



SPEAKERS BY PICASSO

With the Logos-N-Sub and Logos Mini, Goldmund rearranges the loudspeaker into a work of art.

Breaking common objects apart and rearranging them in different forms can give us exciting new perspectives. The technique certainly worked for cubist painters like Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. And at first glance, it seems to have worked for Swiss audio manufacturer Goldmund, which has broken the conventional loudspeaker into its component parts, then reassembled them into a collection of striking sonic sculptures. I intend to experiment with this technique myself, perhaps starting with my girlfriend's CD collection.

Goldmund's smaller speakers are simple, elegant boxes; its larger speakers are assemblages of smaller speakers. Ty Wiedrich, who installs Goldmund systems

across North America, arrives at my home with examples of each. The smallest is the Logos Mini, a bookshelf-type speaker which we set up as a rear surround speaker. The larger model is the freestanding Logos-N-Sub, which comprises a Logos Mini and a Logos subwoofer suspended in a black metal frame. The styling of these speakers immediately grabs attention: The simplicity of half-inch-thick aluminum slabs, black frames, and black grilles gives them an architectural aura, and tiny gold logo plates add a luxurious touch to the spare aesthetic.

The Logos Mini and the Logos-N-Sub differ from competitors not only in appearance, but in substance as well. Both are internally amplified, so they can be connected directly to a surround-sound processor; no external amplifiers are needed, although your installer will have

The Logos Mini (upper left) on its stand and the Logos-N-Sub (near left), both shown without grilles.

BY BRENT BUTTERWORTH PHOTOGRAPHY BY CORDERO STUDIOS



The Logos subwoofer's rear panel (above) includes digital and analog inputs, plus controls for level and crossover frequency.

to plug each speaker directly into an AC outlet. Both also include built-in digital-to-analog converters so they can accept digital signals from Goldmund's unusual, digital-output surround processors—such as the SR8, which the company loans me along with the speakers. The advantage of the digital connection is that the signal does not degrade as it travels down the cable, as it would with an analog connection. It also means you can “daisy-chain” two speakers, running a single wire to the closest one and a second wire to the next. The Logos subwoofer that comprises half of the Logos-N-Sub includes level and crossover frequency controls on the back.

The SR8 has four stereo digital outputs for eight total output channels. Each of the output channels can carry any signal (left, right, center, left surround, right surround, subwoofer), or a mix of any two signals. Wiedrich decides

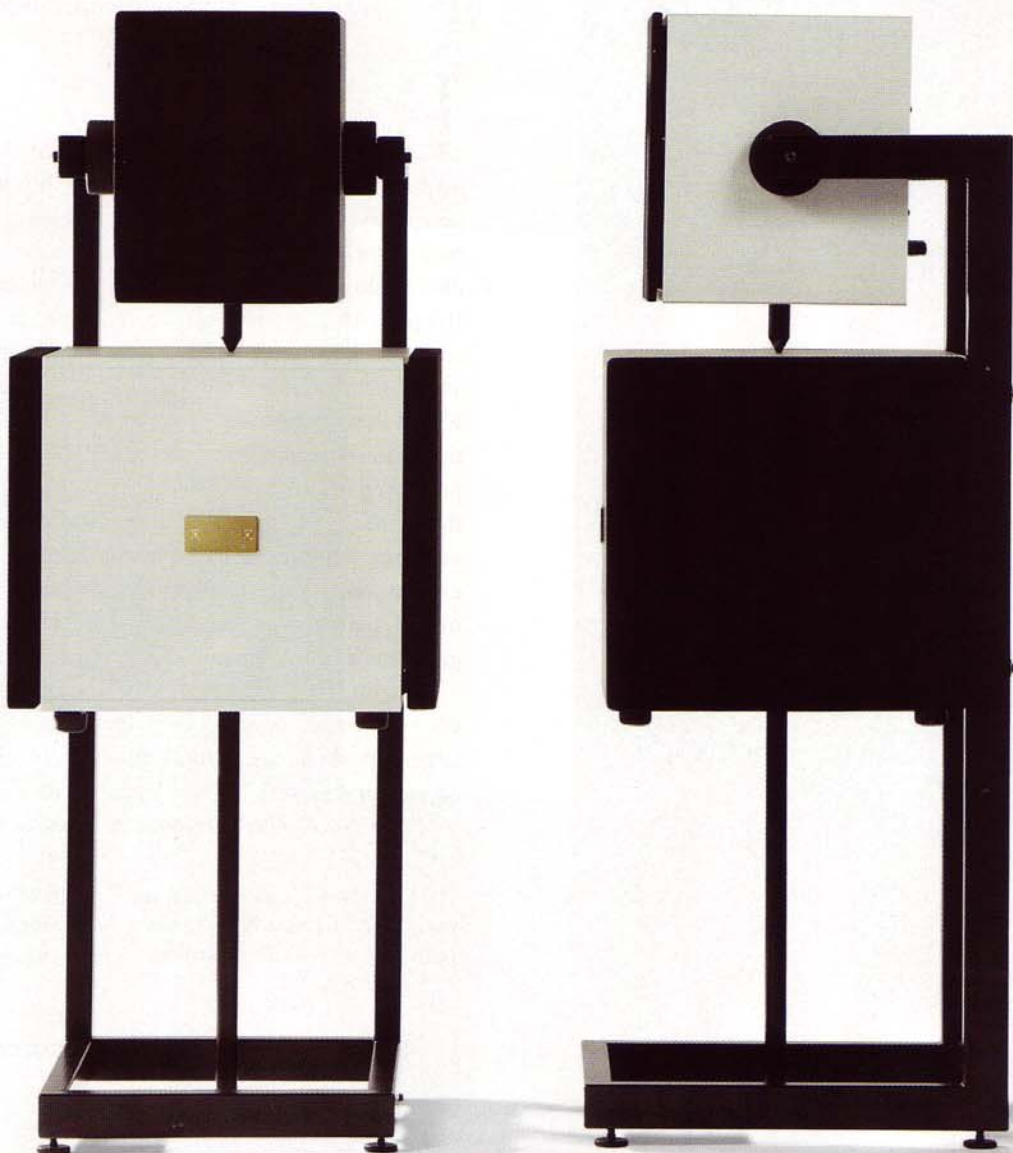
to devote one stereo digital output to each Logos-N-Sub, feeding different digital signals to the Logos Mini section and the Logos subwoofer section. Another stereo digital output is split between the two stand-mounted Logos Minis in the back of the room.

Where's the center speaker? There isn't one—Goldmund doesn't believe in it. Thus, Wiedrich sets the SR8

to mix the sound from the center channel into the left and right channels. While the company makes a valid technical case against the use of a center speaker, I dissent. Without a center speaker, people seated off-center will hear movie dialogue coming from the side of the screen rather than from the middle, and I find this effect distracting. But no matter—an extra Logos Mini makes a perfect

center speaker to go with a pair of Logos-N-Subs, and it is no problem for your installer to configure the SR8

The Logos-N-Sub (below) comprises a Logos Mini bookshelf speaker and a Logos subwoofer, both held by an aluminum frame. Metal spikes in the centers of the speakers route spurious vibrations out of the speakers and into the floor, where they cannot affect sound quality.



to handle a center speaker.

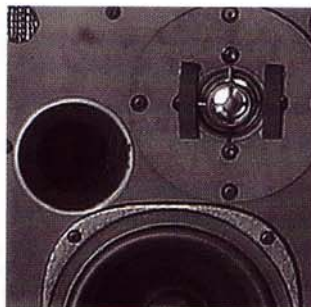
The sound that emerges from the Logos-N-Sub and the Logos Mini shocks me—not simply for its sheer quality (I hear plenty of excellent speakers), but for its friendliness and accessibility, which I did not expect. Most high-end speakers reflect their designer's taste in music—they may reproduce chamber music beautifully, for example, but sound inappropriate for rock music. Or they may be built primarily to fill large home theaters with sound, with little regard for the delicacy and detail in the best stereo recordings. Practically every speaker I review fails to reproduce at least one of my favorite test tracks convincingly—but not the Goldmunds. Through them, everything sounds close to

The SR8 surround processor (below) is extraordinarily unusual in that it has four digital stereo audio outputs and no analog outputs. Each output can be assigned to any channel in a surround-sound system, or a mix of any two channels.

perfect, from gravelly voiced blues singers to soft-toned Brazilian vocalists, from delicate percussion to thunderous explosions, from Mötley Crüe to Mozart. Every detail comes through, and the tonality is extraordinarily neutral, with no chestiness in male vocals, no shrillness in female vocals, no softening of edgy saxophones and guitars, and no boominess in the bass. I cannot remember experiencing such versatility in any other high-end speaker.

The spatial presentation is rather dry, a less enveloping sound than I hear from some other high-end speakers. I suspect this is because the tweeter is set toward the side, and the speakers are not made in mirror-imaged pairs as are most other high-end speakers with offset tweeters. The result is the sort of very focused sound one hears from most professional recording monitors.

The Logos subwoofer incorporated into the Logos-N-Sub performs like the best of the high-powered, overbuilt “minisubs” on the market, combining loads of



High-frequency sounds tend to diffract off the edges of speaker cabinets. The tweeter of the Logos Mini (above) is offset so the diffraction is different on each side, thus lessening its overall effect.

bass oomph with the precision necessary for accurate reproduction of bass lines and movie sound effects. Even my most demanding bass test CD, a recording of Belgian composer Joseph Jongen's “Symphonie Concertante” highlighted by extraordinarily deep organ notes, fails to choke the sub.

Another audio manufacturer recently expressed to me the hope that buyers of high-end audio and video gear might someday take the

DESCRIPTION

Speaker system for home theater or stereo use. Forms a complete digital audio system with SR8 surround processor

COMPONENTS

Logos Mini: 5-inch polypropylene-cone woofer, 1-inch aluminum-dome tweeter
Logos-N-Sub: same as above plus two 10-inch fiber-cone woofers

CONNECTIONS

Logos Mini: RCA jacks for analog audio input and digital audio input
Logos-N-Sub: same as above plus an extra set of inputs and outputs on Logos subwoofer
SR8: three stereo analog audio inputs, four coaxial digital audio inputs, four coaxial digital audio outputs, DB-9 RS-232 connector for programming and control

DIMENSIONS

Logos Mini: 10.5 x 7.5 x 9.2 inches (hwd)
Logos-N-Sub: 40.2 x 15.1 x 14.9 inches (hwd)
SR8: 3 x 17.3 x 15.7 inches (hwd)

PRICE/CONTACT

PRICE: Logos Mini \$19,980 per pair, Logos-N-Sub \$27,350 per pair, SR8: \$9,990
CONTACT: 888.GOLD.001, goldmund.com

same pride in their acquisitions as watch enthusiasts do, trumpeting the brand name to all who care to hear. I have to think Goldmund owners may be the first to do so, if the craftsmanship, design, and sound quality of these speakers are any indication. **[RE]**

