



Exception to the rule

Meet the smallest floorstander in Jamo's new Studio 8 range. **Adam Smith** listens in to see if its heart is bigger than its cabinet

There is a school of thought among some loudspeaker buyers that standmount designs are a bit of a waste of time. To be clear, this is not referring to those small speakers mounted on wall brackets or tucked away on a shelf, but rather those that are positioned in their own space on the floor atop a pair of stands.

Their reasoning is simple enough – if the amount of space taken up in the room by a pair of small speakers on stands or a slim pair of floorstanders is exactly the same; then why not go

Synth bass notes have good attack and bass guitar lines are rounded

for the latter? You'll get more bass, more depth and more woodwork for your money – all good points. But as with most things hi-fi related, it's rather more complicated than that. As a proponent of the school of loudspeaker scale, I've always felt that there's a lot to be said for going straight for something bigger.

However, every now and then, a company comes along with a 'bigger' loudspeaker that stretches the definition to its limit. Totem Acoustic did it with the Arro (HFC 353), Quad did it a few years back with the 21L and now it is Jamo's turn with the arrival of the petite S 805.

The S 805 is the smallest floorstander in Jamo's new Studio 8 range, which was unveiled this year to celebrate the company's 50th anniversary. Founded in 1968 in Glyngøre, Denmark, by Preben Jacobsen and Julius Mortensen, Jamo has been through a varied history right up to its current position today as part of the Klipsch group, which purchased the company in 2005.

The Studio 8 range has a pretty comprehensive lineup, consisting of two standmounts, three floorstanders, two centres and a Dolby Atmos module, and as with any loudspeaker range that's been designed for both stereo and multi-channel installations, the company also manufactures a matching slim subwoofer.

In technical terms, the S 805 is bang up to date. Bass duties are handled by a 127mm polyfiber bass driver that is loaded by a front-firing slot port. This then hands over at 2kHz to a 25mm soft dome tweeter with shallow horn-loading, courtesy of Jamo's WaveGuide, which stands out nicely thanks to its rather tasty wood finish. Grilles are supplied that attach to the front of the cabinet using hidden magnets, but in this case it seems a shame to hide the baffle.

The cabinet is available in white, black and walnut finishes, with the tweeter WaveGuide being walnut on the white and black models and black

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Jamo S 805
ORIGIN
USA/Far East
TYPE
2-way floorstanding loudspeaker
WEIGHT
9kg
DIMENSIONS (WxHxD)
191 x 787 x 252mm
FEATURES
• 1x 25mm soft dome tweeter
• 1x 127mm mid/bass driver
• Quoted sensitivity: 88dB/1W/1m (8ohm)
DISTRIBUTOR
Henley Audio
TELEPHONE
01235 511166
WEBSITE
henleyaudio.co.uk

on the walnut cabinet. Finally, a sub-flush trim panel around the base of each floorstander is finished to match the WaveGuide colour, and four silver outrigger feet are supplied that need to be fitted before use. These add a final styling flourish and increase the footprint for added stability, but, unfortunately, have no threads to accept spikes – just some rubber pads. This limits the absolute stability of the S 805 on carpet.

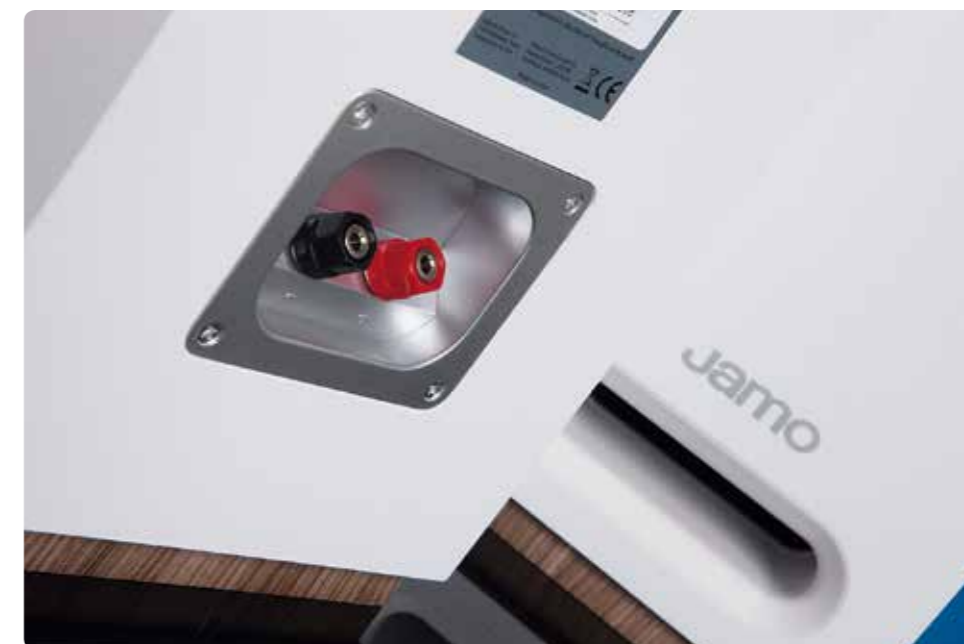
All in all, the cabinet is well made, even if the white finish doesn't look that dissimilar to some self-assembly furniture I have dotted around the home. More disappointing is the owner's manual, which is less a set of instructions and more a collection of random illustrations and smiley face logos. This irritating trend started a few years ago, and it needs to stop.

Sound quality

With the Jamo warmed up and connected to a Yamaha A-S500 integrated amplifier (HFC 364) and Cambridge Audio Azur 650C CD player, it is soon clear that this loudspeaker punches well above its weight. From the first bars of music it surprises with the sheer depth and impact, while the poise and detail it serves up is quite impressive at times.

Does it do bass? Yes, absolutely! It has a bottom-end solidity that similarly priced standmounts miss out on, endowed with a fine level of detail; it's not just a resonant thump added to make things sound ostensibly impressive. Dance bass lines like that from Underworld's *Jumbo* pound out with confidence and pleasing weight, while the double

Single wire binding posts, a slot port and a neat walnut sub-flush trim



Q&A

Mark Casavant

Jamo brand development,
Klipsch Group



AS: What new technologies are to be found in the Studio 8 series?

MC: The Studio 8 line incorporates some significant new innovations for an affordable speaker range. The new enclosures bring a contemporary feel with their small footprint and finish options that match both traditional and modern home decor. Their trapezoidal shape also reduces standing waves and the slim baffles enhance soundstage imaging. New for the entire Studio 8 range are WaveGuide soft dome tweeters that bring a real presence and immediacy to the soundstage, and are perfectly matched by the purpose-chosen Polyfibre woofers. In addition, all Studio 8 models have 8ohm nominal impedance, which makes them easy to drive. The S 805 and other Studio 8 floorstanders also have cast-steel outriggers for added stability. For our top models in the range we also have a new patent-pending Dolby Atmos system where simply locating the speaker on top of the floorstander makes the electrical connection.

Who do you see as the main customer for the S 805?

People who are looking for style and performance in an affordable floorstanding speaker. It serves music well and can be a great start for a home theatre system. The S805 is a rich sounding and easy to live with speaker, so it is an attractive choice for people who just love music and want a simple setup.

What do you regard as the main advantages of the S 805 over similarly priced standmounts?

I would emphasise good looks, great sound and ease of drive from an amplifier standpoint. The S 805 is very musical; it will outperform speakers at similar prices. The extended cabinet allows for deeper bass compared with a similarly priced standmount. It's for music lovers and it's easy on the wallet.

IN SIGHT



- 1 25mm soft dome tweeter
- 2 Single wiring connection terminals
- 3 Front-firing slot port
- 4 127mm polyfiber mid/bass driver

bass on Diana Krall's *Popsicle Toes* has a pleasingly woody 'bloom' to it. Each note is clear and nicely separated from its neighbours, and the S 805 always seems to be having fun.

In fact, during the audition, I find myself searching out increasingly punchier and funky tracks to really test its low-end limits, which is something I really did not expect. Fortunately, it takes it all in its stride; synth bass notes have good attack and bass guitar lines are pleasingly rounded and tuneful. Of course, there is a limit to this and it comes when the material starts to get a little busier. Here, the bass lines seem a little overpowered, but even then, the Jamo does not give up and fall apart. Instead, the low-end action simply shrinks in on itself a little and fades into the background somewhat. As a result, tracks like The Cinematic Orchestra's *Everyday* start well during the double bass-only introduction, but lose some drive and impact when the bass drum kicks in. Still, this is a fine result for such a compact design. After all, as a well known *Star Trek* chief engineer is known to say: "Ye cannae change the laws of physics..."

At the top end, the S 805 is clean and insightful. Yes, of course it would be unreasonable to expect Air Motion Transformer levels of delicacy and fluidity from £350 loudspeakers, but it has a damn good try. As a result, cymbals have a meaty sense of

crispness to them and yet the delicacy of gently struck percussion lurking in the background is never lost. When things are pushed louder or the source material is less than sympathetic, the S 805 tends to harden up somewhat, but it just stops short of sounding openly strident.

And what of the middle ground, where bass and treble meet? Well, it is here that I find its trump card. Lead vocals are remarkably open and detailed, with a fine level of central image stability and backing vocals lined up neatly behind. The Jamo even has a good bash at a sense of

It has a bottom-end solidity that similarly priced standmounts tend to miss out on

scale, although this is limited by its diminutive stature. I would suggest a reclining listening position on a low futon or bean bag is the best way to experience its charms. This done, you will find that it captures the innate nature of both electronic and acoustic instruments well and rarely sounds crowded or confused in imagery terms.

Conclusion

You could listen to this loudspeaker's weaker areas and excuse these by reminding yourself that it's not a costly design. However, during my time with the Jamo I find myself doing the exact opposite – namely being impressed by its copious strengths and, on several occasions, marvelling that, yes, it really is a pair of floorstanders for only £350. There are times when I'm gently reminded of this, but frankly, the time it spends pounding out a rollicking tune with joyous abandon makes any real criticism seem churlish. It's almost impossible not to fall for at the price ●



The Jamo S 805 doesn't have a great deal of competition at the price. The £340 Mission LX-3 and Richer Sounds-only £280 Cambridge Audio SX80 come in at around a similar budget, but can't quite touch the Jamo for fun factor. A jump to £400 would bring you to the level of the Monitor Audio Monitor 200 and the forthcoming Fyne Audio F302, which is rumoured to be rather good. Finally, let's not forget, £349 will buy the excellent Q Acoustics Concept 20 standmount (HFC 372), plus some quality stands if you're not wedded to the idea of a floorstanding design.

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY



LIKE: Impressive midband detail and bass quality; price

VALUE FOR MONEY



DISLIKE: Lack of floor spikes; manual; hard treble when pushed

BUILD QUALITY



WE SAY: Small in stature it may be, but it has a huge musical heart

EASE OF DRIVE



OVERALL

