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[Loudspeaker Review: Bösendorfer VC 7 - Channa Vithana](#)

May 4, 2007

Founded during its nascent years in Austria, 1828, by Ignaz Bösendorfer, the company bearing his name has since become one of the most recognisable piano-making brands in the world. With many choices in finish and specification, a Bösendorfer piano can be specified to be as minimalist or extravagant as you like – from opulent to ornate to modernist – have a look at their website, www.bosendorfer.com, and you can see almost any style is available.

In their recent history Bösendorfer has started to make a range of hi-fi loudspeakers, and in a similar manufacturing quality to the pianos from their factory, they offer them in a variety of standard and non-standard finishes.



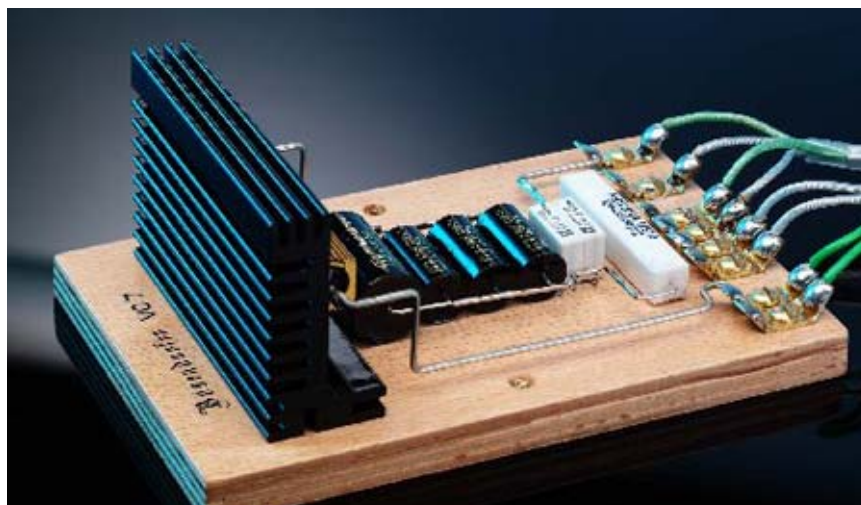
The Bösendorfer loudspeakers, engineered by the very experienced Hans Deutsch, are different to the norm in that they are designed to *resonate just like a musical instrument*. To this end they feature Acoustic Sound Boards which are fin-like panels, fitted with exacting tolerances to the rear of the main cabinet to achieve the correct amount of reverberation.

The CAD-CAM designed cabinet has no internal damping material like ‘acoustic’ wool for instance, or an externally visible cylindrical port. Instead air is shifted *unhindered* and therefore more efficiently from the drive-units down the internal volume of the cabinet, like a diaphragm, and outwards at the lower sides to vibrate the Acoustic Sound Boards.

This arrangement is an ingenious bit of lateral-thinking mechanical-engineering.

So, combining this design philosophy with two 130mm carbon-fibre reinforced paper-cone mid/bass drive-units per side, and two 30mm (approx.) acrylic-coated silk-dome tweeters at the front baffle, the VC 7

here for review is a very special loudspeaker indeed. Essentially, the music signal is transmitted via the *Bösendorfer Acoustic Active Crossover* (developed by Hans Deutsch in 1973) at the rear of the cabinet, and then through the mid/bass drivers (and tweeters) with the resultant bass-loading coming from the Acoustic Sound Boards which, say the company, “...guarantees a multitude of resonances spread across the entire bass frequency range.”



As this review is not for a hi-fi magazine, I have kept it as straightforward as possible. However, for those who are interested in technical details, you can contact Bösendorfer's UK distributor at www.audusa.com for information.

Bösendorfer VC 7 (claimed) Specifications

Frequency response: 25 Hz – 27 kHz

Impedance: 4 ohms

Sensitivity: 91 dB

Dimensions: 1330×403x195mm

Weight: 36.5Kg

Bösendorfer VC 7 Standard Finishes and UK Prices

VC 7S: Black Semi gloss £6,400

VC 7H: High Gloss Piano Black £8,250

VC 7E: High Gloss Piano Black + Lacquer Wood Veneer* £9,200

(*Pomele or Burl Maple or Burl Birch or Burl Walnut)

Non standard finishes, e.g. White, Swarovski Crystals, etc, to special order.

System & Setup

In the listening sessions I used a **North Star** Design Model 192 CD Transport and Extremo DAC source, **Stax** Dual Mono DC CA-X Class-A preamplifier and a beautifully designed and built **Accuphase** Model P-102 Class-A power amplifier which is a dual-mono design rated at 50W/8ohms and 80W/4ohms. Interconnects and power cords were **LAT**. The North Star CD source and LAT cables were supplied by www.audusa.com, while the Stax, Accuphase and listening room were kindly loaned by this site's editor Howard Popeck.

The Bösendorfers were placed at 2M apart with a toe-in of about 20 degrees, 1.5M from the back wall and about 1M from the side walls. The correct location is *very* important as they have side-firing mid-bass drivers, and for this reason, it is also imperative not have anything in-between the VC 7s, like a hi-fi system. I

preferred listening to the loudspeakers without the grills – but it is best to fine-tune setup with your Bösendorfer dealer.

Music

Listening to ‘Korngold - Violin Concerto; Tchaikovsky - Violin Concerto Op 35’ (2004) with Anne-Sophie Mutter on lead and Previn conducting, I was really taken aback by the sheer lyrical quality of Mutter’s playing as it was by turns full-bodied and then very delicately phrased. The music had a beautifully radiant earthy tonality and the violin was indeed convincing where the lyrical phrasing was outstanding.

The separation of instruments was very good thus enabling the delicacy of the violin, especially some of the more playful parts, to be balanced with the full-weight of the orchestra. So, there was the vastness of scale required to reveal the Wiener Philharmoniker combined with the sophisticated deftness of the violin which weaved in and out of the orchestrations.

This ‘Korngold...’ piece goes from delicate violin parts to grand, soaring crescendos very quickly – where the mix can get very busy. And as such the Bösendorfers were entirely composed and authoritative as they ably revealed the subtleties of the violin and the demands of the orchestrations, especially the low frequencies where there was convincing bass extension and bass tunefulness, so a high-resolution balance between weight and control was struck.



Indeed the Bösendorfers had superb instrumental decay to the fading notes of the violin – which enabled a more credible three-dimensional tonal quality.

The opening bass lines to ‘Woman In Chains’ by Tears For Fears from their ‘Seeds Of Love’ (1989) album were delivered with a superb low-frequency sophistication that revealed powerful depth and, importantly, bass *tunefulness*

also. Consequently, it was satisfying to note the harmonic quality of the bass guitar as I could appreciate the timbre and texture of these bass lines, which, when reproduced properly, enable the complex three-dimensional low-frequency qualities to spread across the listening room without being either one-note or baggy.

The lead and accompanying vocals were rendered with a deft and light touch that removed any chance of stridency yet did not impinge on the free-flowing quality of the vocal phrasing, where I could follow, exactly, the change in direction and timbre as the singers emphasised emotional contrasts. The music as a whole was delivered in a lyrical yet well-balanced manner with high resolution instruments and vocals.

With ‘Lithium’ from the ‘Nirvana’ (2002) compilation, the music was well-balanced enabling all of its raging nihilism and huge guitar power-chords to be expressed. And as such, the low-frequencies were wonderfully revealed in all their harmonic beauty. Instrumental separation between the drums, bass and guitar was good which enabled the trademark Kurt Cobain melodies and harmonies from the vocals and abrasive guitar to be lucid.

Indeed Cobain’s deceptively brilliant guitar melodies, still clear underneath all the ‘grunge,’ were really intoxicating via ‘Heart Shaped Box,’ where his excellent playing could be plainly heard as the layering of notes and chords were spread out across the listening room. The outstanding drumming by Dave Grohl which is a curious and exhilarating mix of precise structuring and deep, textural timbres was also superbly reproduced as a rhythm section with the bass lines.

The melodious pop-soul of ‘Crazy’ by Seal from the compilation, ‘Best 1991-2004’ (2004), was unwrapped with effortlessness as the Bösendorfers revealed the mid-paced combination of deep-house bass lines and the intricate drum and percussive parts with ease. Seal’s vocals were a delight as his rich and distinctive voice was clearly articulated within the structure of ‘Crazy.’ When the song developed further and into powerful crescendos, the Bösendorfers retained their composure without taking away the sinuous motion of the beats and melodies preceding them.

‘Kiss From A Rose’ sounded stunning and surprisingly energised even though it is usually one of those over-familiar songs used for weddings, etc. Consequently, it was enthralling where the subtle vocal shifts and intonations were striking in their alacrity. The ‘Kiss...’ music which until now I had dismissed as ‘undemanding,’ took on a more powerful stance and I could really appreciate the production and musicianship of the players where there was depth, clarity and instrumental intelligibility.

Review Outcome

I have extensive experience of the smaller Bösendorfer VC 2 through my Densen/Origin Live reference system and it remains one of the finest I have heard for the price (£4,750, approx.) Indeed the VC 2s, setup correctly and without grills, were superbly high-resolution and yet free-flowingly musical.

The VC 7s are impressively just the same, but obviously more capable of driving bigger rooms with their larger cabinets and extra drive-units.

So what I heard using a different system was the same beautiful bass quality that has excellent decay to musical notes which procured a more convincing and three-dimensional sound.



The bass wasn't congested either and was as tuneful as it was extended. One of the best attributes to Hans Deutsch's Bösendorfer designs is that the acrylic-coated silk-dome tweeter provides a very sophisticated high-frequency sound for cymbals, vocals, violin, etc, without the merest hint of stridency.

In many ways this self-effacing but deceptively revealing tweeter application has much of the superiority of the finest *ribbon* designs. The VC series is elegantly designed, and like the pianos, can have modern, traditional or highly ornate finishes to suit. For smaller rooms, about 4x4M, I can recommend the VC 2 and for larger, the VC 7s.

The Bösendorfer VC 7, like a bigger version of the VC 2, is one of the best loudspeakers I have yet to hear.

CV 1st May 2007

www.bosendorfer.com

U.K. Distributor: www.audusa.com

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May 4, 2007

It starts:

"TSP bought the DVD of Love Actually on Ebay last week. I'd seen it before, but watched it again. I quite like Richard Curtis, despite thinking Four Weddings was largely nonsense, and Notting Hill suffered from the much-publicised lack of black people in a very heavily black part of London. I like the fact that he"

stevlawson.net



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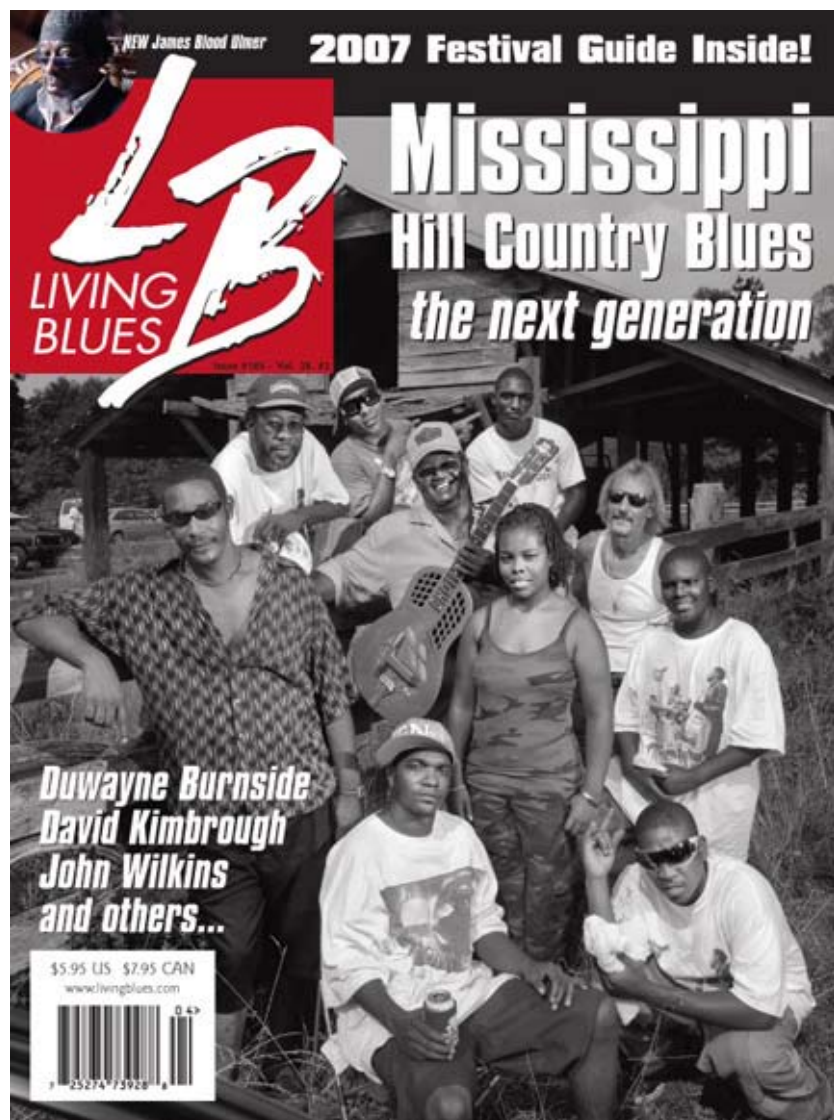
[R.L. Burnside, Junior Kimbrough, and Otha Turner](#)

May 4, 2007

"Over the last two decades Mississippi hill country blues has become increasingly popular. With the

successful late careers of R.L. Burnside, Junior Kimbrough, and Otha Turner most blues fans tuned into the driving, often hypnotic sounds that come out of this little corner of Mississippi. With the passing of the elders, LB decided it was a good time to check on the scene in our own back yard. We found it still vibrant, vital, and growing. In this issue we profile eight artists who are all children (real or “adopted”) or grandchildren of the early masters.”

[via livingbluesmagazine](#)



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[Q&A: Bjork](#)

May 4, 2007

Question:

Do you really believe that Bjork's success is the triumph of marketing over mediocrity?

Answer:

Yes!

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[What happens when jazz and classical music come together?](#)

May 4, 2007

“In a new programme to mark the launch of our sister station theJazz, Margherita Taylor looks at what happens when jazz and classical music come together. Margherita will examine the long history of classical music and jazz coming together in this six-part series. Works will range from Shostakovich’s Jazz Suites, through to Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess, taking in Jacques Loussier’s Bach interpretations, Miles Davis’s take on Rodrigo’s Concierto d’Aranjuez and some brand new compositions from the contemporary jazz arranger and performer, David Rees-Williams On theJazz, Margherita presents Easy Jazz at Six - a relaxing blend of laid-back music - from Sunday to Friday each week.”

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[Exactly the way it happened folks #03: Syrinx & Scott Strachan](#)

May 3, 2007

Scott Strachan, the inventor and constructor of the **Syrinx** arm was a very likeable chap. His enthusiasm was infectious. His tonearms looked, frankly, terrible. Not quite as bad as the original Hadcock, but not far off. They were, until the Ittock, the only intelligent and sonically acceptable alternative to the Grace G707 arm on a Linn. Incidentally, in A-B dems, the majority of listeners preferred it to the Mk1 Ittock on the LP12, especially when partnered with a Dynavector 17/D.

The Syrinx sound, for those days, was spectacular but the overall construction left a lot to be desired. Nevertheless we persisted and I became a volume dealer for him – but he stretched patience to the limit through one particular incident.

He sent us a batch of arms where each of the four headshell leads was the *identical* shade of white.

His explanation was that he was in a hurry to get the shipment to us and he’d lost his set of coloured pens – the ones he used to mark the headshell wires! Without a trace of an apology nor irony he cheerfully pointed out that the problem could be sorted by using a volt meter or some such device.

I pointed out that as were, at that point, acting as his unofficial exporter to enthusiasts around the world, he had at a stroke, or rather lack of a stroke, brought our combined export sales drive re Syrinx PU2s to a halt. He laughed his infectious laugh, and that was it. I wondered why he’d bucked tradition but not buying 4 reels of separate coloured wire, but thought better of it, fearing it would send him into more dangerously convulsed laughter. So we coloured the headshell wires, and that was that.

The next we saw of him, without coloured pens I might add, was with the potentially bearing-crushing PU2 ‘Mass Ring’ – and therein lies another story for another day.

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[3 opportunities to win today’s FREE CD - Iain Matthews “Skeleton](#)

Keys”

May 3, 2007

Today’s free CD – and it’s not a bootleg either!

3 copies available to the first 3 people who email me.

Post free in the UK Post at cost for non-UK winner

The first one to email me with the phrase ‘I WANT SKELETON’ in the subject line gets today’s freebie.

Just email me at hp@no-alibi.demon.co.uk

An owner said:

“Following a ‘difficult’ decade in the 80’s, Iain Matthew’s output since the early 90’s has been both prolific and top quality, at it’s best standing comparison with any singer-songwriter around. This 1992 gem was recorded on German ‘Line’ label, and is, unusually, made up entirely of Matthew’s originals. Mainly acoustic (guitar, accordion, mandolin, dobro and a bit of fiddle) and often with a country feel (though this is far from a country album), the slower numbers in particular have strong melodies that worm their way into the memory. Try the beautiful ‘God’s Empty Chair’ (a tribute to Miles Davis) or the gentle ‘Compass And Chart’ that likens Iain’s career to a mariner who refused to ‘sell out’. Elsewhere there’s the aching melancholy of ‘A Cross To Bear’, and ‘Every Crushing Blow’, the environmental concern of ‘The Ties We Break’ and the charming narrative of ‘Jumping Off The Roof’. Things get up-tempo with the anti-prejudice ‘Back Of The Bus’ and, although ‘Get It Back’ lets the side down by sounding a bit too close to T Rex for comfort (whether by accident or design), the quality of the writing, singing and playing mean ‘Skeleton Keys’ earns it’s 5 star rating on every play. So keep checking back – it’s a shame when such great music has only ‘Limited Availability’!”



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Any Jessye Norman fans here?

May 3, 2007

Yes, apparently

And you can get an insight into their views [HERE](#)



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May 3, 2007

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[Steve Lawson: Rock is dead?](#)

May 3, 2007

"A fabulous post this morning by Jyoti on Why Rock Is Dead.

I emailed him about it, and it seems the tipping point for him was the same band that I was despairing at on the T in the Park coverage last night - WolfMother. How much more could they want to sound like Led Zep? How much more heinously anachronistic could it be to write 'new' songs like that in 2006? Is one of them about to buy Alistair Crowley's old underpants, just to be like Jimmy Page?"

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Editor Howard Popeck can be contacted at hp@no-alibi.demon.co.uk

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