

May 2014  
Munich Special



## Handmade in England for over 35 years

Harbeth was founded in 1977 by the BBC's chief loudspeaker engineer. True to that origin, it has remained at the forefront of innovation and technology. Harbeth's exclusive RADIAL™ cone material is unbeatable for clarity and that 'being there' experience.



## New model features

- Enriched musical experience to bring the concert hall home
- New crossover for a smoother sound
- New bass/mid unit with Harbeth unique RADIAL™2
- Exceptionally flat response

**The legend lives on!**

## Harbeth's new Super HL5<sup>PLUS</sup> launched

**Rarely does British loudspeaker legend Harbeth Audio launch new models. When it does, we can be sure that it will be something very special.**

The wraps come off a totally re-engineered version of Harbeth's best-selling traditional BBC-style monitor loudspeaker as the Super HL5 appears in revamped 'Plus' form.

Munich High End 2014 sees the world's best-loved speaker brand revealing significant improvements to this classic. It now benefits from the brand's exclusive RADIAL2™ cone technology as used in the mighty reference Monitor 40.1 and multi-award-winning M30.1.

Harbeth's designer, Alan Shaw, says, "The two cubic foot monitor concept put Harbeth on the map, over 35 years ago. To be honest, I've always been in awe of Dudley Harwood's original model which he developed as he retired as the head of the BBC loudspeaker R&D team to found Harbeth."

With so many effusive users around the globe and amid continuing critical

acclaim, up-rating the fifteen year-old Super HL5 success story was no easy task. "Every time the subject of updating this masterpiece has been raised in almost the same breath, a host of satisfied customers have cautioned me, 'don't mess with the perfect!' Only recently has technological advance paved a path to retaining all the old plus-points whilst genuinely improving this beloved model", adds Alan.



## First choice for Professionals

When professional audio engineers need the very best, they know they can rely on Harbeth. It's why Harbeth studio monitors are used to craft thousands of hours of radio and TV every year, including many top-rated shows screened around the world to huge audiences.



## Building on a legend

The Super HL5 Plus is the seventh-generation of the original Harbeth Monitor of 1977 – shown here in the launch advertisement published in *Hi-Fi News* magazine, April 1977.



The Harbeth company was founded on the back of Dudley Harwood's patent for the use of polypropylene as a loudspeaker cone material which, at the time, was revolutionary.

As the cone material is so critical to the overall sound, Harbeth abandoned the lacklustre sound of shampoo-bottle plastic about twenty years ago and moved on with digital-ready technology thanks to its proprietary RADIAL™ cone investigations. Nevertheless, each successive generation of that original, pioneering model has retained the same recognisable cabinet proportions and warm, involving sound.

There can be no greater tribute to a loudspeaker design than 35 years after its production, there are thousands of pairs in daily use at the heart of listeners' musical enjoyment.



## New technology gave designer an irresistible itch...

Three elements of the Super HL5 worked so perfectly together that they've been cloned from the outgoing model to the new. The cabinet, a critically-damped 'thin-wall BBC design', makes a perfect match for the new-generation RADIAL2™ bass/midrange unit. Likewise the main tweeter and super-tweeter.

As the designer, Alan Shaw, explained, "The drive units are so well balanced in their acoustic performance that I never even considered a fruitless search for trendy, eye-catching alternatives. Why re-invent the wheel for the sake of it? If sound quality is paramount, the designer should concentrate his efforts on teasing out and resolving peripheral

issues – when technology allows."

Every Harbeth design gestates only because technology has made a worthwhile improvement practicable, not merely on a designer's whim or fancy.

The Harbeth designer is under no commercial pressure to force the pace of development. That ensures longevity of the products and a widespread assurance that buying a Harbeth is a fine future-proof investment.

"Technology does not move in a linear path", adds Shaw. "It may be years, and indeed it has been years, since new techniques hinted at the possibility that the re-examination of a design would be fruitful."

This is exactly what

has happened with the transition from the Super HL5 to the Super HL5 Plus. "I wasn't looking to upgrade this speaker now – new technology just made the upgrade irresistible."

Is there ever a 'right time' to relaunch a much-loved model? How many designers have agonised over that issue?

Shaw's work on the Super HL5 Plus has taken the design to a new level and one step closer to bringing the concert hall home – something every Harbeth aspires to.

At this level of performance, the accumulation of a number of individually small design improvements equates to a very significant increase in overall performance.

### NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF SOUND

**Harwood Loudspeaker**  
Dudley Harwood was for many years a member and leader of the BBC's research team in acoustics. His published work has an authority few can approach in this field, and has laid the technical foundation which underpins many of today's successful British loudspeaker designs. He has now left the BBC and is starting to manufacture a loudspeaker design with several interesting features.

Despite his position as 'father of Bextrene', the design features a cone of an entirely different plastic, which does not require application of damping compounds, and thus preserves light weight and efficiency. This enables the speaker to produce a

sound pressure level of 107dB(A (1m) which is a significant improvement over comparable designs. Power handling is 100 watts programme and frequency response 50Hz-20kHz ±3dB.

The tweeter is the Tin-Son-Audax soft dome unit which is being used by Celef and the Sponder SAT with some success. There is also an unusual application of mechanical damping to the birch ply cabinet. Other aspects of the design are accepted 'BBC' style: 24x13x12 ins. vented enclosure; iron-cored inductors and polyester capacitors in the crossover; ±1dB unit sensitivity matching with auto transformer, and room acoustic damping.

Mr. Harwood claims that the new drive unit gives lower coloration as well as higher sensitivity than Bextrene, and suggests that this is the 'new generation' material, as far advanced on Bextrene as the latter was on paper. When one takes into account the commercial success and influence of the BBC LS 3/5 and LS 3/5A designs, plus the importance of other ex-BBC designs at Spendor and Charwell, to name but two, it is plain that Mr. Harwood's decision to go into manufacturing is of great interest and significance.

Price is expected to be about £200 plus VAT per pair, and the factory address is 2a Nova Road, West Croydon CR6 2TL.



Hi-Fi News magazine announced the arrival of the Harbeth Loudspeaker brand - 1977

## Harbeth.

Super

# HL5 PLUS



Designed and made in Great Britain



**Harbeth** the world's best-loved loudspeakers

Harbeth Audio Ltd, 3-4 Enterprise Park, Lindfield, West Sussex RH16 2LH, United Kingdom

T: +44(0)1444 484371  
E: sound@harbeth.co.uk  
www.harbeth.co.uk