



The Coincident Super Eclipse III Loudspeaker

by Jason Kennedy

Coincident Speaker Technology is a Canadian company based in Ontario and run by a gentleman who basks in the name Israel Blume. Israel is one of those guys that you come across from time to time in this industry who could not find the perfect loudspeaker to meet his, clearly discerning, needs. So, undaunted by the fact that some of the greatest minds in hi-fi had been unable to produce the perfect loudspeaker, he decided to have a go himself. As the Coincident website puts it "Blume put his over twenty five years of audio and music experience to work to conceptualize a loudspeaker that would reproduce music with no obvious or distracting perversions." Now where's the fun in that! After all isn't this whole audiophile thing a perversion; shouldn't we just be listening to the music rather than the kit?

But I digress; Israel wanted to combine the best attributes of cones and electrostatics and produced his first speaker in 1993. The Concentric monitor as it was dubbed had a cabinet built out of MDF rings so as to create high stiffness and to reduce internal standing waves. This speaker, however, was apparently aesthetically challenged and expensive to make not to mention insufficiently sensitive for SET amplifiers. But Israel got hooked on the standing wave thing and went to great lengths to come up with a more practical cabinet design that minimised this particular evil, a process that resulted in him patenting an

asymmetrically walled enclosure design that is claimed to eliminate the sonically deleterious effects of standing waves.

He also set about creating cabinets that were inherently resistant to resonance by using tuning rather than damping techniques. This has been approached by employing inch thick MDF hardwood' with a spline joint construction technique and a CAD bracing system. Coincident doesn't use damping in its cabinets but raises their resonant frequency to 350Hz, which Israel claims is nearly four times that of most other cabinets (which he puts at 80Hz). Cutting through the creative use of language you can take it that the cabinets are stiff and

heavy while the lack of internal damping should keep the sound nice and lively

These are not exactly novel claims, although closer examination of the Super Eclipses (including picking them up) suggests that Coincident have more right to make them than most. But what really hits you when looking at the specs for Coincident speakers is the uncommonly high nature of the impedances they present to your amplifier. The Super Eclipse III has a nominal impedance of 14ohms which when combined with its 92dB sensitivity

makes it, on paper at least, one of the easiest loads in the speaker world.

And this is not even the most sensitive speaker in the

range, an honour that goes to the marvellously

named Total Victory

a model which combines a 10ohm impedance with 97dB sensitivity and that can be driven

by what Israel rather aptly describes as 'flea sized amplifiers'. Not that these things are ever all that small!

These high impedances are achieved by wiring the drive units in series, an approach that necessitates using the crossover to eliminate potential phase problems at low frequencies. Coincident even goes so far as to say its network irons out the dips and bumps in the impedance modulus. The sensitivity is achieved through judicious driver selection and relatively large cabinet volumes.

The Coincident portfolio consists of two ranges, the Eclipse series of which this is the middle floorstander of three (there is also an L/C/R surround bookshelf model) and the UHS series (ultra high sensitivity) where you will find the nine driver Total Victory II and the remarkably compact Triumph Signature. At present the latter range is not available in the UK probably because distributor Simon Mantle doesn't fancy having to shift the TVIIs 200lb bulk.

The Super Eclipse III is a pretty substantial speaker itself, weighing in at 96lbs (43.6kg) and standing 42inches (1.06m) tall it features a mere five



► drive units. The impedance never drops below 10 ohms making it one of the most triode friendly speakers to come my way - although typically there was no triode amp on hand to take advantage of the fact at the time!

Starting at the top, the driver array consists of a Scanspeak Revelator tweeter, which is the same driver that sits on my reference Living Voice OBX-Rs, though listening to it in this speaker you'd not necessarily guess as much. This is a one-inch silk dome with a double magnet assembly built into a substantial aluminium front plate.



It was chosen for its impressive combination of high sensitivity and high power-handling and is

claimed to have a remarkably flat and even response up to 30 degrees off axis.

The midrange drivers that sit either side of the Revelator are 5inch SEAS Excel units with carbon fibre cones and substantial magnet structures supported by a cast chassis. These are arranged in a classic D'Appolito style, or at least that's what appears to be the case. Apparently in this instance it is a refinement of the standard woofer-tweeter-woofer arrangement. Israel investigated the D'Appolito arrangement and found it wanting in terms of polar

response, his investigations resulting in a number of conclusions that can be seen on the Coincident web site. In essence he discovered that in order to achieve an even polar response with this driver orientation considerable attention has to be paid to driver size, driver spacing, front baffle area and crossover frequency/slope, the precise details of which are part of a patent application that is currently pending.

The bass is taken care of by two side firing drive units whose provenance is not indicated beyond the fact that they are "the finest 8" woofers money can buy". They sport chunky two-inch voice coils and "a huge magnet assembly" to drive the 'specially treated' paper cone. They are mirror imaged in the two cabinets so you can have them facing in or out depending on the nature of your room and the proximity of boundaries.

As my listening room is not exactly cavernous I pointed them in and this worked a treat.

The beautifully finished cabinet features a sealed enclosure for the mid and high frequency drivers that has the advantage of mechanically rolling off the midrange units, while the bass section is reflex loaded. The crossover is a first-order design that is hardwired and connected to the drivers with 6N OFC cable.

The claimed result of this particular recipe is a response that extends from 28Hz to 35kHz (presumably -6dB) and an ease of drive that makes the Super Eclipse usable with a seven-watt amplifier.

I didn't have such a thing to hand but the Sugden A21SE was still in the area and proved to be a remarkably good match, its smoothness balancing out the slightly enthusiastic balance of a less than fully run in speaker. With all this sensitivity this is inevitably a dynamic sounding loudspeaker, it can produce energy without even trying and

as a result instruments and voices have all the power and range that they need to express themselves. Esbjorn Svensson's piano has body and great tone, the kettle drums on Tom Waits' *Shore Leave* are stunning while his voice has a tremendous precision of image, sitting there raw and dirty full of hope and despair.

This is also a high-resolution loudspeaker. Coincident have succeeded in getting some of the transparency of an electro-static out of this multi-drivered design.



It's by no means as smooth as a 'static but then again not much is, but it

does go some way to revealing as much detail and does a great job of delivering solid, three dimensional images. The fact that Adem is doubling up his own vocal on the opening track to *Homesongs* is abundantly clear, and that voice has an uncanny, visceral realism and presence in the room. Of the two reference speakers I use, the OBX-R and the ATC SCM150A, the Super Eclipse is closer to the latter thanks to its tremendous dynamic capabilities and power handling. This despite the fact that it

shares both a tweeter and a philosophy of friendliness to triode amps with the Living Voice.

The balance is quite up front and, while it did smooth somewhat over the course of the review, by the standards around this price point this is not the most sophisticated sounding speaker. I had a Gamut L5 in around the same time which has the ring radiator version of the Revelator tweeter. It produced greater finesse and precision albeit at the expense of a shortfall in dynamics and sheer entertainment ability.

If there's space in a recording, then you know all about it. Just as you know about the scale of the studio thanks to an ability to reproduce an image with real depth and that extends beyond the edges of the speakers. Eric Dolphy's sublime *Hat and Beard* is a case in point, and Patti Smith likewise delivered a stunning physical image from her *Horses* album, the gritty raw edge that she specialises in coming through in no uncertain terms. The quality of playing is also clear, thanks to tight timing on the speakers part. It seems to revel in less smooth records for some reason; possibly it's the nature of the detail it prefers, the slightly dry upper-mid sounds that indicate a less than silky production but more often than not a great performance. Zappa's *Fifty Fifty* is bounding with raucous energy, his grungy guitar coming through in all its glory. Here the timing wasn't quite as hot as I'd hoped but this may have been an amp thing, the last time I played this was through the remarkably nimble Euphonic Research amps which would have been great with the Super Eclipses - if possibly too much of a good thing.

Where they do relate to the OBX-Rs

is in tonal rendering, bass instruments in particular have a richness and depth that is entirely convincing. The resolution in this department matches that higher up the range and proved quite transparent to the felt nature of the drum sticks used on Don Rendell and Ian Carr's fabulous 'Black Marigolds' (the highlight of the *Impressed with Gilles Peterson* LP). The dynamic range of the speakers allowed this track to build from its quiet beginning to a torrent of sound without any sense of strain, which was very nice.

With Steely Dan you can hear the preference for the upper-mid a bit more clearly the cymbals, vibes and piano on 'Gold Teeth' are that little bit more obvious than usual and the *Katy Lied* album sounds just that little bit less polished. But the bass is gorgeous, tight and deep and seemingly uncompromised by the positioning of the drive units. David Thomas and his *Two Pale Boys* turned in the performance of the review for my money thanks to the way these speakers do live recordings.

Their ability to reproduce scale, energy and presence at a sensible volume level comes into its own with a good live event. It must be something to do with the balance because the *Meadville* album has never sounded this good or this real before. Whatever it is it works and it does so at the proper SPL when driven by a 30watt amp. It doesn't get a lot better than that.

It's just possible that with another 100 hours on the clock the balance of the Super Eclipse might sweeten up but

even if they don't change at all they are some of the most gripping and entertaining speakers that triodes can play with and living rooms can live with. Not necessarily the flattest speaker out there, they are beautifully integrated. They can produce prodigious energy levels and have truly gorgeous bass too, which is very rare for what is not a huge speaker by enthusiast standards. Unlike many speakers coming from across the Atlantic they are neither hard to drive nor tubby down below. Instead, they actually offer an unusual and entertaining alternative to the majority of UK offerings making them a welcome addition to the audio landscape. Their sheer enthusiasm is infectious and if you want to rediscover the joy of music they make it very easy indeed. ➤



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Type:	Three-way reflex loaded loudspeaker
Driver Complement •	
Tweeter:	25mm silk dome
Midrange:	2 x 125mm carbon fibre midrange units.
Bass:	2x 200mm treated paper woofers
Frequency Response:	28hz - 35khz (±6dB)
Impedance nominal/minimum:	14/10 Ohms
Sensitivity:	92 db @ 1m -1 watt
Power Requirements:	7 watts - 300 watts
Dimensions (WxHxD):	203 x 1060 x 406mm
Weight:	43.6kg each
Finishes:	Natural cherry or red cherry to special order
Price:	£4,750

UK Distributor:

Musicology
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Manufacturer:

Coincident Speaker Technology
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