



Xavian XN 125 Junior

Xavian speakers. Not too many people have heard of them – certainly none of my friends have. But I own a pair, the baby Mias, because at the time I reviewed them years and years ago, they were simply superb and I had to own them. And I have had them ever since. It took something like Vivid Audio to get me out of the Xavian stupor.

The truth is that if I weren't undergoing a Vivid Audio speaker crisis, courtesy of a six-month old Great Dane (who smashed one into smithereens), I would be owning

these XN 125s as well.

Let's unpack that a little bit further. They're roughly the same size as the Mias – i.e. tiny, but that's about where the similarities end. The XN 125s are all grown up now. They sport a time-aligned front baffle and different drivers: notably a pointy, sticky-out dome-thingy tweeter.

Build quality is outstanding, with the speakers feeling more or less as if carved from stone, the chassis is that 'dead'. They may be of a simple design and a simple build, but it is has been done to perfection.

Right, so enough about all that nonsense - let's get to what they sound like. In a word, they sound *amazeballs*. Although this is a new word not often used in the vocabulary of the upper echelons of high-brow audio society, it nonetheless sums up the Xavians perfectly. And this is as it should be.

These tiny teeny tots face the danger of being overlooked because of their diminutive stature, and that's about as far wrong as you can possibly go in the world of music.

I am of the belief that when it comes to hi-fi, it is important to make the distinction between listening to music as opposed to listening to equipment, whether that be the speaker, amp, front end or anything else for that matter. It's sometimes easier said than done



however, and I have sympathies for those of us who get caught up in equipment as opposed to music.

However, I guarantee you that if you couple these puppies to a decent amp and decent source, and throw on Fazil Say's 'Haydn Sonatas', as I did, and just listen with your mind switched off, you will be utterly transfixed.

The first thing you will notice is that the man can play a piano, and immediately after that, that the speakers can sound quite unlike anything you were expecting. In other words, the piano being played sounds just like a piano. It is astonishing.

In fact, the speed is astonishing, the transparency is astonishing, and the sheer accuracy is astonishing. As with the Mias, if you properly stand-mount the XN 125s, even the bass is astonishing.

It seems impossible that such small cabinets could generate so much 'real' bass, yet they manage. I could easily (and I do mean easily) live with them, and I am a bass hound of some note.

Throw in a subwoofer if you must, but you do need to be careful – you need a serious subwoofer to keep up with the XN 125s. Anything less than excellent will muddy and confuse the performance on the low end, which will be a pity, given the overall excellence that the XN 125s deliver.

I must add that the XN 125s also play anything. Anything. Perhaps heavy death metal or bass-heavy Cafe Del Mar rubbish might find them a little light. But honestly, if you listen to Cafe Del Mar, your brain is probably mush anyway, and you'll probably also like vinyl.

No, these are speakers for real people, and I honestly don't think you will miss one iota of the bass at the lowest end of things. The XN 125s will re-ignite your love affair with music, no matter what it is you prefer listening to.

What impresses the most is that there is no particular aspect they do better than any other, and there is

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no chink in their armour that I could find where performance might be compromised. There is nothing that they do badly, or not to the same exceptional standards that they deliver across the board.

As I always say, transparency is the hallmark of a small speaker. Box size counts, and comparing them to, say, my newly-installed Chario Urso Majors couldn't possibly make the comparison between a mouse and an elephant starker if you bashed your own head in with a gold brick wrapped in a slice of lemon. Truly, it would be a case of David vs. Goliath in sheer size terms alone.

VITAL STATS

Enclosure type	Rear-firing bass reflex
Drive units	Custom Scan-Speak 150 mm mid/bass driver, impregnated paper membrane. Selected Scan-Speak ring radiator tweeter, 26 mm voice coil, copper short-circuiting ring
Bi-wiring	No
Impedance	4 ohms
Sensitivity	86 dB
Frequency response	49 Hz - 30 kHz
Power handling	30 to 120 watts
Dimensions (HxWxD)	285 x 180 x 275 mm
Weight	8 kg

PRICE

Xavian XN 125 Junior	R12 000
Atacama Nexus 5i Speaker Stands	R1 800

VERDICT

Attention grabbing. Small speakers that will blow you away. One of the most exciting and engaging pair of speakers I have heard in absolute ages.

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OUR RATING: 90 / 100





Of Note Speaker stands do happiness make

The XN 125s shipped with a pair of speaker stands that came unassembled in a flat pack DIY format. Although my DIY skills are non-existent I was able to put these together with a screwdriver in under 5 minutes. Perhaps 7 minutes, if you factor in that I screwed the base plate on one stand upside down at first.

In essence, you have a base plate, to which you screw in three steel pole legs. At the top, you screw in a small mounting base plate on which the speakers rest. Spikes are supplied for good anchoring - or you can attach rubber feet if you value your wooden floors. You cannot spike the speaker base plate however, which is probably a good thing, all things considered.

The steel pole legs are hollow - and yes, you can fill them with sand quite easily, which will add to the all-important weight factor quite dramatically. I didn't - I left them as is and they served duty for the XN 125s, raising them to the perfect listening height in my room with the tweeters directly at ear level.

Build quality is excellent, with an exceptional jet black powder coating that looks and feels bullet proof. The screws are large and easy to tighten to stupid levels, making them sturdy in the extreme. And really, it took 5 minutes to put them together.

The small speaker mount suited the XN 125s perfectly, although if they were mine, I would definitely use some good old-fashioned Prestik on the base of the speakers (perhaps I am still a little sore and sensitive at the loss of my one Vivid). At the price though, these are impressive speaker stands.



Associated Equipment

Yamaha BDA-1010 Blu-ray deck
 Sony CD XA50ES CD player
 Yamaha RX-V767 AV receiver
 Marantz NA7004 network audio player
 Thule Spirit integrated amp
 Xavian Mia speakers
 Vivid Audio V1S speakers
 Chario Ursa Major speakers
 Paradigm Ultra Cube 12 subwoofer
 Sound Structures Reference sliding stand
 Sound Structures Reference speaker stands
 Tributary Silver speaker cable
 Tributary Silver Interconnects
 Cardas interconnects

Yet the XN 125s disappear. They replace the room with a true soundstage and they punch so much music at you, so quickly, it takes your ears a while to settle down and your brain to understand that this is actually what music is all about.

The fact that the XN 125s spout an even, near-linear response right across the spectrum, and the total absence of any sense of stress or strain from the drivers, means that the waveforms hitting your ears have to be near perfect.

The experience carries through from the generous soundstage to the presence of the speakers in the room. The XN 125s are neither shy nor retiring - they are confident and competent.

Timbre is amazing, with multiple stage harmonics hardly presenting a bump in

the road for these tots. The crossover is flawless, and on crusty vocals the XN 125s will give you goose bumps.

Throw in a busy concerto or symphony and they don't get flustered or get overloaded with a less than precise picture the result – far from it. The more complex the music, the better the XN125s seem to perform, and they will give you the impression that each and every instrument is being played back by its own individual speaker. They are simply that precise.

I have to say that these little speakers have been nothing short of a revelation. At the moment, my Mias serve as my rear channels in the surround sound system and I have pangs of guilt now, because I know that they are simply so much better than that.

Software

Fazil Say - Haydn Piano Sonatas (Naïve CD)
Metallica - The Black Album (Elektra CD)
Annie Lennox - Medusa (BMG CD)
Leonard Cohen - The Future (Columbia CD)
Depeche Mode - Sounds of the Universe (Capitol CD)

It really is not much of a stretch for me to say that the XN 125s are quite easily some of the best speakers I have heard in the last 10 years. If it sounds a little like I'm doing a bit of a gusher on them, perhaps I am. It's not unjustified though, and you simply have to audition them, if only to see if you hear what it is that

I have heard.

I will go so far as to say that I don't even care what they cost – at the time of writing this, the price is unknown to me. Whatever it is, just pay it and get yourself a pair of these. *Amazeballs!* You read it here first. And you can thank me later.

William Kelly



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