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If you are hunting for a largescale sound to fill a large cinema room, then Quadral's flagship Aurum Titan range might be just the ticket. But you'll need a large bank balance, too...

QUADRAL, A GERMAN loudspeaker brand with a deliciously Teutonic approach to engineering, has been selling its top-flight speaker line for some time. So much so, that its flagship Aurum Titan floorstander – named after gold (Au) in the periodic table of elements – is now into its eighth iteration. Simply put, these are as good a speaker as Quadral currently offers, and their approach showcases a fantastically rare grasp of both ends of the audio spectrum.

While only a few speaker manufacturers specialise in sub-bass systems that can make you experience fear by profundity and pressure alike, and some produce speakers with the most breathtakingly realistic and clear high-frequency extension and control, it's not often you find a brand that is brilliant at both. In some cases, this is due to the different requirements of the hi-fi industry influencing the product. For, despite the use of cannon in Tchaikovsky's legendary *1812 Overture*, speakers made mainly for music simply do not need to recreate the sound of a million dollars' worth of hydrocarbons going boom in *Tropic Thunder*. Quadral's flagship array, however, aims to deliver across the entire frequency range, and suit both hi-fi and home cinema fans alike.

Let's talk tweeters

This multichannel system can be yours for approximately £25,000. That's hardly pocket-change, but you do get so much for your money.

Firstly, all the cabinets (bar the subwoofer, of course) bear wonderful tweeter technology. Very subtly different from front to back, yet equally impressive. Ribbon tweeters always make me quiver with anticipation.

On the Aurum Titan VIII floorstander and the Base Titan VIII centre channel, the tweeter is a 4in-tall folded aluminium ribbon, that looks like ruched fabric, held between two magnetic bars. These, it's fair to say, aren't

cheap to manufacture. The rear speakers in our array, the Montan VIIIs, use a similar tweeter – a magnetostatic isodynamic driver, very much like the old Infinity EMIT (Electro Magnetic Induction Tweeter). Both types reach up to a very respectable 65kHz, which should equate to utter effortlessness in the audible zone, plus the arguable benefits for overtones and 'unheard' ultrasonic harmonics that users of super-tweeters will speak in favour of.

Both the large Titans VIIIs – and they are awfully imposing, weighing a substantial 88kg each – and the equally chunky centre channel employ a regular-looking 6.5in midband unit. Looks can be deceptive,

'This array offers no few than eight 10in drivers– whichever way you look at it, that's a lot of low-end'

though. This is a highly developed proprietary cast-chassis driver fashioned from an exotic cone material called ALTIMA. An alloy of aluminium, titanium and magnesium, it should really be called Altimg, but that isn't as snappy. Quadral alone is licensed to use this, and it's designed to offer properties of stiffness, lightness, and rapid thermal dissipation.

Bass by the bucket-load

The same material is used for Quadral's proprietary 10in drivers – and there are eight of these across the five speakers in the system. Whichever way you look at it, that's a lot of low-end, even before you consider the subwoofer: eight 10in cones should ensure a hefty sound pressure level. Furthermore, as well as being ported to the rear

Adam Rayner has been writing about speakers for *HCC* since the very first issue – but only recently admitted that he has a subwoofer in his bedroom



Don't try and install these in a regular living room...





from a cleverly back-swollen enclosure (in order to show a narrower front panel to the world), these bass drivers are front-loaded, too. It may not look like much, but on the centre and the towers, the 10in cones sit within a little 'cave'. This is enough to acoustically support the drivers some more and the benefit is a richer, warmer bass with greater power.

Both the Titan VIII and Base Titan VIII have a +2dB/-2dB passive crossover switch system on the back, next to their paired binding posts, for room tuning. The Montan speaker, however, doesn't, and feels like more of a purist stereo product. Although

'The scale and sheer weight of the Titans' lower ranges is matched by a superb treble detailing'

Quadral is happy to partner these with the Titan floorstanders, those looking for a more compact surround speaker might want to investigate the standmount Altan VIII. As well as its ribbon tweeter and Altima drivers, the Montan's standout design element is the alignment of its bass driver, angled inwards in what Quadral describes as a pressure chamber/reflex configuration. A benefit of this is that it allows the Montan to have a slimmer front baffle.

Getting down to it

Performing LFE duties in this package is the brand's Orkus R subwoofer. It uses a ported enclosure, 500W amplifier and a downward-firing 12in long-throw (24mm) driver. Connections include a balanced XLR input for high-end setups, and it sports a neat design, with a metal faceplate bearing its name.

Off all the speakers, the Orkus R is perhaps the least imposing. You cannot hope to accommodate this six-strong lineup sensibly in anything other than a dedicated – and large – cinema room. Big and vaguely beautiful, they can be ordered in two shades of oak, plus cherry, gloss black, white or even custom lacquer finishes. Our system was supplied with the Montan Viii's in Oak Nature real-wood flavour.

This is yet another array (like Bowers & Wilkins' Diamond series) that required me to leave my own demo room and head elsewhere for the audition. I just don't have the space to do them justice. The venue, a premium cinema room, was laid on by Birmingham install outfit Home Cinema and Beyond – thanks for the hospitality! I arrived to see the Quadral's ready to



The Titan VIII's bass drivers are made from an aluminium, titanium and magnesium alloy, while its rear panel (top right) allows a sneak peak at the crossover technology; the Montan VIII is dual rear-ported (right)

rock, plumbed into Marantz separates via Chord cabling.

Ethereal delivery

Why do so many folks adore Celine Dion? I ask because I politely endured a little slice of her warbling before I could reach into my Blu-ray bag for my own material. We stomach her music because of the sheer production excellence her concert material gets – I was immediately in the audience with a perfect level of realism. From the most ethereal, breathy highs that can separate a dozen violins' strings, to an almost impossibly hilariously visceral bass, via that annoyingly perfect soaring voice of hers, the Quadral setup's performance was superb. I found myself wanting to hear more of her, which isn't something I thought possible.

Then I was shown a clip from *Avatar*, the first arrival in the jungle of Pandora, and the

Montan surround speakers woke from their slumber. I know the soundtrack to James Cameron's sci-fi inside out, but have rarely experienced the entire soundscape so detailed and rich. The lemurs running through it from front to back make little catty yelping sounds, and it was easy to hear that some are closer than others.

This is followed by a chase sequence involving a growling beast and frantic crashing and breaking of branches. It was instantly huge and terrifying. I felt the creature's growl deep in my chest and the floor of the room throbbed as a large tree got decimated. Yet it was all delivered with perfect clarity – this is one of the sweetest, richest, high-fidelity systems I have been lucky enough to try.

The Aurums offer a huge, effortless sound. The monstrous scale and unstrained sheer weight to the lows and low midrange is matched by a treble detailing that is

SPECIFICATIONS

QUADRAL AURUM TITAN VIII
DRIVE UNITS: 1 x aluminium ribbon tweeter; 1 x 6.5in ALTIMA midrange driver; 2 x 10in ALTIMA bass drivers
ENCLOSURE: Three-way, with pressure-chamber loaded and ported low-frequency section
FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 16Hz-65kHz
SENSITIVITY: 90dB
POWER HANDLING: 500W
DIMENSIONS: 310(w) x 1,390(h) x 579(d)mm
WEIGHT: 88kg

QUADRAL AURUM BASE TITAN VIII
DRIVE UNITS: 1 x aluminium ribbon tweeter; 1 x 6.5in ALTIMA midrange driver; 2 x 10in ALTIMA bass drivers
ENCLOSURE: Three-way, with pressure-chamber loaded and ported low-frequency section
FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 25Hz-65kHz
SENSITIVITY: 90dB
POWER HANDLING: 500W
DIMENSIONS: 800(w) x 385(h) x 438(d)mm
WEIGHT: 48.5kg

QUADRAL AURUM MONTAN VIII
DRIVE UNITS: 1 x ribbon tweeter; 1 x 6.5in ALTIMA midrange driver; 1 x 10in ALTIMA bass driver
ENCLOSURE: Three-way, with pressure-chamber loaded and ported low-frequency section
FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 25Hz-65kHz
SENSITIVITY: 89dB
POWER HANDLING: 300W
DIMENSIONS: 270(w) x 1120(h) x 448(d)mm
WEIGHT: 40kg

QUADRAL AURUM ORKUS R
DRIVE UNITS: 1 x proprietary 12in LF driver with paper pulp cone, with 12mm XMAX (long throw of 24mm in all)
ENCLOSURE: Ported enclosure with down-firing driver
FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 20Hz-200Hz
ON BOARD POWER: 500W RMS
REMOTE CONTROL: No
DIMENSIONS: 400(w) x 437(h) x 500(d)mm
WEIGHT: 31.6kg
CONNECTIONS: Paired phono sockets as L/R input; two passthrough phono outputs; balanced XLR input

HCC VERDICT



Quadral Aurum Titan 5.1
 → £25,000 Approx → www.quadralgb-ie.co.uk
 → Tel: 01785 748 446
HIGHS: Excellent build quality; heavyweight, full-range sound performance
LOWS: Not the easiest cabinets to accommodate; price

Performance ★★★★★
Design ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★



just superb. A Michael Bublé recording (*Another Day*) hammered home the point. The mix was endowed with a great sense of space and I could hear all the production, from the delicate vocal reverb to the applauding audience.

It may be an animated film but *Wreck-It Ralph* is high art as far as I'm concerned – partly because of its fantastic DTS-HD Master Audio soundtrack. I spun the Blu-ray on the Marantz UD7007, beginning with the sequence with Ralph at a support group for videogame bad guys, and as it moved into the action, the film's catchy music oozed up and out of this system with layers I had never heard before. Then onto the land between the games in the Game Central arcade. There's a huge swell in the soundtrack as the characters leaves their game to go and quaff a beer, and this practically lifted me off my comfy recliner.

The Quadral's loved to be played loud and provided a sound that was just enormous all round. When a firework is let off at a birthday party in *Wreck-It Ralph*, it's shot out of the rear right channel, and the Montan VIII sent it flying with breathtaking impact and realism. Floorstanding surround speakers? It could catch on...

As for LFE, well, while I had the Orkus R woofer snuffing around the low frequencies, I wasn't able to tell exactly what it was doing, as it was so well blended and working in addition to the octet of 10in drivers in the other cabinets.

All-round proposition

Even without the sort of extensive and careful tuning-to-taste that you'd undoubtedly give a system like this, its excellence shone through during my audition. The Quadral's worked well on quite 'normal' (as against exotic) front-end electronics and amplification – their high sensitivity helps – and are beautifully made to offer a real sense of pride in ownership.

Simply put, if you are looking to make a cinema room where a movie's monsters sound terrifyingly real, yet still have its score move you to gentle tears, then these top-end cabinets are one serious proposition. They offer an amazing all-round performance that will impress anyone at any listening level from sensible to apocalyptic, and offer a wonderful, near holosonic ability to place detail and convey emotion.

This is a true reference system of clever design, beautiful execution and, dare I say it, good value for the first-class level of performance it provides. The front floorstanders may be unfeasibly large, and the centre and rears are hardly small, but there's no arguing with the system's sonic delivery ■

The Orkus sub provides a balanced XLR input for compatible processors