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RADICAL DESIGN OF KEF CONCEPT BLADE LOUDSPEAKER IS MATCHED ONLY BY ITS INCREDIBLE SOUND QUALITY

Now the world has the opportunity to peer into the future of loudspeakers as KEF unveils its most radical design to date

An engineering tour de force, the KEF Concept Blade loudspeaker is the result of three years' exhaustive testing, expert analysis and intricate experimentation. As a concept piece, it highlights KEF's exceptional research and development prowess, showcasing the brand's cutting-edge capabilities that are sure to influence future products – and, arguably, the future of loudspeaker design.

Pulsating at the heart of KEF's Concept Blade is its Single Apparent Source technology. For highest quality sound reproduction the driver sections of a multi-way loudspeaker must work together, and thus need very similar individual sound-fields. This is particularly important at crossover frequencies; the frequencies at which sound output switches from one driver to another. The Single Apparent Source technology is a perfect accompaniment to the KEF Uni-Q. Together they result in a loudspeaker with

unrivalled coherence throughout the entire frequency range. This technology in itself, presents the case for Concept Blade to be classed as arguably one of the first revolutionary loudspeakers of the 21st Century.

The materials engineering in Concept Blade – with every component being designed from the ground up – is incredibly complex and sophisticated, yet like its sculptural form, the theoretical engineering tenants are beautifully simple.

Concept Blade is a breakthrough product offering an advantage not just to the consumer but also to the advancement of audio industry. Take the four 10” (25 cm), newly developed bass drivers, which deliver Concept Blade’s phenomenal and notably distortion-free low frequency response. The engineering principle behind their configuration is wonderfully straightforward – let the huge forces of each cone cancel each other out by arranging them in opposed, symmetrical pairs – but its effective implementation is fraught with engineering obstacles.

Yet KEF has delivered, ingeniously preventing these beasts from muddying the sound by distorting the cabinet when in motion. The force produced by the bass drivers is so strong that the massive rear magnets have had to be bonded directly to each other to obtain the full benefit of this technology. They are side firing so their acoustic centre coincides with those of the 10th generation KEF Uni-Q midrange driver and tweeter – the groundbreaking Single Apparent Source technology. This is found in the driver itself, with the tweeter carefully positioned so that it has the same acoustic centre as the mid-range driver. Formed from critically braced liquid crystal polymer – a light but immensely stiff material – and backed by a huge 3” (75 mm) voice coil to move any break-up way above its operating range – the Uni-Q device incorporates a 1” (25 mm) titanium dome tweeter whose mechanical characteristics are exceptionally free from resonance in its operating band thanks to rear chamber loading and a patented dome profile, developed using Finite Element Analysis. The result means that the entire frequency range is radiated from one point in space. It is impossible to determine where one driver stops working and the next begins, meaning that the resulting sound field is astonishingly convincing.

All this technology is housed in a critically curved cabinet constructed from a carbon fibre, balsa wood composite – as found in ultra-high performance cars. It is used for its exceptional lightness and rigidity. The parabolic curvature of the cabinet increases cabinet strength, meaning sound is only generated from driver movement and not from distortion of the cabinet.

Although the design is all new, Concept Blade is so typically KEF. As a technology driven brand that has been innovating for half-a-century, no other loudspeaker company has done more to improve the state of the art. Concept Blade is simply the latest in a long line of landmark designs that showcase KEF's continuing engagement with fresh ideas and new technologies to enrich the enjoyment of recorded sound.

But this is more than just a concept. It is a tangible development of an ongoing series of KEF technologies, which will feature in many new KEF models in the future. Concept Blade has simply progressed KEF's innovation skills to a new standard. Whatever the future of Concept Blade, be assured that its very introduction heralds a host of technological skills and innovations, which will become the standard in high quality loudspeaker design for some time to come.

But, the question remains; will this radically different and strikingly beautiful design ever see full production? And that is for the world to decide!

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