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Gauder Akustik Elargo 200  
Loudspeaker

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SPEED  
& CLARITY

WITH A TOUCH OF WARMTH

GAUDER AKUSTIK ELARGO 200 LOUDSPEAKER

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**B**efore this evaluation of the Gauder Akustik Elargo 200 loudspeaker (\$49,975), I've had two other Gauder Akustik loudspeakers in for review. One of them was the Berlina RC 9, a reference-quality 4-way floorstander utilizing a ¾" pure-diamond tweeter, a 2" pure-diamond midrange driver, a 7" ceramic lower-midrange driver, and three 7" ceramic woofers in a bass-reflex enclosure. The other was Gauder Akustik's flagship of the DARC series (at the time of review), the DARC 250 MK II, another 4-way speaker system that utilizes a ¾" pure-diamond tweeter, a 2" pure-diamond high-midrange driver, a 7" ceramic lower-midrange driver, and two 9" back-coated aluminum woofers paralleled in a bass-reflex enclosure with a speaker cabinet using stacked aluminum rib construction. Both speakers incorporated impressive 60dB/octave crossovers on all drivers, producing sound that was transient rich and attention grabbing.

## DESCRIPTION

The Elargo 200 is a new line of loudspeakers from Gauder Akustik that features drop-shaped (teardrop) cabinets formed from solid sides rather than the rib construction of the Berlina and DARC Series. As with all Gauder speakers, everything is designed specifically for this individual product: crossovers, enclosure, drivers, and other components. The Elargo 200 is a 3-way floorstander with over 50dB/octave crossover slopes on all drivers. The drivers are a beryllium tweeter with an iron-neodymium-boron magnet; a damped, lightweight, ultra-stiff-aluminum 7" midrange driver with XPulse rear-vented centering spider; and two, stiffened, back-coated-aluminum, long-throw 22cm (8.66") woofers with XPulse rear-ventilated centering spider in a bass-reflex enclosure.

The Elargo 200, like other Gauder Akustik transducers, uses the same physics-based systems-design approach, with mathematical models developed for each speaker system. The founder of the company, Dr. Roland Gauder, holds a doctorate degree in physics. The Gauder approach of using these unique-to-the-speaker equations is derived from Euler's formulas, which describe every parameter of the speaker system (drivers, cabinet, and crossover) and its performance characteristics (including vibration, oscillation, damping, and decay of driver diaphragms, cabinet materials, and electrical components). Additional mathematical transforms are then applied to create transfer functions representing the speaker enclosure size, Thiele-Small driver parameters, and electrical components for the complete system.

According to Gauder Akustik, no off-the-shelf drivers are used in Elargo 200. The Thiele-Small parameters for the required drivers are transferred to the manufacturers to produce a physical component that matches the one developed via the mathematical design. The drivers are made exactly as specified. Gauder feels the resulting adherence to specifications helps to produce drivers that are fast, rigid, and nimble, with strong magnetic properties.

The Elargo 200's enclosure sides and front baffle are constructed from a thick, heavily damped, wood-based material that is internally

braced to provide structural rigidity and suppress vibration. The speaker is 126cm (49.61) tall, 30cm (11.81) wide, 43cm (16.93) deep, and weighs 50 kg (110.23 lbs.).

The front baffle of the Elargo 200 holds, from top to bottom, the tweeter, midrange, and both woofers in a vertical array. The bass-reflex port is located in the bottom of the baseplate where the short distance to the floor has a limited effect on the port's acoustic impedance. Each of the four height/leveling feet on this wide base are easily adjustable using a threaded dial. The position of each leveling foot has an easily viewed stepped indicator next to the dial. There are two sets of WBT bi-wire/bi-amp binding posts found on the lower rear of the Elargo 200. Above the binding posts are a set of low-frequency shelf/level adjustment jumpers and a Bass Extension adjustment jumper (more on these later). The Elargo 200 is available in lacquered high-gloss piano black, high-gloss white, or an attractive high-gloss rosewood veneer.

The Elargo 200 uses passive crossovers that have >50dB/octave slopes throughout. Like the higher-cost Berlina and DARC Series speakers, the design doubles the parts count to create symmetrical crossovers (equipped with components from Mundorf and Intertechnik) that are equally distributed along the positive and negative terminals of the drivers. Gauder Akustik uses a significant amount of computer processing power to solve several multivariate complex equations simultaneously to realize the proper values for these crossover components. These higher-slope crossovers work to reject sound energy from audio signals outside the intended passband of each driver. Gauder does this to ensure each driver can play its portion of the frequency spectrum with greater clarity and dynamic headroom. The company also believes there is an additional advantage of avoiding the breakup modes and some crossover distortion characteristics that tend to show up sooner in some of the lower-order crossover designs using similar-type drivers, especially when playing music at louder levels.

The 7" XPulse midrange operates from 130Hz up to 3500Hz where the tweeter takes over. Below 130Hz, the dual 22cm XPulse bass drivers operate in the aforementioned ported



enclosure where the woofer/cabinet has a second-order high-pass filter around 20Hz to block DC, block subsonic frequencies, and suppresses frequencies below the resonance of the drivers. This effectively allows for the addition of an octave of low-end response via the Bass Extension feature by reducing the impedance of the bass-reflex system so the speaker can handle (and use) more energy from the amplifier.

The Elargo 200 uses a compensating time-delay filter for the tweeter. This time-delay circuit is used to counter the inherent inductor-induced group delay and driver-to-driver voice-coil location difference between the tweeter and midrange. Gauder believes the audible result of this group-delay phenomena is generally observed in slightly smeared impulses and smoothed-over transients. By implementing Gauder's Time-Delay-Control (TDC) circuit, the proper delay of the tweeter relative to the midrange allows the loudspeaker to generate transients at the same time. This approach results in a synchronous projection of sound into the room to create a much more precise impulse response. Gauder says the audible outcome of this circuit design is better instrumental attack without energy robbing time-smear or smoothing.

The Elargo 200 has two different sets of adjustments that help with in-room setup and/or personal sound preferences. A low-frequency shelf adjustment that operates on the woofers from 130Hz and below with three settings: -1.5dB, 0dB, and +1.5dB. The other in-room selectable Bass Extension adjustment allows the user to select 6 different settings that control the bass levels between 30Hz and 70Hz. This range is generally in the area where room-related bass issues tend to arise. There are four bass extension modules and a jumper for setting the levels. The settings are: 0dB (jumper location open), +1dB (red module), +2dB (blue module), +3dB (green module), +3.5dB (white module), +4dB (jumper in). These adjustments can be tailored to the listening room based on linearizing speaker/wall proximity and user preference.

## SETUP

The Elargo 200 loudspeakers were delivered by a team from U.S. importer, Axiss Audio USA. The set-up process was straight-forward and completed without any issues. The high-gloss lacquered rosewood finish on the pair of Elargo 200s in for evaluation fit into the room with ease. The speakers looked terrific in my room.

My listening room is approximately 18' wide and 43' deep, with an 8' ceiling (a little over 6000 cubic feet), with permanent openings that add a few thousand cubic feet of additional space. Since I had experience with two previous Gauder speakers in this listening room, a relatively wonderful sound was achieved by roughly locating the loudspeakers where the others were placed. Those locations were later refined to approximately 4.25' from the sidewalls, 8.75' out from the front wall, 9.25' apart, with each speaker a little over 10.25' from the main listening position.

Utilizing the adjustment capabilities of the Elargo 200 after more fine-tuning, the woofer's low-frequency shelf adjustment sounded ex-

## THE TYPE OF PERFORMANCE AND PRESENTATION BOTH AUDIOPHILES AND MUSIC LOVERS CAN CRAVE.

cellent for my room at the +1.5dB setting. I tried all Bass Extension settings and ended up mostly using the +3.5dB module, which gave the speakers a healthy blend of low-frequency sound with perceived speed and power. As with my experience with the DARC 250 MK II, I believe the Elargo 200's adjustability will prove to be particularly useful for many in-room configurations.

## LISTENING

In my listening space, the Elargo 200 had a physically solid musical presentation with attractive levels of transparency, precise imaging, perceptual speed, macro-dynamics, inner detail, soundstage spaciousness, believable instrumental timbre, and an enjoyable overall listening experience. Coupled with capable sources and electronics, the Elargo 200 played music that was richly satisfying, exciting, and sometimes relaxing, depending on the music. It's an all-around performer that plays at a very high level, meaning the speaker can cope with any genre of music and generate upper-tier performance.

The Elargo 200 appears to be a touch more full-bodied and warmer than the excellent-sounding DARC 250 MK II in the mid/upper bass and lower midrange. The resulting sound makes the fundamentals of vocals and instruments sound denser and more physically present without overtly sacrificing the harmonics that give notes their individuality and identity. Through the Elargo 200, the voices of Lisa Gerrard on "The Wind That Shakes The Barley," Shirley Horn on "Dindi," or Sonny Boy Williamson on "Keep It To Ourselves" had an inviting sense of solidity that kept the unique character of each singer fully intact. Similar effects were observed with instruments ranging from Frédéric Rossetlet's performance of Gyorgy Ligeti's sonata for solo cello to the full-on orchestral delights of Massenet's *Le Cid*. Each instrument felt securely tethered to its fundamental roots while providing delightfully open harmonic richness. The Ligeti sonata captured the direct, somewhat dry acoustics of the Alfred Newman Recital Hall and the close-up microphone placement. As a result, the bow movements, fingering, and action of the playing were realistically clear. The transparency of the *Le Cid*

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performance was also exceptionally well portrayed (more comments on this piece below).

The speaker remains transparent to the performance and engineering without the feeling of overlaying a common sonic signature on every piece of music played through it. Whether listening to the *Belafonte Sings The Blues* album from the late 50s, where it becomes quite easy to hear the juxtaposition of songs on this album that were recorded in two different studios, or the uniquely different orchestral sounds produced during Diana Krall's "Dream" or Linda Ronstadt's "What's New," the Elargo 200s do not appear to obfuscate in any way an open-window view of the recording's character. With "What's New," the orchestra appears deep in the background; yet each instrument is easily located and identifiable. Ronstadt's vocals are reverberant, very dynamic, and imaged directly ahead of everything else. With Krall, the strings are also deeply layered in the background across the soundstage with transparent guitar strumming and bass playing along with dynamic yet subtle piano notes and clear close-mic'd vocals.

Imaging is precise and has high-quality coherence across the soundstage with ample portrayal of the surrounding soundscape when the recording has such information. On the hard left/right/center presentation of older recordings, such as Kenny Burrell's *Midnight Blue* or a modern rendition of that same style of recording like Jerome Sabbagh's more recent *Stand Up!*, the Elargo 200 holds the imaging precise yet still captures the spatial soundscape in which the recording was made, while keeping the instruments from sounding like they are all coming from individual drivers within the cabinet. When things get expanded with broader recording techniques that capture more of the soundscape, the Elargo 200s are capable of responding in kind with a

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EVEN MORE SO GIVEN THEIR VALUE-  
FOR-PERFORMANCE PRICE POINT.**

broad and deep soundstage with pieces of music like the "What's New" or *Le Cid* performances mentioned above. In each case, the orchestral layout, instrument placement, and the bloom of the recording venue are all proportionate and believable to a higher degree than some of the other speaker designs I've experienced. With *Le Cid*, the three-dimensional soundstage was clear with easily rendered spatial location cues. Dynamically percussive lows and highs with soaring horns, strings, drums, and woodwinds were effortlessly served up. The sound was very highly resolved, precise, and musical while maintaining excellent instrumental separation for the type of performance and presentation both audiophiles and music lovers can crave.

Listening to the sometimes-mesmerizing inner detail and speed the speakers can portray while keeping instrumental timbre correct can be a feast of a treat. Playing "Cottontail" from *Duke's Big 4* allows one to hear the rapid note progression and separation of bass and kick drum that hold the tune's rhythm, while the speedy guitar and brush playing keeps up without sounding smeared. Duke's piano sounds great on this tune with excellent start/stop timing that gives a nod to the transient behavior of the speakers.

Speaking of transient behavior, I developed a new appreciation for the drum work of Eric Montzka on the track "Crash" from Patricia Barber's double LP *Live: A fortnight in France* with the Elargo 200 and the new Hana Umami Black



phono cartridge (review forthcoming). This superb-sounding transducer combo allows one to thoroughly hear and almost visually observe the incredible playing, thanks to the location cues captured from Montzka's multi-mic'd drum kit on this tune. His constant speedy time-signature fills and musicianship working with the percussion and micro-rolls on drums, bells, and cymbals were plain mesmerizing, shedding new light on just how much talent was poured into his live performance on this track.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout their time here for evaluation, the Elargo 200s were objectively and subjectively impressive-sounding speakers—even more

## THE SPEAKER CAN LEGITIMATELY STAND ITS GROUND WITH THE COMPETITION.

so given their value-for-performance price point. When properly set up, the speaker can legitimately stand its ground with the competition. An Elargo 200 audition is recommended. If the presentation is to your liking, there is a good chance it may be the speaker you'll want to take home with you. **tas**

## SPECS & PRICING

**Sensitivity:** 87dB

**Impedance:** 5 ohms nominal

**Driver complement:** 2x 22cm (8.66")

XPulse stiffened back-coated aluminum long-throw aluminum-coned woofers; (7") XPulse lightweight, damped, ultra-stiff aluminum-coned midrange; beryllium dome tweeter

**Loading:** Ported

**Crossover type:** Symmetrical 3-way, >50dB/octave slopes

**Crossover frequencies:** 130Hz, 3500Hz

**Power handling:** 480W

**Dimensions:** 11.81" x 49.61" x 16.93"

**Weight:** 110 lbs. each

**Finishes:** Piano lacquer high-gloss black, high-gloss white, or high-gloss Rosewood

**Price:** \$49,975

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## REFERENCE SYSTEM

**Analog tape:** Otari MTR-10 Studio Mastering (¼" 2-track) tape deck with custom Flux Magnetic Mastering Series repro head and secondary custom tube output stage, Studer A820 Studio Mastering (¼" 2-track) tape deck (x2), Studer A80VU MKII Studio Mastering (¼" 2-track) tape deck, ReVox A700 (¼" 2-track and ¼" 4-track heads) tape deck (x2), Stellavox SP7 (¼" 2-track) tape deck with ABR large reel adapter, Nagra IV-S tape deck with custom large reel adapter, ReVox G-36 (¼" 4-track) tape deck, Sony TC-755 (¼" 4-track) tape deck, Uher 4400 (¼" 2-track) stereo tape deck; 1950 Ampex 400A tape repro electronics (x2), The Raptor (Custom) tape repro electronics, ReVox B77 MK III (¼" 2-track) tape deck.

**Analog vinyl:** Basis Audio Debut Vacuum with Synchro-Wave Power Supply, Basis Audio 2800 Vacuum, Basis Audio 2001, TW Acoustic Raven Two turntables; Basis Audio SuperArm 9, Basis Audio Vector IV (x2), Graham Phantom III, Graham 2.2; Lyra Atlas Lambda, Lyra Atlas Lambda SL, Lyra Etna Lambda SL, Lyra Titan-i, van den Hul Colibri XGP, Hana SL, Hana SL MK II, Hana

Umami Red, Hana Umami Blue, Hana Umami Black.

**Analog phono stage:** The Raptor (Custom), Ayre P-5xe, Musical Surroundings Phenomena II+ w/Linear Power Supply.

**Digital source:** Intel i7 10th generation processor-based music server hosting JRiver Media Center, Roon, and Qobuz.

**Preamplification:** Dual Placette Audio Active Linestage

**Amplification:** Custom/modified solid-state monoblocks

**Loudspeakers:** Vandersteen Model 3a Signature with dual 2Wq subwoofers and dual SUB THREE subwoofers using M5-HPB high-pass filter, Gauder Akustik Elargo 200, Clarisys Audio Aria.

**Cables:** Assortment of AudioQuest, Shunyata, Tara Labs, Acoustic Research, Cardas, and custom cables.

**Support:** Minus-K BM-1, Neuance shelf, Maple wood shelf, Symposium Ultra

**Acoustics:** Walker Audio

**Accessories:** Aurios Pro, Pneuance Audio, Walker Audio, Klaudio KD-CLN-LP200, VPI 16.5, Clearaudio Double Matrix Professional Sonic.

**Room:** 18' (W), 8' (H), 43' (L)