



## 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. Its exclusive RADIAL™ cone material is unbeatable for clarity and that 'being there' experience.



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## Live-versus-recorded reveals all

**If you make only one new year's resolution for 2014, make it this... go out and listen to live, un-amplified music! It could be jazz, folk, small-scale classical, or orchestral – but, make sure you are hearing it first-hand and not over a PA system which is inevitably a second-hand sound!**

"I'm quite often surprised by how audiophiles perceive live sound when they have very little or no exposure to it", remarks Harbeth's MD, Alan Shaw. "One feature of hearing live music is that it is never fatiguing; you may not particularly like the music, or even the performance, but you don't leave the hall with a headache. So many hi-fi systems have such an incisive, cutting sound which leads to discomfort that can last for hours after exposure."

Even in the professional studio market there has been a trend towards harsher-sounding loudspeakers which give the illusion of greater resolution but these speakers are often bedevilled with multiple resonances which linger long after the note has ceased. They also superficially compensate, to some extent, for the noisy environments that

many audio engineers are forced to work in because proper studios are both expensive to build, physically large and can be oppressively dingy.

### Audio heydays

In the golden days of the BBC Research Department it was an easy matter to persuade musicians to perform in one room whilst listening to the playback over loudspeakers in the next: a direct comparison. Not one loudspeaker design in ten can pass this live-versus-recorded evaluation and the speakers that the public often choose (not being party to this comparative process), would tend to be those with the most 'exciting' and 'forward' sound, bearing little relation to the truth of the live performance.

Few of us have the luxury of private musicians willing to co-operate in such sessions, but we are all capable of using the human voice as a test signal. Play your own voice over the hi-fi and ask your family to say whether it really sounds like you. That's a test we've always done at Harbeth and it's devastatingly revealing!



## 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, and used for critical post-production work and archive restoration (pictured above).

[www.harbeth.co.uk](http://www.harbeth.co.uk)

The Harbeth sound *is* RADIAL™

## Online community for India customers



There's a new dimension to a popular audio forum since Harbeth India added its colourful banner to [www.theaudiophile.net](http://www.theaudiophile.net) creating a space for Harbeth users.

"New threads allow our customers and potential customers to share their experiences", explains Prithviraj Vedpathak of Harbeth India. "The more we spread the word on these wonderful products, the better".

## New address for Harbeth Estonia

Harbeth Estonia has moved to bigger, better premises at:  
 HiFi Studio  
 9 Türi Street  
 11314 Tallinn  
 Estonia.

The telephone number is +372 662 0511 and the website is now [www.hifistudio.eu](http://www.hifistudio.eu) Paavo Kiinros looks forward to helping customers old and new.



**Audiophiles were delighted at the sounds created during the recent hi-end show staged in Toulon, southern France.**

*Salon Son & Technique* was staged in the prestigious setting of the Golf Hotel La Fregate Bandol. Big names were present including, of



course, hand-crafted English speakers from Harbeth where centre stage was the multi-award-winning Monitor 30.1.

"The show was set in a rural paradise, with stunning scenery under a beautiful sun", explains Marc Chassonnery from Harbeth France. "As you would expect, the Harbeth demonstration was one of the best sounds at the show."

"A huge soundstage was generated by the Harbeth monitors with plenty of 'presence' and a real sense of being immersed in the music", explained one visitor. The Monitor 30.1s were coupled with a CX-7 e /AX-7e Ayre system, totally filling the 30 square metre listening room at the venue.

## Idyllic show setting on the Med coast

*French audiophiles revel in magical sound on the Riviera*

"Everyone who came along was amazed by such a big and natural sound. It was a wonderful weekend, with wonderful people and in a wonderful location," concluded Marc.

View an online show report by Culture HD magazine (link [here](#))



The scenery was as glorious as the sounds produced by the Harbeth loudspeakers.

## Christmas system is all go!

**Harbeth New Zealand reports that interest in all Harbeth models was high in the run-up to the festive period.**

Their final demonstration of 2013 was the SHL5 in striking tiger ebony (pictured). With LFD DPA monoblocks it made for a mesmerizing experience in the showroom.



# Oriental accolades for Harbeth family

*'Best Buy' status and Critics' Applause for Harbeth in Japan*

Japan's highly-revered *Stereo Sound* magazine has dedicated its *Critics' Applause* for 2013 to the award-winning Monitor 30.1 loudspeaker, while nominating three other Harbeth models for Best Buy Components 2013-14!

Four illustrious reviewers from the magazine acclaim the M30.1 which was nominated for *Stereo Sound Grand Prix 2013*. Onodera san speaks of the sonic improvements over its predecessor (the M30), notably the improved LF – an endorsement echoed by

"So many accolades for one brand is extremely rare."

Yanagisawa san. The M30.1's low-frequency richness was also praised by Miura san.

The high-end magazine's pages feature no fewer than **four** Harbeth models in its *BestBuyComponents of 2013-14* ranking, including three models in the world top ten of the same price category (¥200,000 to ¥400,000).

"This is an extremely rare occurrence", explains Sasamoto san of Harbeth Japan, "because so many Harbeth models won the editors' votes even in the same price range."

For example, the Compact 7ES-3 is awarded by Onodera san, who says of the speaker "truly for the music-lover", and an "outstanding ability

to surpass even top-end systems".

Also awarded in this category are the P3ESR and Monitor 20.1.

In the ¥400,000 to ¥800,000 section, the M30.1 is given eight stars.

Japan has always loved the Harbeth open sound!



In their quest to find the best audio products of 2013-14, the magazine highlighted no fewer than four Harbeth models.



## Festive spirit supports the local community in need



Every Christmas Harbeth selects projects in the local area which need support.

"We heard of a club providing a lifeline for a group of very elderly people which meets in the village hall but was in jeopardy because it couldn't fund increasing costs", explains Harbeth's Trevor Butler. "Alan was delighted to step in to help and ensure that the rent for 2014 was met. He's pictured (above) handing over the cheque."

Additionally, Harbeth was able to purchase a tricycle for disabled pupils at a nearby college. It is already being enjoyed (see photo below).

"And, just before Christmas we were able to provide, via the local Lions Club, a cooker for a disabled lady looking after five children", adds Trevor.



## Pop-topping Harbeth

**Harbeth's mighty Monitor 40.1 monitors were behind the absorbing sound of a BBC TV Christmas classic.**

When audio guru Tudor Davies mixed chart-topping *Top of the Pops* he needed some monitoring he could rely on. His faithful M40.1s were the natural choice.





## The designer's view by Alan Shaw

“I've always been aware that the design of a natural-sounding loudspeaker cannot be perfected in a laboratory. Nor can it be a team effort. Neither can it be open to a vote by well-intentioned friends, colleagues or audio journalists.

Such a process and the human relations involved result in the lowest common denominator – depending on the personalities of those involved and their vested interests or dominance.

If the loudspeaker designer can carry in his head the sound of at least the human voice, cello, piano and brass he should not need to consult with other people to turn that into a reproduced sound through his speaker design.

Natural sounding speaker design is an internalised feedback process to one individual. Dudley Harwood was the master of this iterative process and I was fortunate that his goals of natural sound were so effectively embodied in his early speakers that it set the parameters in which I also should work.”



www.stanprokopenko.com

## Audio memory is the key to well designed speakers

One thing which seems to bemuse many audiophiles is how the ear is so extremely non-linear. In fact, this should not be such a surprise since it is the most intensely studied organ in the human body, and has been since the beginning of the 20th century.

For example, have you noticed that when using a hair dryer you cannot hear the telephone or doorbell ring? This is an example of 'masking', where the loud, wide-band noise from the dryer covers up the quieter, narrower-band sound from the phone.

Likewise, as you turn down the volume on your amplifier, the bass notes rapidly diminish in perceived loudness until

what remains is a twittering squeak. Technically, if you measured the frequency response at the loudspeaker it is identical, regardless of the volume setting – but, to the human ear, the perception of the relative balance of bass, middle and 'top' are inextricably linked to replay loudness.

Similarly, in the so-called 'presence' region the ear's sensitivity increases to boost sounds that evolution considers important: speech communication and the approach of predators generating the 'fight or flight' response.

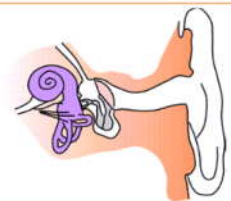
As touched upon in our lead story (see page 1), a loudspeaker designer intent on maximising his market could justify

peaking the loudspeaker response in that sensitive 'presence' region, creating a heightened arousal in the listener. By elevating him to such a listening state and holding him there, more 'presence' it will often be misinterpreted as greater involvement with the music. In actuality it is just audio trickery.

As a professional boxer would attest, living in such an excitable state leads to considerable fatigue, akin to listener burn-out. In audio, this burn-out is a serious problem with so many contemporary loudspeakers. We are seeing more sound engineers suffering because studio monitors can be the most fatiguing speakers of all.



Professional audio engineers know the value of fatigue-free monitoring loudspeakers from Harbeth.



The human ear is a complex, delicate and highly sophisticated organ.

Diagram by Iain Fergusson



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

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