

AUDIO
FILE

Two-way standmount loudspeaker
 Made by: Franco Serblin Studio, Vicenza, Italy
 Supplied by: Absolute Sounds Ltd, UK
 Telephone: 0208 971 3909
 Web: www.francoserblin.it; www.absolutesounds.com
 Prices: £8888 (+£2798 for stands)



Franco Serblin Accordo Goldberg

This loudspeaker ostensibly follows the formula of Franco Serblin's regular Accordo standmount [HFN Jan '18], with the same asymmetrical 'wing' design and cabinets supplied in mirror-imaged pairs. But while the Accordo Goldberg also retains the 29mm silk-dome tweeter, designed by Ragnar Lian, the original 150mm 'sliced paper cone' bass/mid driver is replaced here with a 180mm 'microsphere cone'. Also, to house this larger woofer, the rear-ported enclosure has been upscaled to 405x240x430mm (hwd).

These dimensions suggest a narrow, deep-looking speaker,

'Pace/rhythm/timing junkies would revel in these delicious beats'

but once positioned according to Franco Serblin's instructions, toed-in so they cross in front of the listener, you get a three-quarter view. And do experiment with the toe-in, because the Goldberg – and its siblings – deliver intense focus when it comes to imaging.

Also note that, due to its shape, the cabinet is almost impossible to fit onto conventional stands. Goldberg's 'optional' swan-neck pillar supports are therefore absolutely mandatory, so treat these speakers as not costing £8888 per pair, but £11,686 per pair. And they are still worth every penny...

LOST IN MUSIC

As with designs from DeVore, D'Agostino, de Paravicini and others conceived by auteurs, the Goldberg is the embodiment of its designer's

philosophy. First and foremost, as evinced by the almost tyrannical strictures regarding placement, soundstage reproduction is arguably the primary concern, and so it is that the Accordo Goldberg deftly places the performers – whether a group or solo – in the space created by the triangle formed by the speakers' siting. This can be disconcerting if you've grown used to sounds outside of the speakers' edges, but you'll soon adapt to the notion of a tightly defined space between them.

Listening to the live recording of The Who's 'Baba O'Riley' [Who's Next/Life House; Polydor], its 'wall of sound' was presented as a perfectly formed diorama with precise image height and depth. So, while being in two-channel rather than surround, it was all-embracing – fitting in with what the inspirational, late Franco Serblin himself would say about the path to losing one's self in the music.

The miracle is that this sensation is not a product of the speaker being too soft or forgiving. The Accordo Goldberg standmounts sounded better the *louder* they were played. The sax break in 'Dirty Work', from Steely Dan's *Can't Buy A Thrill* [Analogue Productions], had just the right balance of rasp and honk. Pace/rhythm/timing junkies would revel in the opening bongo patterns of the same album's 'Do It Again', delicious beats with the sounds of the heads almost shimmering. As for the vocals, we started imagining what an LS3/5A would sound like with a couple of octaves extending the bottom, and another 10dB added to the levels.

There was also a silkiness to the Accordo Goldberg's performance,



ensuring the fine detail on show in the remastered 2023 edition of The Beatles' *Red* collection [Apple] never sounded over-etched. This mesmerising speaker is transparent enough to satisfy the forensically inclined, but always utterly musical. Like Serblin's designs of 40 years ago, it's a sonic stunner.

VERDICT

Immediacy plays no role with the Accordo Goldberg – it must be learned, savoured like fine wine, in order to appreciate what it can do. Take care with positioning, and its performance will blow you away. 🗨️

ABOVE: The asymmetric wooden cabinet is 'hand crafted by master artisans' and further braced with magnesium alloy sheets. The 29mm Ragnar Lian silk-dome tweeter is joined here by a 180mm 'microsphere' bass/mid driver featuring an alloy dust cap

HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Sensitivity (SPL/1m/2.83V – 1kHz/Mean/IEC)	88.8dB / 87.8dB / 85.7dB
Impedance modulus: minimum & maximum (20Hz–20kHz)	3.9ohm @ 5.5kHz 48ohm @ 80Hz
Impedance phase: minimum & maximum (20Hz–20kHz)	-57° @ 88Hz +45° @ 72Hz
Pair matching/Resp. error (200Hz–20kHz)	0.6dB / ±4.1dB/±3.8dB
LF/HF extension (-6dB ref 200Hz/10kHz)	47Hz / 25.3kHz/24.3kHz
THD 100Hz/1kHz/10kHz (for 90dB SPL/1m)	1.5% / 0.35% / 0.5%
Dimensions (HWD) / Weight (each)	405x240x430mm / 12.5kg