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MoFi SourcePoint 888

Three 8in drivers bring added foundation and scale to the SourcePoint 8 – say ‘hello’ to the 888 with bass a-plenty
 Review: **Jamie Biesemans** Lab: **Paul Miller**

If you thought that MoFi Electronics’ SourcePoint 10 [HFN Apr ’23] was a sizeable speaker, then you haven’t seen anything yet. Sporting a trio of 200mm drivers, the new SourcePoint 888 is the company’s third outing in the loudspeaker space and something of a beast – reasonably tall at 107cm, positively stocky at 32cm wide and 41cm deep, and hefty too at 43kg.

Despite the increase in size, this floorstander is very closely related to the standmount SourcePoint 10, and principally the SourcePoint 8 [HFN Aug ’23], which makes sense as all three were designed by noted engineer Andrew Jones [see boxout, p63] and sport his trademark coaxial driver. When the ‘888 launched, Jones stated its aim was to evolve the SourcePoint range ‘to an even higher performance level’. But does bigger always mean better?

IN THE MOOD

There’s a whiff of nostalgia about the MoFi brand, with Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab’s vinyl re-releases of landmark albums and, since 2014, a MoFi Electronics subsidiary that produces a turntable brandishing Fender’s iconic Sunburst finish, plus a phono stage adorned with VU meters [HFN Dec ’23]. The SourcePoint 888 entertains the same mood, in particular the Walnut and Satin Black Oak colourways, but you can opt for a Satin White option if you’d prefer something a bit more ‘modern’.

Grilles are supplied, but are colour-matched to your chosen finish, so a black ‘888 comes with black grilles, and grey grilles accompany the white and walnut models (additional black grilles can be bought for £199). These attach magnetically and their unusual, angled shape – to follow the contours of the speaker’s multifaceted black baffle – is rather pleasing, but using them isn’t recommended for critical listening [see PM’s Lab Report, p65]. Also supplied are flat and coned feet options that screw into the speaker’s plinth stand.

Most loudspeaker manufacturers want to optimise their production processes by ‘reusing’ drivers in multiple models, so the fact that Jones has carried over the SourcePoint 8’s concentric array isn’t unusual. An evolution of the 250mm design of the original SourcePoint 10, it positions a decoupled 32mm soft dome tweeter, with 28mm copper voice-coil, in the throat of a 200mm pulp paper cone. As before, a ‘Twin Drive’ motor system, where neodymium magnets for both the woofer and tweeter are coupled together, is said to limit distortion, while the shape of the cone has been modelled to optimally load the tweeter and minimise reflections from the cone’s low-profile surround.

THREE’S COMPANY

These two units crossover at a relatively low 1.6kHz, but the doubling in cabinet size over the SourcePoint 8 has made space for two additional 200mm paper cone woofers, this time with dual-opposed neodymium magnets, operating in tandem below 130Hz. As the designer notes, this relieves the concentric driver from any significant low frequency duty, which should improve its midrange performance.

Low-end extension, meanwhile, is down to a claimed 32Hz [again, see Lab Report, p65], aided by the SourcePoint 888’s pair of rear-facing bass reflex ports, below which is a new set of dual binding posts, linked by metal straps. Sensitivity is rated by MoFi at 87dB/2.83V/1m, the same as the SourcePoint 8, but nominal and minimal impedance figures have lowered to 6ohm and 4.5ohm respectively, meaning this bigger model will also benefit from a beefier amplifier...

The mass of the SourcePoint 888 can be partly explained by the use of thick 25mm

RIGHT: MoFi’s cabinet employs 25mm MDF panels, a 50mm faceted baffle shaped to minimise diffraction, and internal bracing that separates the concentric 200mm pulp mid/32mm tweeter from the 200mm woofers



BELOW: The faceted baffle forms part of the speaker's waveguide and informs the shape of the colour-matched plastic-framed grille. This attaches magnetically to the satin black oak, satin white and walnut veneered cabinets



MDF panels for the cabinet's sides, top and bottom, plus a base that doesn't look light either. The front baffle is also thicker, reaching up to 50mm in places, ensuring the speaker's three drivers have a solid foundation from which to work. On top of that, each driver is mounted into its own internal chamber, these also helping to strengthen the rigidity of the enclosure.

THE LOWDOWN

As you would expect, the SourcePoint 888 continues down the sonic route already travelled by the SourcePoint 10 and 8, generating warm textures, a lush lower midrange and a good sense of time coherence. But, and this is quite significant, there's a lot more bass extension. The two 200mm woofers and the large cabinet are used very effectively to deliver deep bass, and in this respect the SourcePoint 888's performance is outstanding.

While the lowest frequencies aren't perfectly taut and defined, there's no faulting the bass thrills produced by the SourcePoint 888. If you really want to feel the bassline in Daft Punk's 'Fragments Of Time', or the profound beat in 'Motherboard' [*Random Access Memories*, Columbia 0886443927087; 88.2kHz/24-bit], then you'll enjoy these.

Some (but not extreme) angling-in made Todd Edwards' singing and pedal steel guitar

on 'Fragments...' gel better with the underlying bass and percussion, with a toe-tapping sense of rhythm that felt missing with the '888s turned outwards. This was played via Roon through a Lyngdorf TDAI-3400 amplifier [*HFN* Aug '18], which had no problems driving MoFi's new speakers – a versatile but less potent Marantz Stereo 70s proved decent horsepower is required to really deliver those low frequencies.

STOP, LOOK, LISTEN

This impressive bass delivery does mean there's real potential for exciting room modes, and care should be taken in positioning the '888s at a reasonable distance from corners and walls. MoFi recommends between 2ft and 4ft as part of a rather good setup guide that also notes experimentation is key. Generally, I am a proponent of using room correction below 300Hz, something offered by the Lyngdorf amp's RoomPerfect system, and with these MoFi speakers it's certainly worth considering if you're installing them into a smaller or even medium-sized space. As is true with most similar sized floorstanders, to be fair.

It would take a particularly bad speaker to make the classic *Ella And Louis* [Verve Records download; 96kHz/24-bit] sound disagreeable, but that doesn't mean there isn't a chasm between 'pretty okay' and truly engrossing. Listening to the texture of Armstrong's trumpet in 'Under A Blanket Of Blue' found the SourcePoint 888 on the right side of that divide, offering a slight roughness that juxtaposed perfectly with the smooth voice of Fitzgerald and the more gravelly delivery of Armstrong.

As before with Jones' coaxial designs for KEF and ELAC, vocals and most instruments →

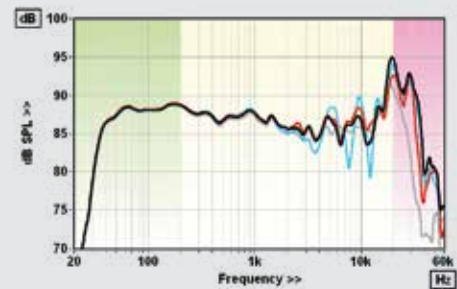
HI-FI'S GUN FOR HIRE

Loudspeaker designers are usually only household names if said household is packed with hi-fi equipment, but if anyone can claim to be well-known in the industry it's Andrew Jones. After studying physics and acoustics at the University of Surrey, followed by postgraduate studies in crossover design, he landed a job at KEF in 1983. He stayed in Maidstone until 1994, becoming Chief Engineer and working on – among other projects – KEF's Reference 104/2s and the Uni-Q driver that's still used (albeit much improved). After a stint at Infinity Systems, he moved on to Pioneer in 1998, where he worked on the TAD Model 1-derived EX series. It was in 2015 that Jones left the Japanese brand for Germany's ELAC, where he took up the role of vice-president of engineering and lead designer. Based in the US, he engineered several celebrated speakers, including the affordable Debut ranges. In 2021 he left ELAC, to the great surprise of many hi-fi enthusiasts, and joined Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab to expand the hardware offering of its new MoFi Electronics subsidiary. The first speaker for the American brand was the SourcePoint 10, built around a concentric driver design that remains the hallmark of Jones' extensive career.

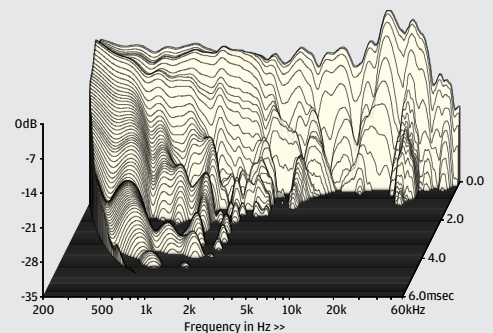
MOFI SOURCEPOINT 888

Take MoFi's SourcePoint 8 [HFN Aug '23], double the enclosure volume and add two additional 200mm bass units to relieve the concentric 32mm tweeter/200mm midrange of all bass duties below 130Hz and, hey presto, you'll have the 888... Higher SPLs are possible here, deeper bass and a much reduced LF distortion (0.1% vs. 0.8% re. 100Hz/90dB/1m) while sensitivity is 1dB higher at 87.7dB/1kHz but unchanged at 86.4dB/500Hz-8kHz. However, the 888 is a tougher drive, meeting its 6ohm nominal and 4.5ohm minimum rating with a dip to just 4.5ohm at a very low 29Hz and 4.6ohm at 78Hz. The impedance modulus lies below 8ohm from 45Hz-2.3kHz, and with phase angles dropping to -66° in the deep bass there's an EPDR of 1.7ohm/26Hz and sub-3ohm from 48-73Hz for the amplifier to deal with.

The 888's response trend is like a mildly exaggerated '8 – the faceted baffle is no longer symmetrical here – the coaxial treble dome now responsible for slightly higher ± 4.4 dB and ± 5.8 dB response errors [see Graph 1] and ~ 2 dB pair matching. A smoother trend is revealed by listening slightly off-axis [grey trace] where the response is flat to within a tighter ± 1.6 dB (ignoring the +4dB/19kHz peak). Again, the plastic-framed grille disrupts the baffle's facets, leading to bold peaks and notches in the presence/treble [blue trace] – remove before listening! The ports are both tuned to 31Hz and are broadly free of pipe or cabinet modes, the most obvious at 615Hz (-24 dB). The two 200mm paper-coned bass drivers operate between 40Hz-160Hz (-6 dB), leaving the ports to push the diffraction-correction bass extension down to a very creditable 32Hz (-6 dB re. 200Hz). PM



ABOVE: Response inc. nearfield summed drivers /ports [green], freefield corrected to 1m at 2.83V [yellow], ultrasonic [pink]. L, blk; R, red; grille, blue; off-axis, grey



ABOVE: Cabinet and port modes are well suppressed, leaving mid cone modes above the 1.6kHz crossover

LEFT: Two pairs of bi-wire/bi-amp-ready 4mm cable binding posts connect to the split (130Hz) bass and mid/treble crossover. The cabinet tapers slightly to the rear where two large ports provide the 200mm bass drivers' reflex loading

eponymous 1988 release [Universal 4733804]. There's not much low-frequency content in this track, besides some sparse folksy drums, which allowed me to savour the ambient atmosphere encapsulating Julianne Regan's singing. Although turning up the volume – which is very rewarding with the SourcePoint 888 – was required to really open up the soundstage and get the song's full emotional impact.

READY TO ROCK

The tracks on The Pixies' 2019 *Beneath The Eyrie* set [Infectious Music INFECT526CD] veer closer to classic rock than the loud-quiet-loud trademark compositions of the band's heyday, and this powerful riff-laden approach suited these large MoFi speakers nicely. A dynamic stomping kick drum led the way on 'Graveyard Hill', before the '888s effortlessly transitioned into a fully fledged wall of growling guitars without sounding compressed, and with Joey Santiago's emblematic high-pitched slide guitar detaching itself sufficiently from the noise.

Refined? Maybe not, but quietly – figuratively – proving that rock music can be played to good effect on the right speaker. The concentric driver helps achieve that aim, allowing the SourcePoint 888 to convey a big stage experience without making a muddle of it. Electrifying stuff. 🎸

HI-FI NEWS VERDICT

Big bass is on offer with this grand evolution of the SourcePoint 8, but that's not all. While these floorstanders might not be suited to every living room, if you have the space – and power to drive them – MoFi's SourcePoint 888s deliver a full-range, vivacious performance that few equal at the price. Andrew Jones' concentric driver design is once again put to good use, now underpinned by rousing low frequencies.

Sound Quality: 88%



had outstanding coherence, bringing a life-like character to the proceedings. Everything seemed to originate naturally from the same point in space, which made for a relaxing listen, free of distractions.

ART ATTACK

These big speakers are fairly nimble too, which ensured the speed and finesse of Art Blakey's performance on 'The Drum Thunder Suite' [Moanin'; Blue Note BST 84003] was communicated in an exciting manner. Combine these qualities with some midrange warmth and a morsel of extra presence, and the 1950s/'60s jazz recordings I listened to on a rainy audition day sounded deliciously inviting.

There's also the '888s expansive soundstaging to enjoy, as evidenced when playing 'She Moved Through The Fair' from All About Eve's

HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Sensitivity (SPL/1m/2.83V – 1kHz/Mean/IEC)	87.7dB / 86.4dB / 85.1dB
Impedance modulus: minimum & maximum (20Hz–20kHz)	4.53ohm @ 29Hz 43.6ohm @ 17.6Hz
Impedance phase: minimum & maximum (20Hz–20kHz)	-66° @ 21Hz $+48^\circ$ @ 13Hz
Pair matching/Resp. error (200Hz–20kHz)	2.15dB / ± 5.8 dB/ ± 4.4 dB
LF/HF extension (-6 dB ref 200Hz/10kHz)	32Hz / 38.9kHz/34.8kHz
THD 100Hz/1kHz/10kHz (for 90dB SPL/1m)	0.1% / 0.16% / 0.5%
Dimensions (HWD) / Weight (each)	1070x320x410mm / 43kg