble of components are audiophile quality, right down to the included link leads which are copper stranded cables of a very high purity, silver plated with Teflon isolation. The icing on the cake: the terminal and the filter are designed to enable bi-wiring.

**Bass:** We were surprised by the ability of the speaker to adapt to our demands in matters of bass. We can say having experimented, simply that, the alignment of the back wall determines the perceived bass level. Subjectively it also determines the sense of depth and the ability

# Back to the wall

## WILSON BENESCH SQUARE 1 V2

By Patrice Philippe

**View from below with two ports, four feet and on the rear side, the passive speaker above the terminal**

to drop the systems frequency. After some trial and error, we adopted a satisfactory position, which allowed us to obtain both serious low bass that remained very clean, crisp, tight and perfectly balanced with the midrange and treble.

**Mid-range:** As is often the case with small speakers and in particular the two-way speaker, where the bass and the mid is delivered by one woofer, the integration up to 5KHz is more pure. Therefore the low registers with the mid-range and the high treble with the mid integration is absolute. The Patricia Barber 'A fortnight in France' attests, voices and instruments are very clear and pure but rich in warmth, sensuality and refinement.

**Tweeter:** The tweeter frequency rises through the soft dome without aggressiveness, without gloss, but rather with beautiful precision.

**Sibilants** presented in the voices sound very natural. We played 'Musik wie von enema and iron Stern, Jazz Variants by the Ozone Percussion Group', which is a difficult disc to manage. The harmonics and extension notes of the speaker are very realistic and we perceive fully the nature of different materials on the constituent instruments. The metallic character in particular is precisely reproduced without stress or exaggeration. We also appreciate the integration of the treble; you never directly "hear" the tweeter, which is great.

**Dynamics:** The Wilson Benesch's are easy to handle and despite their 88dB sensitivity - which ranks among speakers of average efficiency - they are happy with watts in the framework of a small to medium room. However with our much more powerful amplifier, degradation of the dynamics has never been put in difficulty even at very high SPL. Dynamics are quite satisfactory and it remains as strong with weak signals, where the beautiful microdynamics give you the feeling you hear everything.



**Attack:** We enjoyed the accuracy of the speaker. The performance of the bass / midrange and tweeter perfectly aligned with phase, the result very nice percussion such as cymbals, but also guitar notes. The qualities of the attack are also delightfully presented on the highs in Tchaikovsky's Overture 1812 or the explosive cannons.

**Sound Scene:** Often we are able to obtain the most beautiful scenes in sound when the speakers are placed a significant distance from the back wall. Here, it is not possible since the Square 1 V2 is designed to be placed in the immediate vicinity of the wall. However, we found that the Square 1 V2 stereo image is wide and very realistic. As long as one closes his eyes, the sound stage extends deep beyond the rear wall.

**Transparency:** The bass of d'Ugonna Okwego from the album 'Reach de Jacky Terrasson' is clear and without confusion, low notes are clearly differentiated and the melody is very true and defined. Transparency is the meeting point, which enables us to perceive the tiniest details: Keith Jarrett and the album 'Rarum' CD1, track 'Book of Ways', whispers at us with great clarity.

**Quality / Price:** The Square 1 V2: These speakers are amazon and they deliver superb music. Perceived quality is

## Technical

**Origin:** England

**Price:** £1

**Dimensions:** 20 x 32 x 28 cm

**Weight:** 10 Kgs

**2 ported bass-reflex speaker**

**Bass / Mid:** 17 cm Tactic Drive Unit

**Tweeter:** Ultralinear Soft Dome

**Wilson Benesch Spec 25mm**

**Tweeter**

**Impedance:** 6 ohms

matched by the intrinsic quality and the care that has been taken in the design and the manufacture of components makes the product highly desirable. We can't say that the product is cheap, but the price is more than justified, because these speakers are actually big hitters. For those who want to go further, these remarkable small speakers open a wide universe of bi-amping which in itself is a unique opportunity presented by this speaker.

## VERDICT

The Wilson Benesch Square 1 V2 is a beautiful speaker, perfect finish and very rewarding. The departure from the concept that speakers must be placed away from a wall appeals to anyone who does not have the space to stick to this rule. The musical qualities of the speaker can be seriously adjusted depending on the distance they are placed from the wall, affording them a decisive advantage whenever the room is small. Ideal for urban dwellers, where these beautiful English speakers will provide many years of intense musical pleasure to their happy owner.

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|------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>CONSTRUCTION</b>    | ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <b>COMPOSANTS</b>      | ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <b>GRAVE</b>           | ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <b>MEDIUM</b>          | ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <b>AIGU</b>            | ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <b>DYNAMIQUE</b>       | ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <b>ATTAQUE DE NOTE</b> | ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <b>SCENE SONORE</b>    | ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <b>TRANSPARENCE</b>    | ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <b>QUALITE/PRIX</b>    | ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |

## SYSTEME D'ECOUTE

Sources : Lecteur ICOS Fado

Electroniques : Ampli ICOS Elsberg

Câbles : Absolue Créations (M)

Hi-Fi Câbles & Cie Super Maxitrans II (HP)