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Q Acoustics 3050i | Stereo speakers | £649 | whf.cm/3050i

# "Clearer, cleaner and punchier than ever before"

**FOR** Punchy and musical; spacious presentation

**AGAINST** Nothing of note at this price



If your love of bass and big sound is paramount in your search for new speakers, you may find yourself looking at pair of midrange floorstanders. Few pairs offer that kind of heft while matching the best comparable standmounters in every other regard, but there are some... such as these Q Acoustics 3050is, for instance.

Regular readers of *What Hi-Fi?* won't be surprised to see five stars next to Q Acoustics' name - not only have both the 3010i and 3020i standmounters in the brand's 3000i family already bagged maximum stars, their predecessors, the 3050s, also won an Award last year.

## Steadily evolving

The 3050is are more evolutionary than revolutionary, in both performance and aesthetic. For the latter, there is the addition of a fourth colour finish and a stylish chrome bezel around each driver.

But there are some advancements upon the predecessors they replace. As with the 3010i and 3020i, cabinet rigidity has been improved - P2P (point-to-point) cabinet bracing piles extra support to the parts that require stiffening to make them quieter; the baffle is thicker to support the tweeter and mid/bass driver; and traditional terminal panel cut-outs make way for embedded sockets within the cabinet.

The 3050is' 20mm soft dome tweeter has also been decoupled from the baffle via a suspension system, isolating it from vibrations from the two sandwiching 16.5cm woofers.

Unique to the 3050is in the range, however, is Q's use of HPE (Helmholtz Pressure Equalizer) technology, which was first introduced in its high-end Concept 500. Essentially, this is a tube filled with damping material inside the cabinet, which absorbs energy and reduces resonance.

## Effortless concentration

The Q Acoustics 3050i's performance isn't short of energy. Echoing their predecessors' musicality as well as warmth, smoothness and scale, they are also noticeably clearer, cleaner and punchier.

We start with the wild groove of Jack White's *Corporation*. The 3050is keep it all

The 3050is can be serious, but never without a sense of fun

in check, clocking different dynamic signatures and tracking overlapping instruments in a spacious, orderly soundstage so that nothing feels like a mere footnote. It is, importantly, an interesting delivery, the 3050is' predilection apparent as we flit between genres.

Even with more ambient tracks, such as Gas's *Rausch*, these Q Acoustics have the subtlety to pick out textures and discern dynamics without combing over intricacies.

With effortless concentration, they ride the piece's undulating waves and underlying techno beats, the latter taut, punchy and punctual through the 3050is' woofer. The Q Acoustics' ability to anchor even the deepest, most foreboding notes



allows them to communicate threat and peril effectively.

*Texas Midlands* by Nick Cave and Warren Ellis is also a great advert for floorstanders of this calibre, allowing these Q Acoustics to extract greater detail and reach further into the low end than just about any standmount alternative.

Likewise, the tribal drum pattering in LCD Soundsystem's *How Do You Sleep?* reveals the Q Acoustics' low-end agility in all its glory.

Thankfully that talent doesn't come at the expense of the higher frequencies. With Suede's *Filmstar*, Brett Anderson's vocal lifts and lurches between the dense electric instrumental as he belts out his cynical lyrics, showcasing the 3050is' rich midrange, while there's crispness to the leading edges of the tangy guitar lines that reflect the recording's thorny production.

## Plugging a gap

The 3050is are a pair of speakers you may only need to hear for a few minutes before making a decision on which finish suits your room best.

Q Acoustics has squeezed more performance into its mid-level towers than ever before, albeit at a higher price (the 3050s launched at £500). In doing so, it has comfortably helped fill an important price gap between Fyne Audio's five-star F302s (£399) and Monitor Audio's 2017 Award-winning Silver 200s (£1000).

With the 3050is, Q Acoustics has reaffirmed its position within the midrange floorstander market. We shouldn't imagine you'd be too surprised if they featured again in a few pages' time.

## KEY FEATURES



Dimensions (hwd)  
102 x 31 x 31cm



Weight per speaker  
17.8kg

## WHAT HI-FI? says

Rating ★★★★★

SOUND ★★★★★

FEATURES ★★★★★

BUILD ★★★★★

**VERDICT** The 3050is are full of energy and even better than their predecessors - Q Acoustics has come up with the goods.