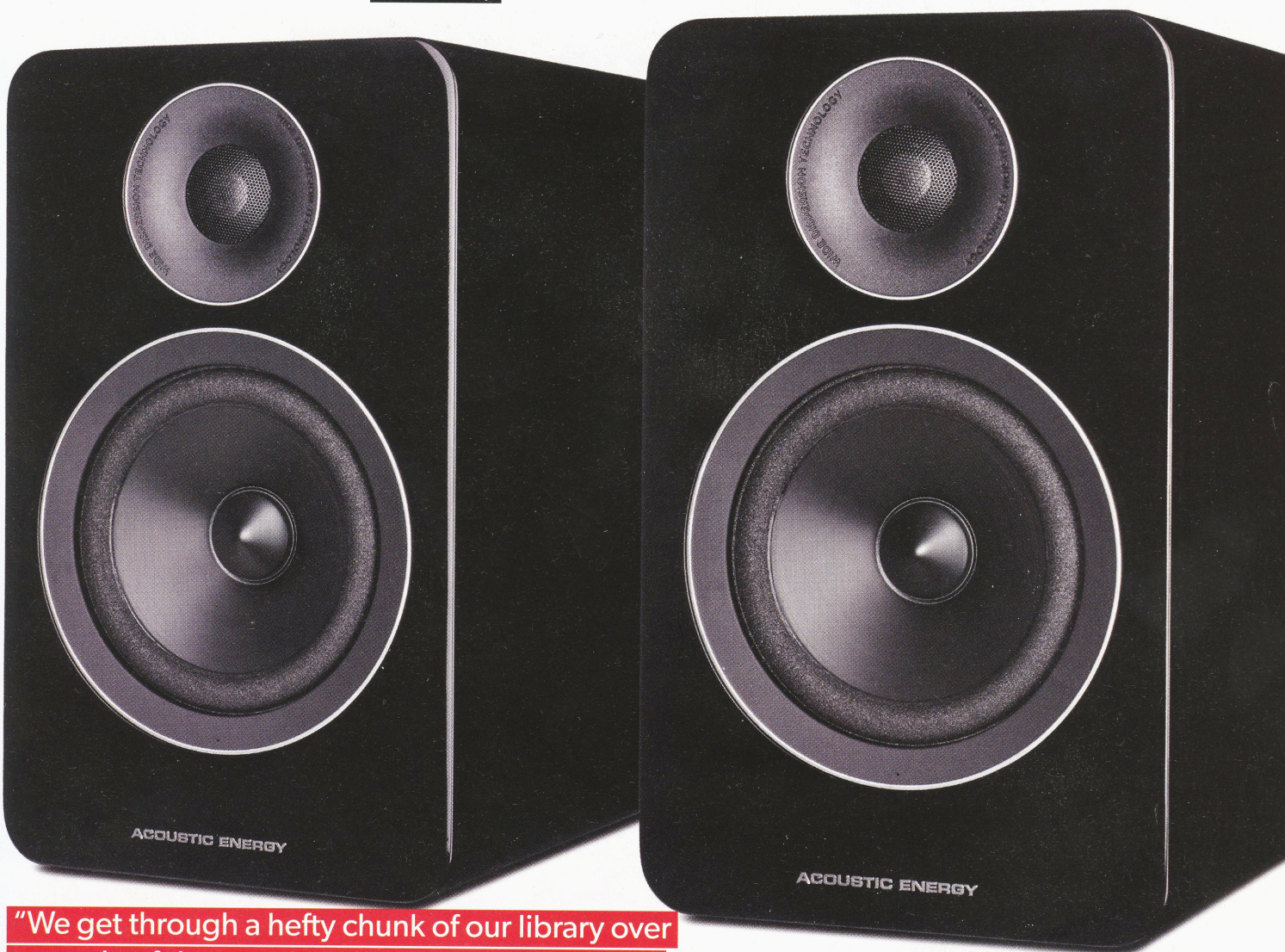


Each driver in the
AEs has its own,
dedicated amp



"We get through a hefty chunk of our library over a couple of days, and with each album the AE1s' response is an absolute delight"

We play Soulwax's *From Deewee*, and these speakers' character reveals itself almost from the outset. The rising synthesizer phrases of *Preset Tense* ring with clarity and climb with vigour; there is granular detail to their waveforms and an irrepressible sense of anticipation.

With *Masterplanned*, we get a sense of the AE1s' fine integration and balance. The synth hook stabs away at the low end, complemented by substantial body in the midrange to showcase the vocal melody and control over potentially coarse percussion in the treble.

We're also treated to these speakers' punch and drive. Rhythms jab as much as time, able to contrast often quite ghostly vocal lines with the verve and swagger of their synth-led polyrhythmic accompaniments.

That this record is so dependent on the delivery of its rhythmic personality is testament to how well the AE1s are able to

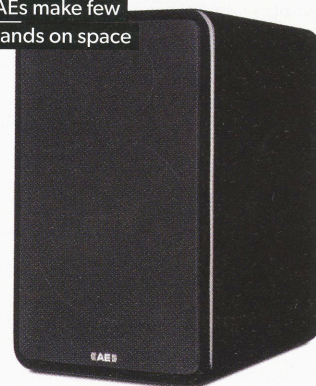
convey it. Timing is spot on, of course, but equally the dynamic expression is subtle enough to spotlight differing intensities of beats that texturally can be cluttered.

Fast-forward to *Is It Always Binary*, for example, an unabashed album highlight. Here, relying on timing or the timbre of the drums alone to differentiate rhythmic strands is not enough; the AE1s allow the 4/4 to pulse while busier strands lead each bar into the next.

Punching above

Simply, these AE1s do everything down to a tee. Not only for what they are, but to the standards we could expect from any amp and speaker combination. So, yes, we love tradition, and we love hi-fi separates. But it would be a much more expensive pair of components that would see a marked improvement on these Acoustic Energy active speakers. You owe it to yourself to track down a pair to find that out.

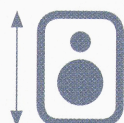
At just 30cm high, the AE1s make few demands on space



KEY FEATURES



4 x 50W amps



30cm tall



3 finishes

WHAT HI-FI? says

Rating ★★★★★

SOUND ★★★★★

COMPATIBILITY ★★★★★

BUILD ★★★★★

VERDICT It's difficult to think of a pair of separates that would better these Acoustic Energy active speakers