


FIDELITY

YOUR EQUIPMENT. YOUR MUSIC.



SAME HERE!

At long last I can throw out a couple of my deep-seated prejudices. Suddenly, QUAD from QUADRAL is no longer so far away...

Sometimes covering up is a good thing. For example, I think that noise permeable material is great: When it is stretched over a suitable frame it can cover several speakers if they start to look like a chassis collection. This type of material can also be used to cover up a wall and hide the speakers, which in turn will permit “objective listening” and eliminate many audiophile preconceptions. However, until I install such an acoustically permeable wall in my music room (or in the office), I will continue to use a simple alternative for my late night listening, so that I can continue to fully concentrate on my music and the sound: I’ll just turn out the light!

This gives me a material wall as well as a light-switch by my side: My initial contact with the Quadral Aurum Wotan VIII was in daylight and this was more or less a functional check to ascertain that everything was technically correct. I found everything to be in order as well as a pair of astounding qualities that, quite frankly, I would never have expected from Quadral.

Quadral? This is what I found...

Deco-object?

People who do not position their speakers correctly should be punished!

WHY DON'T YOU HAVE
A NOISE PERMEABLE
CURTAIN? THEY
REALLY DO LOOK
GOOD!

BIANCA DICHTL

**Real Cable
inside**

AURUM WOTAN VIII

120/200 W 33...65.000 HZ 4...8 Ω

quadral
MADE IN EUROPE

CE

Tests and dazzlement

In my view Quadral was the absolutely dominant scene player at the height of the HiFi scene in Germany as from the end of the seventies and up to the middle of the eighties. Quadral, they were the “big player”, the powerhouse, the test winners for the subscribers. All of which didn’t seem to matter to me at the time. I gave my heart to HiFi early on, in fact I changed over lock, stock and barrel to the high-fidelity coming out of Great Britain, where Linnatic were on the offensive and Naimie were one and the same. Quadral was not on my personal HiFi radar at the time as it did not have “Made in Great Britain” on it. Yes, I was completely dazzled back then. I was young and broke, with many opinions and even more prejudices!

Flagship demos

Today I am older and wiser and I discarded many of my old prejudices a long time ago, yet I still turn the light out when listening to music. For a considerable time now I have been listening to a system that sounds really good, even though it is not from GB.

However, my direct experience with Quadral can be easily explained. It has been restricted to a pair of private “flagship demonstrations” with classic, head-high flagship systems provided by the company. These mainly took place in acoustically critical surroundings and were dominated by blatantly overstrained amplifiers (many gaudy Japanese test winners) and DJs (who were fans of many of the test winners). I kept these demos in mind not as audiophile recommendations, but more as specific references as in practise the printed

data sheets supplied with the amplifiers no longer listed full coverage of the leading qualities of the reproduced sound. Reading and understanding them were often two completely different things!

What is different here?

This is precisely the reason why I am more impressed and ready to sit on the sofa at any time and listen to these slender white speakers. Yes, I am now using Quadral. It’s not just the Quadral sound, more about how I came to get to know the brand. In fact the superbly clear mid-ranges, on which everything else is based and can develop cleanly, somehow sound slightly British to me! Actually, I am of the opinion, at least for the moment and as I am constantly reminded by various monitors, that I value the smooth poignancy, even though no conceivable bass areas are produced. Furthermore, it is different here. The bass is good, even very good indeed: Crisp and deep at the same time, it harmonises perfectly with the mid-ranges. Everything is bundled together from high up right up to the top: The very pronounced and clear yet not over-fancy high ranges are adequately integrated into the overall acoustic image. This Quadral system with the long name is normally called the Wotan VIII – or by its even shorter name: W8, which sounds as if it has come out of a mould. If there was a sound permeable wall between me and the W8 and I had to guess where it came from, I would probably say Great Britain.

Performance must never be flawed

With a broad selection of music under my arm and a pair of hot amplifiers close-by, I can feel the sound from the Wotan VIII. As it is controlled by an excellent valve amplifier (Audiomat Solfège, report in the next issue of FIDELITY), the Quadral projects a deep and wide platform that is surprisingly evenly illuminated but only slightly curved yet it is really widely spread. Large orchestras remain cleanly focused and precisely defined in big rooms with excellent reproduction in Fortissimo as well as effecting the correct

height, when the crescendo of the orchestra instruments feels as if it has filled the room and the tonal range virtually reaches the ceiling. It can only come perceptibly closer if, for example, a massive amount of percussion is used or if there is no limit to the volume control for rousing rock and funk titles. As before you do not have to worry about the dynamics when sudden constraints are applied, as they can only affect the speaker indirectly.

As far as I can see, dynamic limiting is applied up front inside the amplifier and with 45 watts per channel this means that they are driven at the limits of their performance anyway. The Wotan VIII generates its deep and rapid bass from the volume, which cannot be described as excessive, and this can normally only be realised at cost to the overall efficiency (I am eager to hear what the test laboratory has to say about that). W8 cannot be called an efficiency marvel, as it is really a relatively small upright speaker (not even one metre high), but with additional qualities.

If used with a Synthesis A100T (see FIDELITY No. 3, issue 5/2012) then the dynamics are quite different. Even though the strong Italian does not quite match the subtle sophistication of the French, both of them fly past the post. After a double dose of rock’n’roll training I released the Synthesis from its training obligation: with ZZ Top and “Cheap Sunglasses” and the aforementioned clockwise rotation. I find the Wotan VIII’s clean reproduction of the different tone characteristics from the two valve amplifiers eminently respectable.

Multi-room for beginners

A perfect intermediary for both worlds is the Dartzeel CTH-8550, my favourite power amplifier. It combines the harmonic closeness of a good valve (even if it is not used) with the sovereign power of a really huge transistor amp (over 300 Watts on 4 ohms if required). The worry-free Quadral manages this upwards quality jump with ease and presents itself as being “larger” than it actually is, whilst sounding even more liberated than beforehand.

All-round quality

Dual-terminal with standard cable bridges, low tuned bass reflex opening

Small, but powerful!

The two lower dome drivers are responsible for the bass

SPEAKERS

In the meantime the Wotan has found itself a temporary job as a “multi-room” component: When nobody else except me is in the house and I have a little to do here and there I always open the door between the music room and the corridor and turn the amp up. The best test is to flood the whole house with music and this is based on solid experience: The system will then reveal its true self. In a worst case scenario the acoustic sound breaks up immediately in front of the door to the music room (or separates, depending on the conditions) and your pure musical enjoyment is soured with every further step you take away from there.

The Wotan passes these small tests with distinction and wins stars. The Road To Ensenada by Lyle Lovett (Edel/Curb 78232), for example, is left to run right through and this refreshes me with a varied mixture of schmaltzy country & western and sharp up-tempo swing with big-band sound. Lovett’s guitar solo in “Private conversation” sounds as if the maverick Texan was playing live and practicing for a gig. Famous! The astounding all-round performance of the Wotan makes you want more. Back in the music room I can listen to it “properly” once again: on the sofa, sat in the stereo field. And with the light off please!

Luxuries

The Flat Earth by Thomas Dolby (Parlophone/EMI CDP 7460282) has just come my way, literally: The 1984 disc was lost during a move and it has now tumbled out of a side pocket and returned to my high-fidelity life. What a funky production this really is! Dolby plays the crazy button-pressing professor who controls his melodic keyboard

park. The Wotan understands this and is able to produce the original “digitally interwoven” tone of the eighties as well as the continually surprising complexity of this tricky, funny work absolutely clearly and distinctly, both loudly as well as quietly. I am deeply impressed once again.

Is there nothing for me to complain about? Well the W8 cannot be described as Prince Charming, euphony is alien to it. It is unflattering, honest and dangerous at the best. The combination of sound from several cool sources might also be one “brilliant” idea too many. The ribbon tweeter, which has not really been mentioned up to now, as it has been superbly integrated, might be a little too flippant if extreme peaking occurs.




Slim silhouette
The very low Wotan masters the volume needed to overcome the depth of your housing

Presumably it is only the amp that is at the limit or else your ears are being overloaded. Spikes, which are not needed with these excellent speakers, will have to be ordered separately (free-of-charge) as they are not included in the original package. But these are just mere gimmicks. The Quadral Aurum Wotan VIII is an unexpected and well-priced highlight – very well made in Germany!

■ Text: Cai Brockmann; Pictures: SZ, IS



Cai Brockmann's music tips Easygoing: **Hans Theessink** and **Terry Evans** play harmonic acoustic blues, duets and top sounds on “Delta Time” (Blue Groove 2220) with Ry Cooder! Needs concentration: **Erich Wolfgang Korngold's** “Sinfonie Fis-Dur” (Chandos 9171) grows with the quality of your system.



Quadral Aurum Wotan VIII

3-way speaker, bass reflex
Impedance: 4 Ω
Styling: High-gloss black or white; wooden cherry veneer, natural or chocolate oak
Size (W/H/D): 20/93/43 cm
Weight: 20 kg
Guarantee period: 10 years
Price per pair: 2600 €
www.aurumspeakers.com