



# AUDISON PRIMA

## FIRST FOR SUB BASS

### Low Musical Bass From Audison Prima

The Audison Prima range of speakers and amplifiers was launched in 2014 to great critical acclaim. Now Audison has launched a range of complementary subwoofers and loaded enclosures that take Prima to new lows.

For listeners of fast-paced heavy beat music genres, sub bass is central to enjoyment whilst to some acoustic instrument listeners such as brass projection of the low-end is seen as unseemly and unnecessary. As subwoofers become smaller and more efficient, the two extremes are meeting at a blurred middle view. Bass in a car will be eaten up by the very act of driving and although some lows can be preserved with the liberal use of sound deadening materials, a subwoofer remains the best way to counteract the effects of road rumble. With acoustic music, especially orchestral, bass is used sparingly but with dramatic effect. The failure to reproduce it in a balanced way can remove much of the drama from a piece of music. In order to fit in with the sophistication and class of the Prima badge, any sub bass solution would have to be similarly sophisticated and “grown up” for want of a better phrase.

The Audison Prima range consists of “loaded” enclosures as well as subs without a box. Looking at the subwoofers themselves, these are a departure from the industrial beasts normally associated with high-energy low sounds. In fact, the Prima subwoofers are very compact indeed but don’t be fooled - they kick like an angry mule. Construction is very similar for each of the three models identified as: APS 8 R, APS 8 D and APS 10 D. A water-resistant compressed cardboard cone has an interesting

profile, as it is very shallow while featuring a “V” at its centre. The shape is specifically designed to ensure linear performance even at long excursions. The key focus of design was to move as much air as possible while keeping mounting depth to a minimum. A further technique to help achieve this was the mounting of all necessary cooling vents under the spider (a “convoluted” disc that dampens the movement of the cone and attaches between the chassis and cone). It is more usual to vent hot air from the voice coil via the rear of the magnet but this means that a considerable gap is required between the rear of the speaker and the enclosure wall. The result of this clever technology is a chassis that is just 79 mm in depth that can be installed right up against the wall of its enclosure.

Both APS 8 D and APS 10 D have dual voice coils and are designed for mounting in sealed enclosures with a volume as small as 7.5 and 12 litres respectively. The APS 8 R is designed specifically to work best in a reflex enclosure.

Loaded enclosures are designated: APBX 10 DS, APBX 8 DS and APBX 8 R. The enclosures are solidly built and feature handy push connectors or plug and play connectors allowing for flexible configuration and speedy removal if additional luggage space is required. Having heard the APBX 10 DS however, I feel it unlikely that you would ever allow it to be removed from your car for the sake of more shopping. In fact I would strongly recommend more trips to the shops with the double whammy of more time to listen to great audio and not having to live without this most desirable item!

The enclosures are carpeted and the sealed enclosures come with stand off feet with Velcro at the ends. This means they can literally be plonked in your boot space where they will sit without moving around. The feet can be fixed to the bottom of the enclosure, which allows for the actual sub to fire upwards or downwards which will have a significant effect on the sound.

The subs have been specifically designed to run with the rest of the Prima range and allow for perfect blending via the astonishingly flexible bit processors available separately or built in to certain Prima amplifiers.

My dislike of over-the-top bass is well documented. I am a musician in part and a music lover mostly. To overwhelm any element of a recording with another is a crime in my eyes (and ears). This does not make me anti bass. I think bass players are lovely chaps and want to hear their skills but bass synth and bass guitar are still supposed to be musical. Many sub solutions I hear take a lot of grunt to get them to speak and when they do, they only do it at a very narrow bandwidth and very loudly. My very first impression of the APBX 10 DS I heard in the Tesla featured elsewhere in this issue was one of perfect balance. The low-end was very, very low but allowed the bass and mid bass plenty of space to do their work. In fact I would say the greatest achievement of these subwoofers is their ability to reproduce very low bass without shouting! If you have a subwoofer in your car, play a piece of acoustic guitar music. A guitar in standard tuning will reach down to 83Hz (low E) however much lower tones are generated from the tone wood. With over zealous amplification such music, particularly live recordings are rendered unlistenable. Try "Signe" the opening track of Eric Clapton "Unplugged" or any well recorded live acoustic session. If you cannot enjoy the fidelity due to low rumblings and thumps then your sub bass is too rude. Guitar aside, there are many overtones and undertones created when musical instruments are recorded when playing together which can sound quite horrible if too much bass is deployed. "But I like bass music" I hear you cry. That's absolutely fine but too much can hide the music and leave you with just a very loud buzz with absolutely no music at all.

I have managed in my travels to hear two great installs featuring the APBX 10 DS. The first was the aforementioned Tesla. I threw a number of different tracks at this and the musicality was maintained at all levels. In this particular car the subwoofer was integrated with a Mille Legend speaker system and Prima amplifiers and bit processor. It faulted once while I was listening to a gentle acoustic-guitar-rich track, "Back To Forever" by Lissie. Here there were some low-end artefacts created by hands on tone

wood slightly over cooked. These were easily dialled out by reducing the subwoofer level on the DRC controller. I was stationary of course and this does make a difference and I decided to experiment with subwoofer level throughout the audition to find out what did and didn't work. The track begins quietly however the close-mic'd vocal does excite the subwoofer by way of plosives particularly in the phrase, "sunburnt faces" at around 52 seconds. When the "chugging" guitar comes into accompany the spacious piano there is more low-end excitement prompting me to find a level that stopped this from detracting from the rest of the sounds. With this done, the low cello becomes important to the emotion of the song rather than just annoying. The track crescendos at around 2m30s when more low-end is introduced but the balance is so perfect, I can still hear Lissie's fingers causing the strings on her guitar to squeak (some people call this sound "seagulls"). A gentle kick drum at around 3mins adds a lot of low-end drama to what is a very gentle track. Folk who listen to this

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kind of acoustic-based ballad would I guess instinctively feel that they could live without a subwoofer altogether. I would encourage you all to get one of these Prima subwoofers. It can make the difference between joy and heaven in my opinion.

For complete contrast I played "Starboy" by The Weeknd ft. Daft Punk. Now this

reaches very low. With subwoofer level control left where I had put it during the Lissie track above, it articulated very well and was perfectly balanced. The track features the bass heavily, but there is plenty of other stuff going on. All of which deserves to be heard! I had to turn the sub level up for purely scientific purposes. I was expecting a horrible noise but no; the bass was now too loud insofar as it was beginning to shake my liver loose from its moorings but the other elements of the music could still be clearly heard! I returned the subwoofer control to whence it came and the track was just as enjoyable with the sub bass blending perfectly with the front end rather than being in anyway detached or distant.

To say I was impressed with the Audison Prima APBX 10 DS is an understatement. It is almost the antithesis of all those horrid overblown sub bass "experiences" I have suffered throughout 20 years of listening to car audio. Even at full chat I did not feel even slightly nauseous. The articulation of really low notes was precise and perfectly well balanced with no hint of unfortunate peaks or resonances. All in all, this is the most musical sub bass I have ever heard in a car. Bloody good job Audison!

Find out more about Audison Prima subwoofers at: [www.fourcaraudio.co.uk](http://www.fourcaraudio.co.uk)

