

Wilson Benesch Cardinal - 83 000 Euro

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# YOUR EMINENCE ASK'S YOU TO DANCE

The Cardinal is a costly, but also very enjoyable contemporary. It's kind of music-making is extremely pleasurable and remarkable to the extreme. In addition, he has mastered a virtually unique art form: the unrepentant rock-'n'-roll-confession

It is still relatively early in the evening. A beautiful late summer day comes to an end. The Jazz Club is darkened and somewhat jovial, as befits a decent music establishment. Lively conversation on the few occupied tables, cool drinks, light snacks. The band, who will perform tonight, should be a real surprise, but meanwhile they warm up in another room backstage.

Then, the local impresario opens the door – and yes the sound of the band exists before you! – it promises to be a musical experience with extra class. But first the impresario asks one more time before opening the door fully to the audience. Would you like to go outside now? Maybe for some fresh air? You can leave the jackets hanging over the chairs, we shouldn't be long ...

There is a slight frown on my part, but why not. The man is serious, he even accompanied me in person down the stairs outside into the courtyard. All this had an "educational background," he says with a mischievous smile.

As soon as we are then in the courtyard the sound of a jazz club fills the air, whilst we enjoy the setting sun of the last part of the day, the impresario speaks quietly as though talking into a phone. A few seconds later the

The full band begins to play, with a loose swing. Cardinal Wait a minute, I'm still out here? Should I listen through the open window? No this show cannot go on without me! I will not miss this band for sure!

Again, this certain smile. He then escorts me around >>>



>> the building past the stairs which approach the entrance into the club. Finally we make our approach back into the centre of the action ... The track is already in full swing, but still seems to be quite shy: The door to the room is still closed, and the air inside the alley is hot, it feels almost dimly lit as though only by the emergency lighting. Oh man, these jazz musicians!

### Lifting the Curtain!

You, dear readers, have probably already guessed: Of course, this is not a jazz club. And the great band comes from the CD, played over a hi-fi amplifier and hi-fi speakers. Because I am in the Taurus-Haus in Hamburg, on a visit to the German distribution partners of Wilson Benesch and Soudation and some other fine things. But Rene Tromner, the Taurus boss, for a good half hour staged a demonstration of sound which for all intents and purposes sounded like a live event. Paragraph 7

In any case the surprise succeeded. Of course it was already previously clear that at some point I would get to hear the object of my desire. Still, Tromner manage to fool me quite well for at least the first half hour of my visit. The music started by remote control. And quite honestly, at least for a short time it really brought the illusion of a live band in the room. The man is quite commedic and just for fun he implemented this fun filled introduction into the action. A real Jazz swing trio in the listening room? Why not indeed!

1 Your Eminence looks good: The Cardinal carries its mass in a 1.74m tall column



My experience, in terms of the live feeling goes well over and beyond what I expect from a “normal” HIFI speaker. But what is normal on a luxury, carefully considered and sensationally designed high-tech sound transducer such as the Wilson Benesch Cardinal?

After the curtain pushed aside and the light has returned to the room, stood facing us, his Lord, the speaker. The name Cardinal, apparently taken from the domed top of the transducer. And although, there is a subtle British humour to the name given to this speaker, which makes me smile a little, you cannot forget: Behind the name Wilson Benesch is serious engineering knowledge, each component in the design is typical of Wilson Benesch, all made with purpose and intent. Research at Wilson Benesch is complete to the most minute detail. >>

**2** Powerhouse: The 530 is actually Solutions “smallest” amplifier and proves to be more than adequate.

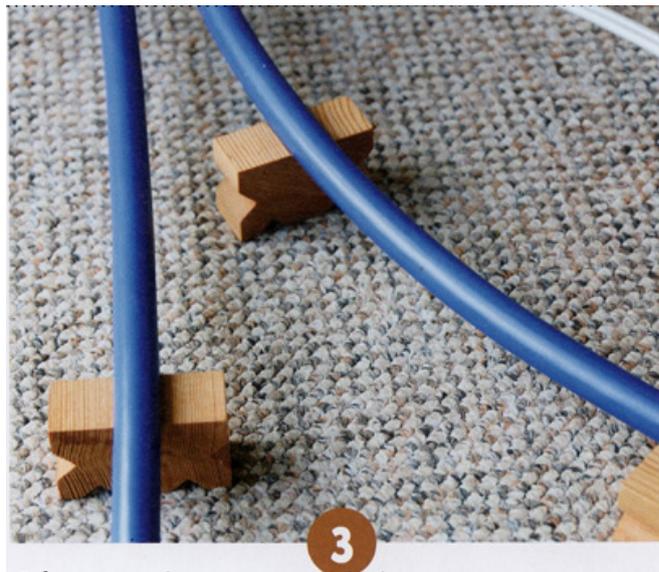
>> The Wilson Benesch flagship model has a comprehensive and informative white paper written by the engineers who designed it, which is presented to me. It outlines and explains the smallest structural details of the Cardinal. What, the white paper cannot explain, however, is how beautiful and attractive the speaker is. An acquaintance from the HiFi scene told me in advance that he could not stop his fingers from tracing the curves of the resonance damping carbon fibre and the high quality aerospace finish; on contact it feels almost rubberised, it's a sensational material for a finish. What's also apparent is that the Wilson Benesch designers managed to make the spikes and the base objects of real desire. Speaking of base: the mechanical design of the base plate, milled out of a solid block of aluminum has a separate chapter devoted to it within the white paper. The associated spikes also follow the WB principle of "Kinematic Location", again presented in detail with words and pictures. All combined the Cardinal weighs in at a total of 120 kilograms, locating kinematically to create a solid, wobble-free transducer. The Cardinal is a 2.5-way design; giving away no less than nine speakers; three of them forming the



Troika System inside two, precisely calculated and almost completely non-resonant shell, which in turn has two further Isotactic Isobaric Drive modules which support deep bass reproduction and rapid transient response. And, of course, the company has developed a perfectly integrated “cap” for the Cardinal using advanced 3D parametric design software. The Design Director, Craig Milnes makes a fascinating argument for the use of advanced materials technology in his presentation to the Tokyo International Forum ...

But instead of confusing you with the technical details of the White Paper or continue to fascinate you - both would be easily possible - I will now prefer expend a few personal remarks about his eminence, The Cardinal. Since as taurus unmasked a gorgeous well-tuned high-end system, proposing it was indeed a live band in the showroom, the listening experience was indeed truly great. First of all, I was amazed time and time again that the Wilson Benesch speaker could create incredibly powerful large dynamics so easily and almost off the cuff. Precisely – this is the mark of true Great speakers – even at low and delicate listening levels. Even at lower room-volume, and even still at “full bore” the Cardinal succeeds in representing music in a holistic scale. Granted, it is not one of the most important requirements of a high end speaker is making a top performance when having guests for afternoon tea, but it is simply gorgeous when he can do this aswell.

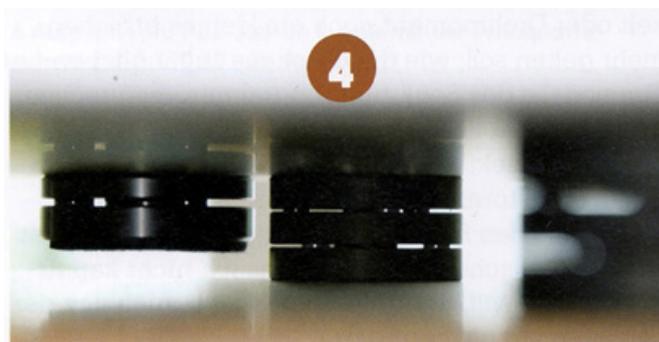
If you turn the volume up to nearly the full level capable by the amplifier, the performance gains a physical impact. But even with a forced gait, the Cardinal is disciplined and unobtrusive, there’s an orderliness, but also a playfulness. It invites you to dance. Your Eminence knows how to behave at all times, but does not put a limit on your fun. This is a rare characteristic and evidence of a true great.



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Of course the connected electronics are not not entirely innocent in this remarkable performance. CD players and amplifiers are in the shape and specification of Soulution, but the amplifier is by no means out of the top drawer of the Swiss companies product line. Quite the contrary: Rene Trömner “limited” us to the “smallest” model, the 530 amplifier. Of course, I must tell you right away that the “small” class, is still the size of a mini-bar and the weight of a middle-class car ... However the 530 excels, allowing a light ethereal air to the sound. Interestingly, during the ten, twelve

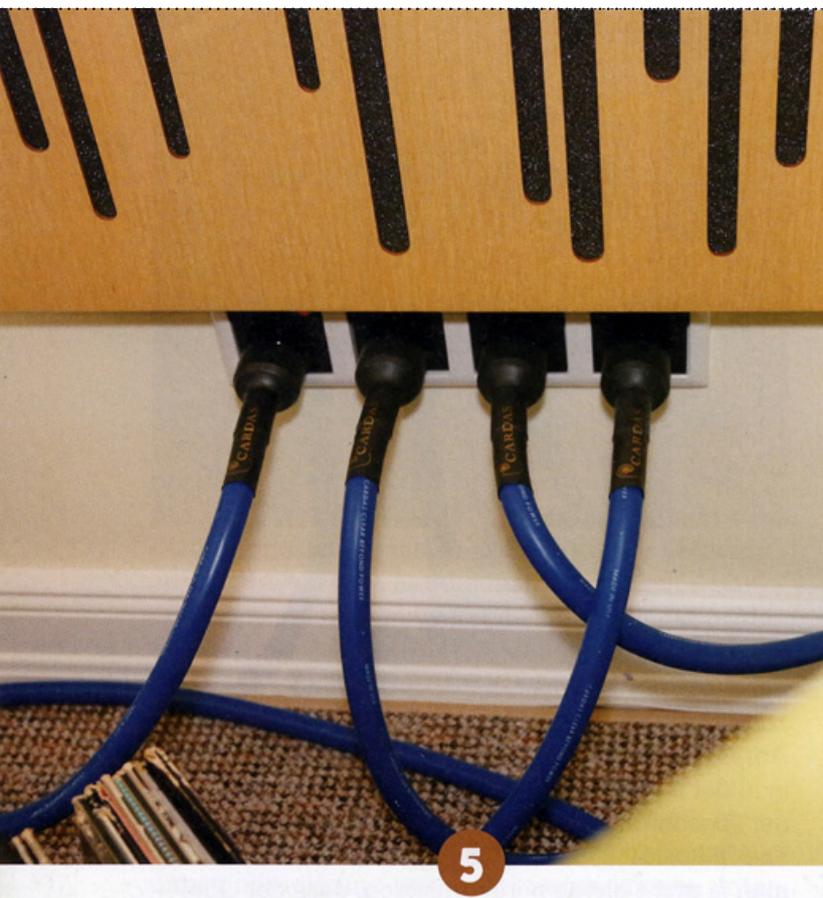
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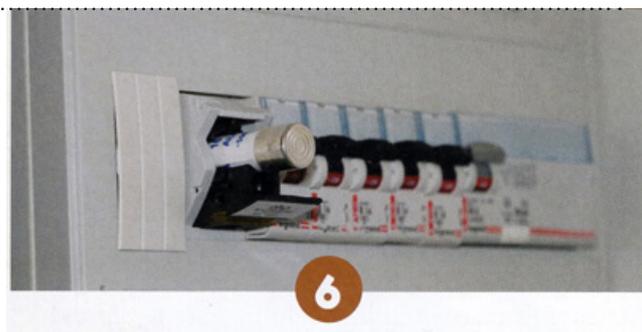
3 The devil is in the details? Also wooden cable carriers can contribute to superior performance.

4 Fine Tuning the CD player: special resonance coupling feet are installed to optimise the performance.



hours of unperturbed music hours, I never the desired for more. The plant and the Cardinal plays with simply amazing precision and is "lifelike". In terms of energy transfer, grip and torque, it is conceivable that there might just be a little more available, accessible from the top models of the Soulution portfolio. But I do not want to disturb the apparently perfectly fine-tuned setup in this room to find out. The sound is colorful, airy, harmonious in every respect; the performance is a musical gift that I do not want to over analyze and try and find fault. Instead, I simply as for the next CD.

- 5 Two in one: excellent Cardas cabling plus acoustic elements for the fine-tuning.
- 6 Already tried it? Special care has been taken to ensure the fuses at the front of the chain have been optimised.



Finally it remains to say, even after close examination the desire to touch the Cardinal is irresistible. Of all the great and grand speakers, on this earth, the Wilson Benesch is possibly the most beautiful. The awe-inspiring price here comes with awe-inspiring performance and a sensational dynamics, and not just an awe-inspiring look. So I make my musical confession through his eminence. Why? Because it leads directly, almost one hundred percent to the live jazz club.

## Wilson Benesch Cardinal

2-way Electrical, 4-way acoustical

**Sensitivity:** 90dB

**Impedance:** 6 Ohms

**Drivers:** 25mm WB Semisphere Tweeter, 1 x 17cm Upper Mid-Range WB Tactic II Drive Unit, 1 x 17cm Lower Mid-Range WB Tactic II Drive Unit, 4 x 17cm WB Isobarically loaded Tactic II Drive Units, 2 x 17cm Tactic Drive Units (Passive ABRs)

**Speciality:** High cost, precision engineered and manufactured multi-layered carbon composite monocoque and top.

**Finishes:** Silk Black Baffle, Spine and Foot. Bespoke Side Cheek options in a range of wood and high gloss finishes.

**Dimensions:** (w/h/d): 62/174/64cm

**Weight:** 120 kg

**Warranty:** 3 Years

**Price:** £55,000 (UK Retail)