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JBL LS40 review

It's not often we come across horn-loaded speakers **Tested at £1,100**

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Our Verdict



They certainly make an impression. With better bass performance, the LS40s would be a match for most at this price point

For

- Breathtaking detail in the mid-range and treble
- dynamic sound

Against

- Bottom end sounds cloudy, lacking definition and clarity

Reviewed on **30th July 2008**

It's not often we come across horn-loaded speakers in a commercial setting. They're usually found tagged onto PA systems in nightclubs and concert venues.

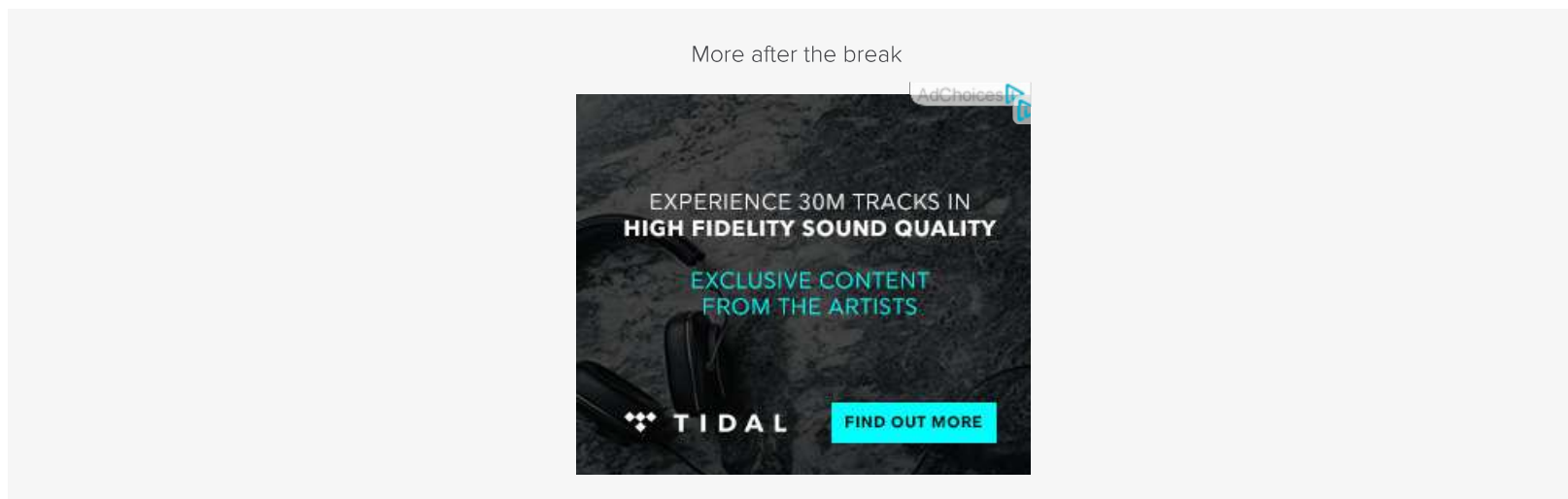
Why? Because the nature of horn-loaded speakers means they can throw out a loud sound more efficiently than a conventional driver unit configuration.

The catch is that this can come at a price: tonally, they may not sound as pure as traditional speakers. JBL has tried hard to prevent the bi-wireable LS40s from sounding coloured. And, on the whole, it seems to have worked.

Dynamically, the LS40s sound superb. From the midrange all the way to the top, there's a real immediacy and directness to the sound. Vocals and instruments are delivered clearly and precisely, with fantastic attention to detail.

It's a real pleasure listening to Madonna's vocals and the background guitar during The Power Of Goodbye, with the latter

sounding extremely refined and realistic. The JBLs really bring a sense of sparkle to proceedings. **Bass needs a boost** Over a prolonged listen, though, it's hard not to feel there's something missing. It's a telling sign that, while we are liberal with our gushing praise over the treble and midrange, the same doesn't extend to the lower frequencies.



If they handled bass with the same clarity, punch and impact, you'd be looking at a possible class-leader. Throughout The Battle track from the Gladiator OST, bass notes sound cloudy and ill-defined. The JBLs struggle to cut through this sonic mist and you lose a dimension to the sound.

It's a shame, especially when you take into account a refined look that includes high-gloss-ebony wood panels.

Unfortunately, the lack of consistency across the frequency range robs them of a star.

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