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A SYNDICATED REVIEW
FROM GERMANY



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



ELECTROMOTION ESL

UNITES STATES

This review first appeared in the January 2013 issue of [hi-end hifi magazine fairaudio.de](http://hi-end-hifi-magazine.fairaudio.de) of Germany. You can also read this [review of Martin Logan](#) in its original German version. We publish its English translation in a mutual syndication arrangement with the publishers. As is customary for our own reviews, the writer's signature at review's end shows an e-mail address should you have questions or wish to send feedback. All images contained in this review are the property of fairaudio or Martin Logan- Ed.

Reviewer: Jochen Reinecke

Sources: Audiolab 8200CDQ, 80GB iPod Video with Pure i-20 dock, Marantz SA 7001 CD/SACD, Yamaha CD-S 1000, Pro-Ject Xpression III with Ortofon OM 30 Super

Amplification: Audiolab 8200CDQ, Funk LAP-2 and Dynavox TPR-2 preamps, Trends Audio TA-10.2 SE and Yarland FV-34C III integrated amps, Myryad MXA 2150 power amp

Loudspeakers: Neat Momentum 4i, Quadral Rondo, Nubert nuBox 101 with AW 441 subwoofer, DIY TL with F120A widebender

Cables: AVI Deep Blue interconnects, Ortofon SPK 500 speaker cables

Review component retail: €3.190/pr



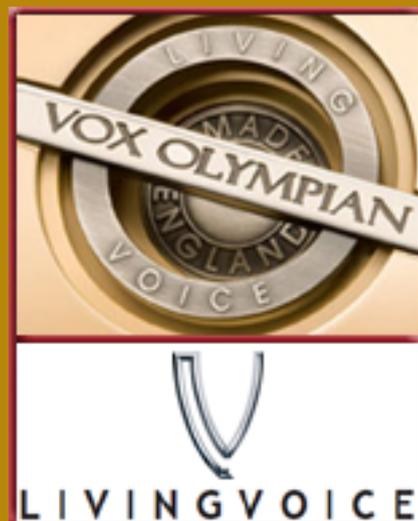
Premieres are neat! This one had me thrilled to learn that my publisher had booked me for Martin Logan's ElectroMotion ESL electrostat as a type of speaker I'd never hosted before. After unpeeling the immaculately finished speakers from their top-shelf shipping containers, the first impression duly was "they *do* look different than your typical box" - more filigreed, ethereal and literally more translucent. The panel diaphragms of the ElectroMotion ESL sit inside lightly curved finely perforated aluminium/composite frames which has one see right *through* the speakers.



The maker's website blows this trumpet loud. "The new Xstat panel of the ElectroMotion ESL is so visually transparent that you nearly don't see it when you sit down to listen." That's putting it on a bit thick but the fact remains, compared to classical speakers this one blends more harmoniously into domestic environs to become of particular interest for those with better half issues. To maintain narrative flow I'll refrain from explaining the electrostatic operating principle which a bit of googling takes care of. Ultimately the how isn't important, only results. But a brief survey of technical advantages and challenges shall be useful to set the stage compared to more traditional dynamic speakers.



Amongst obvious assets is far more effective ratio of diaphragm size vs. moving mass. Compared to the combined cone/dome surface of a classic floorstander, today's tester throws into the deal far greater surface area at a fraction of the weight. From this one expects superior impulse response and higher resolution. Another advantage is reproducing the entire audible frequencies with one and the same driver. Full-range electrostats like the [Silberstatic Nr.1](#) which could be called true widebanders do away with crossovers entirely (though the ElectroMotion ESL doesn't belong to this category). This eliminates typical network effects of phase shift, response deviations and such. Finally box talk disappears since there's no traditional enclosure with its tendencies for undesirable resonance and internal standing waves.



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Obviously the electrostat has its own fundamental issues. As a typical dipole radiating freely front *and* back, in-room radiation behavior is more poorly defined. A given space and its acoustic traits weigh more heavily into the final outcome. And then there's panel speakers' reputation for taking the term sweet spot literal – as a truly small area. Finally one must mention that bass particularly in the first two octaves becomes a true challenge. To compete with the pressurization of classic electrodynamic transducers now requires disproportionately large panels. Put differently, under real-world practical constraints full bass extension remains on the wish list. One either accepts this or augments the panel with a dynamic woofer as Martin Logan has done with this model.



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