

## LOUDSPEAKER CONCLUSION

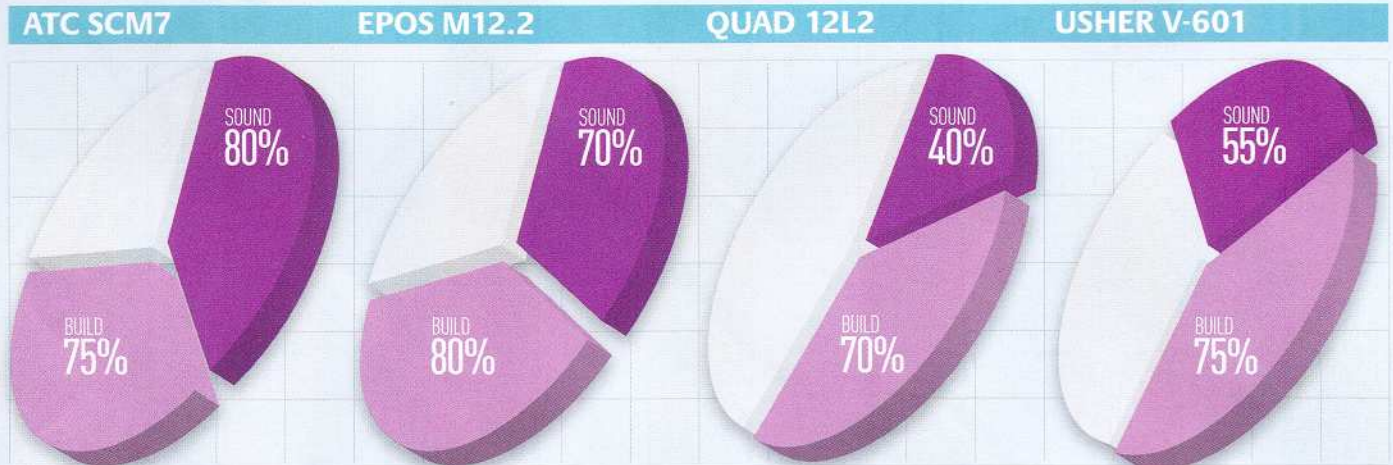
In a range of superlative finishes, the Quad 12L2 is a fast, engagingly detailed speaker, great for rock where a lot of electronic manipulation is involved. I have strong reservations, though, about its tonal accuracy on acoustic instruments, notably strings. Setup is especially critical and it does need bi-wired connection to a powerful amplifier. The Usher V-601 is more even-handed. The more refined

the amplifier the better – it's not just a question of power. The spread is somewhat exuberant and you don't feel much contrast between analogue and digital sources. But it too is engaging whatever kind of music is played. Handsome in appearance too.

A cut above these, Epos' M12.2 is a revealing, enjoyable speaker traditional in style which can create vivid three-dimensional soundstages. It deserves a

refined but generous amplifier – there should be synergy when partnered with one of Mike Creek's designs. It can look sombre in the darker finish but there's also a light cherry wood veneer.

Despite its hunger for power, the little nipper from ATC walks smartly away with the Blue Ribbon. The SCM7 wins for its smooth, well-timed delivery and the sheer convenience of size. ☺



### ATC SCM7

As with other ATCs we've reviewed recently, we were unable to match the SCM7's claimed 84dB sensitivity, our figure being 81dB, making this easily the least sensitive speaker in this group. But the SCM7 is compact, is the only model here to use sealed box bass loading, and it achieves creditable bass extension – so its low sensitivity is not surprising.

Its frequency response is one of the flattest in the group and the pair matching is equally tight at  $\pm 1$ dB. The SCM7 also presents a relatively benign load to its amplifier.

### EPOS M12.2

Not only did our measurement of the M12.2's sensitivity fall 2dB short of Epos's claimed 87dB, there was also an average 1.2dB difference between the two samples, over and above the  $\pm 2.0$ dB pair matching error. Frequency response error was high too at 6.5dB and 5.8dB respectively, principally due to a 'switchback' between 4 and 10kHz. Its peak, just under 5kHz, was associated with an obvious resonant ridge in the waterfall plot, although elsewhere the decay was notably rapid, indicating low energy storage in the drivers and cabinet.

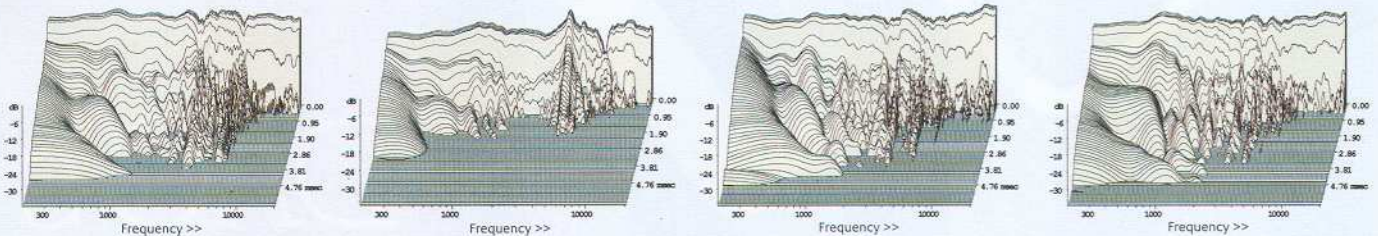
### QUAD 12L2

Although comfortably the most sensitive speaker in this group – actually 0.5dB more sensitive than the specified 88dB – the 12L2 blotted its copybook by displaying a 1dB disparity between the two speakers, largely accounted for by one having a significantly more sensitive tweeter.

Frequency response error was not the tightest nor – because of the tweeter disparity – was the pair matching. The high sensitivity is paid for in part by the lowest minimum impedance modulus in the group, and the least impressive bass extension.

### USHER V-601

Usher may be an unfamiliar name but its V-601 posted some of the best measurements of this illustrious group. Its larger cabinet allows it to combine an 86.5dB sensitivity – exactly on spec – with impressive bass extension (51Hz) without a lowered impedance, the 6ohm minimum modulus being the highest of the group. Frequency response errors were a low  $\pm 2.4$ dB and  $\pm 2.2$ dB respectively, and pair matching an outstanding  $\pm 0.6$ dB. Only in the cumulative spectral decay was it less outstanding, with low-level resonant ridges clearly visible.



TEST PARAMETERS / MODEL	ATC SCM7	EPOS M12.2	QUAD 12L2	USHER V-601
Sensitivity (SPL at 1m/2.83V)	81.0dB	85.0dB	88.5dB	86.5dB
Impedance modulus (min/max)	4.8ohm @ 4.9kHz / 57.5ohm @ 58Hz	5.1ohm @ 13.7kHz / 24ohm @ 94Hz	4.3ohm @ 194Hz / 21ohm @ 1.9kHz	6.0ohm @ 2.8kHz / 24.6ohm @ 20Hz
Impedance phase (min/max)	-65° @ 72Hz / 50° @ 46Hz	-37° @ 124Hz / 33° @ 30Hz	-28° @ 3.1kHz / 42° @ 1.03kHz	-38° @ 84Hz / 30° @ 19.9kHz
Freq. resp. error (200Hz-20kHz)	$\pm 2.4$ dB / $\pm 2.3$ dB	$\pm 6.5$ dB / $\pm 5.8$ dB	$\pm 3.4$ dB / $\pm 4.2$ dB	$\pm 2.4$ dB / $\pm 2.2$ dB
Pair matching (200Hz-20kHz)	$\pm 1.0$ dB	$\pm 2.0$ dB	$\pm 1.6$ dB	$\pm 0.6$ dB
Bass/Treble extension (-6dB)	55Hz / >40kHz	57Hz / >40kHz	73Hz / >40kHz	51Hz / 37.5kHz
THD 100Hz/1kHz/10kHz (90dB at 1m)	3.1% / 0.6% / 0.1%	1.3% / 0.4% / 0.2%	1.2% / 0.2% / 1.0%	0.4% / 0.4% / 0.2%