



Eaton rifles

As a classic from the seventies returns, **Chris Ward** jumps off his scooter, removes his Harrington and pumps up the jam

It's 1974, we're in flared trousers, ABBA has just won Eurovision with *Waterloo* and the long-established Tannoy brand has brought out the High Power Dual (HPD) loudspeaker range, including the Arden, Cheviot and Eaton models. At the time, these speakers were designed to give the studio monitor experience to home hi-fi enthusiasts and soon earned critical acclaim. Over 30 years later and with the Scottish brand under new ownership, Tannoy has introduced a Legacy range, featuring updated Arden, Cheviot and Eaton loudspeakers all built in the UK.

The Eaton is very much the 'baby bear' of this trio, but is still a

The Eaton provides genuine studio monitor accuracy that tells it like it is

substantial standmount loudspeaker. At 20kg it has disproportionate mass for its size. The walnut veneer is beautifully finished and the speaker has an air of high-quality furniture. Removing the refined puce-coloured grille reveals more treats for the eye. Central and proud is a 254mm dual-concentric paper pulp driver featuring a twin roll fabric surround and no dustcap. The tweeter within is a 33mm aluminium/magnesium alloy dome that utilises a tulip wave guide. Beneath this substantial driver is an elegant tweeter adjustment panel, complete with subtly engraved engineering diagram. Moving the brass screw connectors enables the user to adjust treble levels and roll-off to perfectly suit their environment or preference. Twin ports in the generous MDF and plywood laminate baffle complete the facade, creating a purposeful and timeless look that is modern and fashionably classic at the same time. The enclosure is made of very high-density chipboard – solid wood is extremely variable – and

plywood bracing and damping within the box has been well thought out.

Around the back, beefy, bi-wireable binding posts accept all speaker cable connections. Intriguingly, there's a fifth binding post that provides a ground point that can be connected to an appropriate ground connection on an amplifier. This is a nice touch and could be a boon for those that live with less than perfect mains or in areas of significant interference.

I experiment with the Eaton on Atacama Moseco and older Heybrook HB1 stands and connect up a refurbished Inca Tech 'The Claymore' amplifier via Black Rhodium Foxtrot speaker cables (HFC 412). For sources I use an original Townshend Elite Rock turntable with Timestep T-01MC phono stage (HFC 371) along with Shanling CD-T100 HDCD player via The Chord Company Shawline interconnects (HFC 412). Being front-ported, the Eaton isn't too fussy about proximity to a rear wall and I position it with a small amount of toe-in. I experiment with treble adjustments, but decide the factory settings are spot on. The speaker sounds a little tight from the factory, so it gets a good extra run in.

Sound quality

Spinning *Rock On* by David Essex on vinyl, the opening rhythmic backbeat has real atmosphere and delicious precision. The tweeter has a wonderfully projected quality that delivers body and sparkle without becoming dry or harsh, and I get new, quiet sounds deep in the mix. Herbie Flowers' double-tracked bass guitar with loads of slapback delay builds a satisfyingly rich and slinky bassline that feels well extended and detailed. The ample 254mm woofer in a ported standmounter of generous proportions seems to balance bass extension with bass agility very well. There's a tautness to the bass that some may feel exerts a tad too much control, but this control is also communicating the texture well, so there is a trade off. The Eaton does a great job of conveying a three dimensionality to

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Tannoy Legacy Eaton

ORIGIN
UK

TYPE
2-way standmount loudspeaker

WEIGHT
20kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
376 x 538 x 250mm

FEATURES
• Dual concentric 254mm mid/bass driver with 33mm dome tweeter
• Adjustable treble level and roll-off
• Quoted sensitivity: 89dB 1W/1m (8ohm)

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Essex's sultry, charismatic voice. Playing *You're The One* by Kaytranada on CD is insightful. The opening click track has detail and body in equal measure and the soundstage has excellent depth and pinpoint precision. Syd's vocals have detail and warmth, but when the bass line and percussion kick in the infectious rhythm isn't quite fully communicated. The Eaton is a tad too 'polite' for a tune that's getting down and dirty. It's as though it's the designated driver on a night out and letting its hair down doesn't seem like the sensible thing to do. Bass depth and detail is all there, but the control I heard before seems to slightly inhibit the Eaton from fully 'grooving'. I swap in a lower power, single-ended, Transcription Audio 211 valve amplifier with a low damping factor and it's night and day. It becomes extremely lithe and supple in the bass. 18 triode watts aren't able to communicate all the same solid-state bass detail, but the Eaton now grooves so deeply it's borderline rude. This experiment truly underlines its monitor credentials, but also confirms careful amp matching is key to get to the musical qualities you value most. On paper, it is relatively high efficiency and an easy load, but driving it is

Adjust the treble and roll-off simply by moving these hand screws



Q&A

Andrew Pardoe

Senior acoustics manager,
Music Group



CW: What was your design brief for revisiting this classic speaker?

AP: The brief was to keep the essence and pedigree of the original, but bring the technology and quality up to modern standards. Visually the design is strongly based on the original, with an update to the terminals and switches, and with no dust cap on the transducer for extra high-frequency clarity. We've modernised the port design and geometry with a low-noise flare and added a second port to compliment the updated driver and provide accurate enclosure tuning.

What technical improvements have been made?

Internal bracing using modern plywood considerably reduces panel vibration and DMT materials give a damped mechanical coupling of the driver to the bracing structure. The magnesium alloy used in the tweeter dome reproduces frequencies up to 30kHz and a tulip wave-guide improves high accuracy impulse response. Modern Ferrite design with copper demodulation rings and a high flux magnetic circuit give much better overall performance. Edge wound coils maximise the winding density in the flux gap and reduce moving mass. All these measures reduce distortion, improve frequency response and output sensitivity, improving clarity and impulse response integrity.

Tell us about the importance of manufacturing in the UK?

We have a very large and advanced facility in Scotland, with an R&D centre, 4 Pi anechoic chamber, testing and listening rooms, warehousing and a manufacturing floor. We can do everything from driver assembly, wooden cabinet construction and final loudspeaker assembly. We lead the world in precision and quality. Every driver and crossover is individually measured against tight limits and all drivers are listened to by technicians. Once components are assembled, they are measured again, pair matched where required and then listened to again.

IN SIGHT



- 1 Twin bass ports
- 2 Bi-wireable binding posts and grounding point
- 3 Tweeter adjustment and roll-off panel
- 4 Dual concentric 254mm mid/bass driver with 33mm dome tweeter

HOW IT COMPARES

If you're after classic looks and monitor credentials there are several excellent contenders to consider. The Graham Audio LS5/8 (£7,000) and Spondor SP2/3R² (£3,295) have thin wooden enclosures to create part of their monitor magic. I'd also audition the Harbeth 30.1 (around £2,700) and KEF Reference 1 speaker (circa £4,500), reviewed *HFC* 414. I suspect many that love the Tannoy Eaton proposition will also be drawn to the Tannoy Prestige Turnberry GR (yours for £4,949) or its fellow Cheviot (at £5,200). A serious listener will find the right qualities for them and a great solution that suits their space and musical tastes.

more nuanced. I return to my starting amp that strikes a good balance.

Playing Cassadó's *Suite for Solo Cello* played by Vincent Bélanger on vinyl, the opening phrase captures and holds my attention completely. The cello is imbued with a superb, full-bodied richness, communicating loads of luscious texture from the instrument and travel of bow over strings. A sharp flourish at the end of a phrase creates dynamic drama that

The tweeter has a wonderful projected quality that delivers body and sparkle

ebbs beautifully away into the acoustic of the chapel recording space. The perfect union of tweeter and woofer in a dual concentric arrangement is one of Tannoy's fortes and here this arrangement creates very coherent voicing to a highly complex instrument played with real verve. Indeed, it's the vivid communication of the tiny micro-dynamic details from a cello getting a serious workout that shows off the Eaton so well. Tiny squeaks, rasps and grumbles from the instrument have loads of treble, mid and bass detail that has to be served perfectly together to create the most

compelling whole, and this speaker does it with real aplomb.

Conclusion

The Eaton is a grower. Partnered carefully, it will reward you deeply. The longer I spend with it, the more I respect its authoritative reserve. Some may want a bit more bounce in the bass department, but this is a refreshing design that delivers a differentiated, dynamic quality many will love. High efficiency and a powerful driver come together in a classy box of modest proportions to provide genuine studio monitor accuracy that tells it like it is. It isn't cheap, but innovative design and meticulous hand-built craftsmanship from the UK isn't likely to be ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY



LIKE: Build; tight dynamics; imaging; adjustable treble

VALUE FOR MONEY



DISLIKE: Needs to be partnered carefully to perform its best

BUILD QUALITY



WE SAY: Jewel of a speaker with studio monitor credentials and retro charm

EASE OF DRIVE



OVERALL

