

## OPERA SP CALLAS £1,695



### VERDICT

OPERA SP CALLAS £1695

OPERA LOUDSPEAKERS

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### FOR

- great with Rock/Dance
- taut upper bass
- timing

### AGAINST

- treble brightness
- slightly 'cuppy' presentation

## MEASURED PERFORMANCE

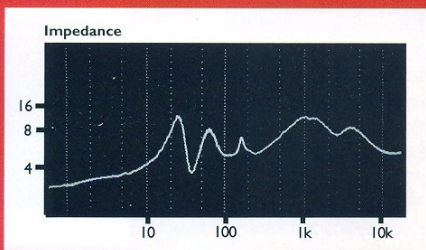
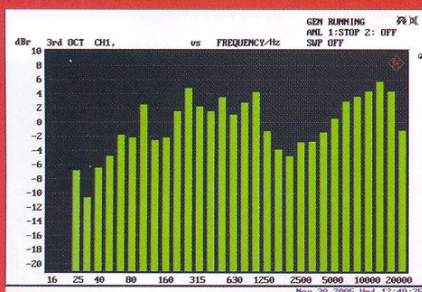
There's a large crossover dip in the frequency response of this loudspeaker, that will mute lower treble, softening the sound. This will lessen detailing but make for an amenable sound. However, the tweeter peaks up at 12kHz by no less than +6dB above midrange level and this will certainly be audible as a sense of divorced sharpness.

Bass output rolls down relatively slowly compared to the other loudspeakers, reaching down to 40Hz (-6dB) in our test room, low enough to stimulate a 25Hz mode. Near field analysis confirmed the lower rate of roll off and good bass depth.

As a load the Operas were largely resistive, varying between 6ohms and 8ohms, definitely amplifier friendly in nature. Sensitivity was a little low at 85dB so amplifiers with some power will be needed.

The Opera SPs will sound midrange warm / smooth, have sharp treble, but also good

apparent bass extension. I wonder whether the dip and peak is deliberate or due to drive unit variability. NK



Here's a beautifully crafted, handsome loudspeaker that hails from Italy. With its neatly finished real-wood cabinet to the leather front baffle, to the sturdy binding posts at the rear, the Opera says "high-class!" All loudspeakers in the new Callas range have been designed – Callas say – to “recreate the emotion and pleasure of listening to music; to provide a stable and focused musical soundstage in three dimensions with correct timbre, dynamics and detail; and to do this with no listening fatigue”. Lofty claims to be sure.

How do they go about achieving this in the Callas Super Pavaroti then? First of all the cabinets are extremely inert – a rap of the knuckles proves that. Dimensions are a room friendly 1000x146x260mm, and weight is 17.5kg each. The cabinets contain two 4.5” bass drivers manufactured from polypropylene, one 1” forward radiating fabric treble unit, and a 1” rear radiating treble unit which is again a fabric type, with a neodymium magnet. Frequency response is quoted as being 40-20,000 Hz, and sensitivity at 88dB. Nominal impedance is 4ohms.

### SOUND QUALITY

The Callas SP proved to be an exciting match for the Naim power amplifier, with its punchy and upfront sound. Sly and Robbie's 'Make 'Em Move' had the sort of bubbly character which makes listening to music a lot of fun. It might not have been strictly accurate, but it engaged me with the performance, which is a quality rare in many designs. There wasn't a great deal of real low-down bass grunt, but what was there was both taut and tuneful.

Treble was a little on the bright side – which seems to be quite a common occurrence these days – but it did increase the adrenaline on rock music and dance in particular. Black Sabbath's 'The Wizard' sounded wonderful through the Callas SP and had my feet tapping all the way through the song. The rasp of the harmonica at the beginning of this track was very realistic and imaged out of the speakers quite splendidly.

It was the same situation with Toni Braxton's 'Spanish Guitar'. Her voice was lovely and smooth, with just a hint of cone coloration to mar things slightly. This manifested itself as a slightly 'cuppy' quality on vocals, but by no means stole my attention from the positive things this speaker was doing elsewhere. Again upper bass was nice and taut and propelled the song along nicely.

Classical wasn't quite as successful. For the most part it was still an enjoyable rendition, but that treble could impart an unpleasant peakiness to stringed instruments on Wagner's 'Lohengrin', and trumpets could sometimes verge on the shrill side. The presentation was a tad on the thin side, highlighting a somewhat recessed midrange, and could have done with more body and a little more tonal colour. For the most part though string tone was generally on the sweet side unless the going got rough. **JM**

### NOEL SAYS

Initially, the Opera Super Pavarotis came across as the best balanced loudspeakers within our group. With supple but fulsome bass that went satisfyingly low, they really delivered a bass tune, without the huffing and puffing we encountered from others when faced by Sly and Robbie. There was a warm midband that sounded clean and easy, if a little wreathed by the slight murk that characterises plastic cone drivers. Initially, treble was obviously pronounced but tolerable. As listening extended though I became less comfortable with the intrusiveness of the tweeter - especially on high energy Rock. If this was tamed, the Operas would truly sing. **NK**