

Be My Guest! – Ian Guest’s noisy Puma

I am always thrilled when asked to look at a car belonging to a musician. Ian Guest is a piano teacher/performer. He has been playing the piano since the age of seven, and enjoys it more than ever.



“When I asked Ian for suggestions of a venue for us to meet, he had no hesitation in recommending Croydon Airport.”

Ian, who originally hails from Sheffield, now lives in South Croydon with his Slovakian partner, Anna. When asked for suggestions of a venue for us to meet, he had no hesitation in recommending Croydon Airport. On checking out the associate website, we were just as keen. Housed in a beautiful Grade II listed neo-classical building with an aeroplane on stilts outside. Even though it does not operate as an airport any longer, it does have a visitor centre and open days for visitors to get a flavour of the place, much of it is intact, offering a great trip down memory lane. The airport opened in 1920 and operated until 1959. It was used heavily by the military during

the Second World War as a hub for flying military personnel off to do their duty, before reverting to its original purpose as a civil aviation airport.

Ian was quick to recommend it as the building is well known to him. Following 25 years of working in banking, Ian joined an insolvency practice that operates out of offices within the airport, which has since been subdivided into multiple offices.

Following this, Ian took a role teaching children with special needs, eventually building on his musical talents to teach

privately as well as performing in a 3-piece function band. He expressed his frustration having to try and teach over Zoom during COVID. A frustration I am only too aware of, having tried to teach guitar this way for the same reasons.

He tells me he is not massively into cars, but he travels frequently to see his mother in Upton-on-Seven, some three hours’ drive away. Ian previously owned a Honda Civic, 1.5L Turbo. This he had fitted with a subwoofer and amplifier by his local car audio specialist and FOUR MASTER partner BCSS. Proprietors Brian and Brian Jr. both have a long history in the

car audio business and have seen trends come and go. Along the way, they learnt how to make modest subwoofers sound enormous. They have done exactly this with a pair of Hertz Energy ES250 10” subwoofers, which came from Ian’s previous car – Always a good way to save money. A custom enclosure with a slotted port houses these beasts and was made to fit into the redundant spare wheel well. The subwoofers are driven from a Hertz Dieci DP 1500 monoblock amplifier. The subwoofers are wired in parallel, resulting in 500watts RMS coming from the DP 1500. This is typical Brian Jr. If you ask for bass, you get BIG bass! Having said that, this box was

remarkably well-behaved and blended seamlessly with the high-class front end.

Ian had previously had a pair of Morel speakers fitted to the front of his car, but was not entirely satisfied with the sound, so as part of this upgrade project, he had them moved to the rear and replaced with Audison Thesis Tweeters (1.5 II violin) and Woofers (TH 6.5 Sax).

He admits that he allow Brian to decide on the front speakers. As Brian and Ian know each other from previous interactions, Brian now has a good feel for the sound Ian looks for.

Both front and rear speaker sets are run from an Audison Forza AF M12.14 bit amplifier. Brian bridged the amplifier to the front tweeters and woofers and then bridged the remaining



“*Ian tells me he is not massively into cars*”





Ian's Top Five Tunes

- Hysteria - Def Leppard
- You Don't Fool Me - Queen
- You don't see me - Keane
- One Summer Dream - E.L.O
- One Love- Bob Marley and the Chineke Orchestra



channels to run the rear speakers passively, offering plenty of power all around.

An Audison Forza DRC AC remote controller is installed neatly on a vertical panel in the centre console. It is configured to control volume/bass and to change between setups on the Forza amplifier. It looks very much like it is meant to be there, adding panache to the dash!

From the mounting of the Forza amplifier under the passenger seat to the beautifully stitched panel that the Hertz Dieci DP 1.500 amplifier is mounted to, the whole installation has been carried out with the care and attention we have come to expect from a FOUR MASTER partner.

The front tweeters and woofers sit behind the B&O badged grilles, leading me to wonder why Ian had chosen to upgrade them in the first place. Ian explained that the B&O system was OK, but left him wanting something more musical. A common complaint from those who have replaced so-called dealer upgrades. Unlike many, Ian had purchased the vehicle with the B&O system fitted rather than having specified it on a brand-new vehicle. My advice? Never choose the upgraded audio when purchasing a new car; they always fall short of expectations, regardless of the badge on the grille. You will get much better value by taking your car to an aftermarket specialist.

Ian invited me to climb into the driver's seat, and we began working our way through tracks he wanted to play me.

The first track he played me was “One Love” by Bob Marley and the Chineke Orchestra. This is a reworking with an orchestra playing over the original recording. You can clearly hear the crisp percussion from the original track blending perfectly with the orchestral work. The effect is nothing short of stunning!

I found that although the image was centred around the middle of the dashboard, it played very wide. This is not always the case with this kind of setup, where the listener can find themselves looking to the left to find the centre of a relatively



narrow image. I suspect the presence of a decent pair of rear speakers helps to develop the width, even though they were hardly turned up.

Next, we played Hysteria by Def Leppard. I have to admit to not being quite so impressed with this. A lot of 80's rock tends to feature huge amounts of audio compression. It was a fad in the day. Gated reverb on snare drums and all the mids squeezed dynamically. The track was slightly bass-heavy; however, there was a good top-to-bottom balance. It just didn't seem to suit this particular track as well as it did with Bob Marley.

Finally, Ian played “You Don't See Me” by Keane. I was a little puzzled by the lack of dynamics and wanted to compare Ian's Spotify rendering with one from Qobuz. As is so often the case, the difference was incredible. We could suddenly hear tom-toms playing during the introduction. These were not discernible when listening to Spotify. The whole system came to life. I think it was a “wow!” moment for both of us. I think this exemplifies the need to get as close to a pure source as possible, particularly with this level of equipment.

“*The whole system came to life. I think it was a “wow!” moment for both of us.*”

Ironically, a Qobuz Studio package costs about a quid more than Spotify, but sounds like it should be much, much more!

The system, when fed with the right source, is incredible, as it should be when Audison Thesis speakers and Forza amplification are installed by an expert.

A huge thank you to Ian for giving up his precious time. Hats off to BCSS for their knowledge and expertise, and to our welcoming and accommodating staff at Croydon Airport, Graeme and Sarah. ○

Equipment list

- AUDISON FORZA AF M 12.4 bit - Amp & DSP
- AUDISON DRC AC - Digital Remote Control
- AUDISON THESIS TH 1.5 II Violino - Tweeter
- AUDISON THESIS TH 6.5 II Saxo Woofer
- HERTZ DP 1.500 Mono Amp
- HERTZ ES 250 - Sub Woofers

