

## **QIn Signature speakers**

### **More exciting than a Swedish thriller**

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The pattern is almost always the same, speakers are delivered, the set-up begins, optimizing for a good soundstage, the avoidance of unwanted room interactions. Listening, living with new loudspeakers, discovering. At the very end, the impressions formed are entrusted to the keyboard, using music samples to translate the impressions gained over the weeks into words. Dismantling and back in the carton. With a QIn Signature loudspeaker, that pattern is no different, except for ever-postponing of the final step, because it inevitably marks the end of a relationship between loudspeaker and reviewer. You know a farewell is approaching, the departure only motivated by what it is always about, money. The fate of a writer unable to keep everything his heart desires.

### **Immediately listening**

This theatrical introduction has everything to do with the pure musical pleasure that QIn has managed to put into the Signature and release it with just about any kind of music you can think of. Take for example Allan Taylor's latest album titled "The road well-travelled" which I was able to download in 88.2/24 FLAC format and save on my own Melco. I have been using his albums for review purposes many times before, this one is another gem. Both in terms of wonderful easy listening music and technically. The QIn Signature does make it difficult to describe what I perceive, simply because I am not served with hi-fi, but with the artist Allan himself and his music. In such an unforced and natural way that switching to what I refer to as 'technical listening' is twistedly difficult. Regardless of the volume setting, from very soft to actually too loud for singer/songwriter, the music and the voices remain listenable in optima forma. Nothing changes in sound quality, not in richness of sound, the sound pressure is the only thing that changes as the pleasure control goes up or down. All this in an exemplary stereo image, set just a little in front of the speakers, building up in a deep image to beyond the back wall. Wide enough to reach outside the speaker position, kept naturally compact to unite voice and band. Detached from the loudspeakers with an ease as if these are not physically present. You can certainly call the reproduction rich of details, transparent enough to make even the smallest subtleties audible, the whole so easy on the ear that even the highest notes are presented in a natural calm flow. Bass extends deeper than I could suspect given the cone surface of the woofer and the size of the QIn Signature. Perfectly suitable for my living room, with plenty of pressure, reaching deep in the frequency range downwards, but absolutely controlled and also beautifully balanced with the midrange. The strength of a two-way system is integration of woofer and tweeter. If done by the book a two-way becomes a point source, but rarely the frequency range is as wide and the balance between the drivers as good as with a QIn Signature.

After forty minutes, Taylor finishes the album and I let it settle. I try to hold on to the same mood with Simone Kopmajer, a sort of Diana Krall, lots of easy listening evergreens. Kopmajer brings her vocals and arrangements over the QIn Signature into the living room literally with "With love". More instruments compared to Taylor, also much more evident are bass, percussion, saxophone, added cello, violin and guitar. All for a mood, the sentimental journey where Simone's voice fits in like a Cancan dancer in the Moulin Rouge. With every track on this CD, the QIn Signature makes me feel like I'm in a club with Kopmajer, where she changes places. One moment she's singing leaning against the bar, sometimes on a small stage, sometimes in a hall. Always close, tangible, visible, present and in a perfect setting. It's obviously the QIn Signature turning music into an event. Kopmajer hails from Austria, has the charm and charisma of an American jazz singer who grew up in the scene. The unimaginable ease with which the QIn Signature brings out every aspect of her voice, the faultless instruments, it feels like a warm blanket. Percussion is ever-present, cymbals, snare drum, a quiet bass drum. Bass is melodic and obvious picked on a double bass. Piano notes are clear, punchy in the high notes, long decay in the low registers, saxophone is clear, but so pure that it never pushes the voice aside. You know, this is the second album in a row that I listen front to back. Not for a moment does the inclination arise to skip tracks or dig even further into the collection. Music is so natural and so captivating on a QIn Signature that listening and enjoying it takes

away all the restlessness in your head. Regaining the past few weeks, that has actually been the case all the time, always listening to entire albums. Sitting on my couch, reading a book, or listening intensely with eyes closed, sometimes just radio in the background. The QIn Signature has something addictive, fortunately much healthier than a drug.

### **Bassoon of a goddess**

Sophie Dervaux, together with La Folia Barockorchester, plays a number of concertos composed by Vivaldi for bassoon. The QIn Signature manages to keep the small orchestra beautifully on track in terms of image. Spread out against the back wall, with forward-facing soloists including of course Sophie's bassoon, but also a bright, powerful yet tenderly played violin. Repeatedly it is striking how balanced the presentation is, without favouring or disadvantaging any part of the frequency range the QIn can handle. The reproduction is extremely complete, even with classical music, providing details in a high degree of transparency, easily audible with this small orchestra line-up. Orchestra members can be pointed out in the accurate placement. How lovely to caress my ears with bassoon, cellos and harpsichord. Everything falls into place, sound quality, stereo image, placement, loosening from loudspeakers. I can't stress enough how little hi-fi I experience and how much naturalness, forming the illusion of being present at a concert. Sitting in the best seat of the concert hall.

Norwegian Oja Gjello has brought together on "Dreamweaver" everything a reviewer could wish for. His composition features soprano, choir, orchestra, solo piano and violin, arranged in eight movements and truly beautifully recorded. The soprano really pops out of the speakers with a powerful, almost otherworldly voice. Next the choir comes to life, men and women that go wild in a concert hall, recorded in such a way that the acoustics are preserved, while the choir is still intelligible. My goodness, goosebumps. Behind it the orchestra forms the basis for the voices. Overwhelming on the QIn Signature is an understatement with this music. Given you can handle it in terms of volume in your room because it is highly dynamic. Which often is a limitation and leaves you constantly reaching for a remote control, the QIn avoids this tendency as music remains complete at any volume level. An interlude with Gjello as soloist on piano makes your mind drift away, just briefly, soon the choir returns, the sopranos pushing for a place of honour. It is impossible to regain the original acoustic information into a living room, but the QIn makes a valiant and certainly not undeserving attempt to at least create the illusion. I am convinced that in a larger listening room the result will take another step.

New day, new impressions. I must confess that yesterday I started playing music after Oja Gjello, without taking notes, purely to enjoy myself. Today continues with 'obligatory fare'. "Mirror in Mirror" was composed by Arvo Pärt and this time performed by Anne Akiko Meyers. Fabulous how her violin hangs in the air, accompanied by notes played on a grand piano, notice the continuous high note and sometimes the impressive attack on the keyboard. It is rarefied, it is pure, it is intense. Two instruments in complete harmony with each other. Not the most sensitive performance, but one of the best recorded. For a set of QIn Signature, I would gratefully put down my order at this point. (Note: I tried on several other systems to recreate the magic of Akiko's violin, they failed to match the QIn!). Want to hear something that beautiful again? Then consider "Same girl", sung by Youn Sun Nah. Where all the emphasis is on the singer's voice. It's great to be able to concentrate on one voice, with only a tinny in the background. Although you miss the complexity in music that some systems can't handle at all. Singer and guitar often sounds great, an orchestra or a band can be easily too much on badly designed loudspeakers. I could not find limitations to any extent with QIn, my witness the Oja Gjello recording with choir, orchestra, soloists and Oja himself on grand piano. Anette Askvik with "Liberty", played to often on every hifi show. Only thing is, I have never listened to this track in such a beautiful way on a show, not elsewhere and not at home. Deep bass, cello more powerful than ever, second voice as entity and not as fill-in, saxophone big and full of air. Rarely was playback this transparent, tight, detail-rich, built in layers and filled with music. The QIn set I had at home before, Prestige Three considerably lower in price, left a great impression, the Signature takes reproduction steps further. Honestly, I didn't know that my system behind the loudspeakers is that good, it finally explodes in all its glory. This is why I have to play my reference "Truly" by Lori Lieberman, I want to make sure I am not caught off guard. Track by track so loosely hanging in space, using width, depth and full

height. There seem to be no speakers in my room, even with eyes wide open, sound cannot be traced back to them. The QIn Signature plays open and pure, with so little colouration than they completely obliterate themselves. Is this my favourite kind of playback? Yes Yes Yes Yes, this is how music should play. End of review, because otherwise I will only repeat myself.

## Stuff

Above I hinted at the system that's playing. Clean power is the start, AudioQuest Niagara mains filter, Crystal Cable and AudioQuest power cords. Digital is built around a Melco N10 music storage, ROON Nuc, Auralic Aries G2.1 streamer (upgraded to a better power supply than standard), the whole connected with AudioQuest RJ/45 cables to my Melco S100 Ethernet switch. Ending in analogue format after a Metrum Acoustics Pavane d/a converter. Analogue pre- and power amplifier are Audia Flight Strumento No.1 and a FLS 4. That FLS 4 guarantees 200 watts per channel into 8 ohms. Interlinks running to and in between the amplifiers are Inakustik NF-2404 AIR Helix and speaker cables Crystal Cable Speak Reference. Distance between speaker and side wall is 88 cm, between speaker and rear wall 25-28 cm (toed in), they are 180 cm apart. All measured at the corners of the cabinets. The QIn Signature is on Signature stands, not padded, resting on the non-metal spikes and coasters that QIn supplies.

## QIn Signature dissects

Almost always I start by describing the product in question, a kind of logical structure is: 'what is', 'with which' and 'how does that play'. In very few cases I deviate from the rule, really only if the device or speaker in question performs so exceptionally that listening to music comes first. Indeed now with the QIn Signature, which I'm going to describe on paper for you anyway. The QIn Signature loudspeaker is a two-way system with a dome tweeter, a woofer and a bass reflex port. Housed in an enclosure of which only the side walls are at the same angle. Front and rear walls are sat at an angle that differs from each other by a few degrees, the top plate slopes down, only the bottom is flat. Must be a crime to make a cutting plan. Not measured in millimetres but centimetres, the QIn Signature is large at the bottom measuring 28 x 48 cm, narrow at the top at 18 x 36 cm, tall at the front with 42.5 cm and low at the back where I measure 38 cm. The QIn Signature stand measures 30 x 48 cm and is 67 cm high, including spikes and cups. Fits exactly under the QIn Signature and therefore has bevelled edges. Total height is one metre and ten centimetre. Seen from the front they are reasonably slim together, seen from the side the QIn Signature on the Signature stand suffers from obesity. Which translates into the weight, the speaker 31 kilos and each stand (unfilled) 13 kilos. The speaker is available in matt walnut or burr walnut piano lacquer. The stand in black or matching veneer. A front cover is included. Take the front off for serious listening sessions.

After listening for three weeks it is funny to read my own conclusion back in the QIn documentation. QIn does not aim first and only for flat frequency response, low distortion and hyper detailing, they aim to make music and convey emotion. To do this, they use techniques such as correct phase behaviour by an angled baffle, a small baffle for minimal reflections, avoiding cabinet resonances, phase correct crossovers with even impedance and avoiding voltage generation in the speaker, voltage to return to the connected amplifier (EMF). The enclosure of the QIn Signature with its pyramid shape prevents internal standing waves and contributes to its phase correct behaviour. The cabinet is made of Qboard, a multi-layer construction with damping between inner and outer walls. The stand is also made of Qboard. If you take a look through the reflex port, you can just barely see the inside of the baffle and the little damping of real wool, with reinforcement of a synthetic fibre to keep the wool in place. The woofer has a 7-inch Kevlar cone and an "under hung" magnet. The latter indicates that the voice coil can never move outside the air gap. The woofer is heavy in weight and costly because of the large magnet, leading to super linear behaviour. The structure of the magnet prevents turbulence in the voice coil chamber, preserving micro details. The tweeter is a 25mm dome with a large surround. The AirCirc magnet system consists of multiple magnets placed in a ring shape for extra high field strength. The frequency range of this tweeter extends to beyond 30kHz. The chamber behind the AirCirc magnet dampens all reflections and resonances. For the filter, which has a constant impedance, QIn uses non-inductive capacitors with copper

film for the tweeter and flat-wire coils for the woofer. Resistors are precision metal film. QIn produces the internal cabling itself, solid copper wound on a polypropylene carrier and fitted with polypropylene insulation. The terminals on the back of the QIn are WBT Nextgen silver on copper. All in all, the QIn Signature has an efficiency of 87dB at 8 ohms. With a -3dB point at 38Hz. QIn recommends an amplifier with power output between 50 and 250 watts.

### **Leaving**

What useful words are left to make a final assessment of the QIn Signature. Let me start with the statement I wrote down at the very beginning of the review, the QIn Signature is here to enjoy music. That they need technology, more than thought possible and more than QIn reveals, is just a fact that only the manufacturer has to worry about. What the listener is presented with is further removed from technology than many other speakers can be proud of. You are sucked into the music every second that sound escapes from the QIn Signature. In which placement, stereo image, lack of distortion, correct phase behaviour and wide frequency range play a very big role, but the listener is not bothered with those parameters. In my opinion, this is due to the balance QIn has managed to achieve between technology and music. I sat down breathlessly listening to music, wondering if I have ever had a speaker in my house that managed to convey emotion and atmosphere better. Wondering if there was ever a loudspeaker in my living that came so close to the source, to the artist him/herself. Realising in the process of reviewing that the entire system behind the QIn Signature also continued to improve over the years, which will surely help achieve this feat. Nonetheless, I cannot help but describe the QIn Signature as a top-notch loudspeaker that captivated from the first minute to the last. And sadly, that last minute is now history. Highly, highly recommended to listen to yourself.

### **Prices per pair:**

QLN Signature matt walnut 22,000 euro  
QLN Signature walnut burl piano 25,000 euro  
QLN Signature stand black/walnut burl piano 2,750 euro  
QLN Signature stand black 2,000 euro

### **Benelux distributor:**

City Audio Trade

### **Pros:**

- Has been created for music playback
- Magnificent stereo image
- May be positioned close to the rear wall (my experience)
- Shape ensures absence of internal standing waves and resonances
- High-quality drivers, filters and cabinet
- Flat frequency response
- Minus 3dB point at 38 Hz
- Perfect integration of woofer and tweeter

### **Cons:**

- Only two available finishes

### **Rating**

5 out of 5 with a golden edge