

At Home In Your Car

Coaxial speakers have long been a favourite of home hi-fi manufacturers. The ability to generate bass and treble within a compact footprint leads to a more coherent phase response across the whole audio spectrum. We investigate how a pair of coaxial speakers designed for car use would fair in a domestic situation.

Although we do have some scientific knowledge here at Driving Sounds, we are also a practical bunch who believe that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I have owned a pair of Kef Q70 floor standing speakers for some years now. They are connected to a Marantz PM 6005 amplifier and I use a Raspberry Pi with Hi-fi Berry digital sound card in it as a HD music source. I also run the family telly through the same system so the Kefs do take a bit of a pounding. Recently, one of the midrange speakers became very crunchy and unpleasant sounding and so I had the usual choice of bin them, fix them or try something different. I took the latter course as I have been wanting to review a pair of Audison Prima APX 6.5 coaxial speakers for some time but not found an appropriate vehicle to fit them to. The Kef's are OK but I have always felt they were built for home cinema rather than two channel and as that doesn't really interest me, I probably focused on the negatives. These include poor high frequency response and virtually no high mid-range at all, but bags of sub bass. The APX 6.5 receives consistently great reviews on the Four Car Audio website. The specification and technical info on the Audison site reads well, so I thought I would see if I could run them instead of the weird looking white septagonal coaxials in the Kefs. I decided that running them directly from the Kef crossovers would make the best comparison and was able to disconnect the capacitor that Audison use as a crossover in the APX's and connect each driver separately. Luckily, they fitted neatly into the same footprint as the original drivers although the mounting holes were in slightly different places which was no challenge at all really. On initial turn on, I was immediately impressed by the high frequencies. As all speakers require a bit of running in, I avoided listening to music for a good while and just ran them as telly speakers. The whole family agreed that dialogue was clearer and that the sound track to MasterChef in particular was really good. If you are not a regular watcher, I can thoroughly recommend it even if just for the clever sound track where bonks and drum beats are often synchronised with the chopping of a knife or other kitchen utensil handling. Very entertaining even if you don't like cooking programmes! A composer called Stuart Roslyn



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is involved alongside many other acts. I happen to know that Stuart is the proud owner of a pair of Mille Legend speakers too! As the Kefs are blessed with plenty of bass from an elliptical 6 X 9 speaker in its own ported enclosure within the towers, I avoided tracks with loads of bass for the audition. The Audisons are good down to 60Hz according to the published specification and with a triple wave surround ensuring good linear performance at high excursion, I can well imagine this to be true. There is also an acoustic lens over the tweeter to help with dispersion and off axis listening. This is a common feature in home audio too as not everyone is able to sit in the “sweet spot” critical listening all of the time. It is very important to enjoy music and not just listen to a system's technical attributes.

The Perfect Fit



Carl's
TOP
FIVE
AT HOME
TUNES

David Bowie -
Girl Loves Me
Arne Domnerus -
Take Five
Led Zeppelin -
Since I've Been Lovin' You
Ravel -
Bolero
Vecente Amigo -
Roma

“You really could live the music and the ambience.”

I started with a favourite jazz track of mine from the superbly recorded “Jazz at the Pawn Shop” featuring Arne Domnerus. I chose “Take Five” as it has a very busy drum solo in it which was going to expose any mid-range deficiency. It is also recorded live and the joy of this recording is that you can hear chatter in the background along with clinking of glasses and of course the obligatory applause after each soloist takes a turn. The separation on the hi-res rendering was the first thing that struck me. You really could live the music and the ambience. Close your eyes and you are at the gig yourself. The Audisons handled everything perfectly. Such clarity and never getting messy in the mid-range even on the very busy bits! Next up I went for “Girl Loves Me” from David Bowie's final album, Blackstar. Yes, there is throbbing low bass and deep kick drum but there is also fantastic balance all the way through the mid-range and high frequencies. The typical Bowie vocals sound more ethereal on this track than the up-front vocals I would normally associate with the great man. The snare drum has a very interesting quality harping back to 80's gated reverb yet far less reverb and short repeat echo instead. It sounds quite electronically produced

but is not uneasy on the ear. There is a guitar that shadows the bass and it sits perfectly with it, yet can be clearly heard in its own right. Again, the speakers are able to articulate every sound without becoming over excited or mushy in the middle. Finally, I revisited an old favourite audition track, “Since I've Been Lovin' You” from the remastered hi-res Led Zeppelin III. I often reference the squeaky kick drum pedal when using this track. This time, although it was there, I had to turn the volume up quite a way to hear it. This is not necessarily a bad thing, just different to many in-car listening experiences I have had. Otherwise there seemed to be a more rounded mid bass presence and the guitar solo really sang out. In conclusion, I can strongly recommend these speakers to those who own a car with 6.5” speaker positions. The dispersion is almost unworldly which is unusual at this price point (**£109.99 a time of going to press**) and they are definitely amongst the best coaxial speakers I have heard in this class. □