

MoFi SourcePoint 8

With the 'proof of concept' SourcePoint 10 already under his belt, MoFi's Andrew Jones has engineered a more compact coincident driver array for the SourcePoint 8 cabinet
 Review: **Jamie Biesemans** Lab: **Paul Miller**

Speaking to designer Andrew Jones at High End Munich in May '23, he kidded that his latest loudspeaker could be considered the 'European' version of his larger SourcePoint 10 [HFN Apr '23]. 'People were often surprised by its size – it does host a 10in driver after all – so something smaller was needed', he explained. Cue the 'modest' SourcePoint 8, with its 8in version of the launch speaker's inaugural 10in coaxial driver.

The SourcePoint 10 is not unlike those big pickup trucks that sell so well in the US. Interesting to look at and mighty fine if you are a Texan rancher, but when confronted in real life it turns out to be quite large for smaller European roads, uhm, living rooms. That makes the SourcePoint 8 the sensible choice for those of us 'over here', though beware of stereotyping as there are probably just as many people living in small NYC apartments that might appreciate a more practical SourcePoint 8 too.

Whatever the setting, one of the three available colour options will surely fit your decor. If you're looking for an understated presence, the satin white finish pictured here will do nicely, while the high-quality veneer of the walnut and black ash cabinets really hit the vintage spot.

BABY BROTHER

Enthusiasts already familiar with the SourcePoint 10 won't be surprised by the newcomer's looks. They're identical – except for, again, the size. It is as if the SourcePoint 8 was shrunk in the wash, broadly retaining its original proportions. The coaxial driver itself is practically the same. That fact is cunningly disguised though, as the total diameter is only

RIGHT: Faceted baffle is also part of the speaker's waveguide. A colour-matched plastic-framed grille attaches magnetically to the black, white and satin walnut veneered cabinets

8in/200mm compared to the 10in/254mm of the SourcePoint 10 – no guessing how the naming convention works. Jones did this by preserving the 32mm soft dome tweeter in the middle while shaving one inch off the edge of the cone, reducing the overall diameter by two inches. The basket is necessarily more compact but the 'Twin-Drive' rare-earth magnet, said to reduce distortion in the motor system, is retained.

This 'downscaling' impacts low-frequency reproduction less than you might expect because, as PM explains in his boxout [p69], the SourcePoint 8 has far lower sensitivity than its larger brethren. Output, for a given input, is traded for bass extension,

so technoheads living in a tiny house will still love these speakers if they have a sufficiently powerful amplifier.

POWER POINT

Importantly, the SourcePoint 8's loading does not stray into 'impossible to drive' territory [see PM's Lab Report, p71], but my own listening experience still suggests that having some genuine power on tap will be rewarding. In my case, the SourcePoint 8s undoubtedly performed more convincingly with Hegel's 300W H590 integrated amplifier [HFN Oct '18] and the 200W NAD C 298 [HFN Oct '21] than with the more run-of-the-mill Yamaha R-N1000A also currently at my disposal.

Regardless of all this talk about 'small', the SourcePoint 8 is still fairly robust for a standmount model, with a very respectable volume and footprint. There's no need to exaggerate the weight, as its 12.7kg is quite acceptable when compared with – say – the 18kg of KEF's Reference 1 Meta. MoFi offers a dedicated three-legged stand that's terminated in solid plates top and bottom, but any good-quality 22in stand will do the trick. For example, the SourcePoint 8s perched perfectly on my Focal Kanta stands.

Following hot on the heels of the rear-leaning, retro-inspired Epos ES14N [HFN Jul '23] in my listening room, the seemingly more rectangular SourcePoint 8 could have been a dull visual experience – were it not for the baffle. Wondrous to behold, this faceted affair sees the driver mounted centrally within a diamond-shaped octagon. From my vantage point (the sofa) this

RIGHT: Pictured on its partnering stand, MoFi's cabinet employs 19mm MDF panels, two 19mm vertical braces and a 38mm faceted baffle, shaped to minimise diffraction. The 200mm pulp-fibre woofer has a 32mm tweeter concentrically mounted at the cone's apex

gives both the SourcePoint 10 and 8 a very distinct appearance, without being outrageous... which is ideal, as quirky designs can get old very fast.

There's acoustical method in the aesthetic design too, as the baffle lifts the front of the driver out past the edges of the cabinet. If the baffle had been recessed, there could have been an issue with

diffraction. As it is, Andrew Jones states that, although the protruding edges were proposed by the industrial designer, not him, it turned out the measured impact on the speaker's performance was limited [though less so with the grille in place, see PM's Lab Report p71].

And there's a lot at work here to reduce unwanted cabinet resonances. Looking from the top, the sides angle inward and the top panel slopes backward, preventing standing waves by keeping the walls non-parallel. Inside, the cabinet is further reinforced with two vertical braces (there are three inside the SourcePoint 10), keeping the structure as rigid as possible and minimising any panel modes in the largest sheets of the 19mm MDF used in its construction.

SUMMER TIME

There's no faulting the confident way the SourcePoint 8s handle music, presenting complex and densely mixed songs with a high level of coherence, and there's no missing that touch of warmth either. There's also very little 'deconstruction' going on, which is one of the things I appreciate about point source/coaxial drivers. You're not constantly piqued by an instrument on the far reaches of the room, but rather immersed in the whole of the performance.

Conversely, the MoFi SourcePoint 8 does not create a hugely expansive soundstage. Of course, when Donna Summer's Moroder disco classic *I Feel Love* [B001 8005 02; 192kHz/24-bit] plays you'll still have the synthesiser exaggeratedly panning from side to side, but with less outlandish recordings the stage tends to be a bit more concentrated up front.

This makes for a very adept loudspeaker, able to play all kinds of music with a secure consistency, while underscoring the sense of fun and engagement the experience really is about. The SourcePoint

'This is a speaker that "talks" in a unified voice'

8s show that while coaxial drivers have their disadvantages, Jones is right in advocating their strengths. His driver underpins the concept of a loudspeaker 'talking in one unified voice', even when the listening

distance is quite limited, so these speakers are an intriguing option if you're looking for a full-bodied performance but space is limited – not that they aren't equally capable of filling a larger listening room.

Their immediacy turned out to be well suited to the gravelly voice of Mark Lanegan on *Bubblegum* [BBQCD237; 44.1kHz/16-bit]. The droning guitar riff sounded dense and dark on 'Hit The City', as intended, and I was especially impressed with the authentically thick rendering of Lanegan's distinctive vocal. Moreover, there was enough space for PJ Harvey's backing vocals, which tail the main lyrics slightly, to be highlighted as well.

There's a murkier, improvised feel to most of the tracks on this 2004 album →

ART OF COMPROMISE

Many loudspeaker designers remain resistant to the idea of coaxial drivers, particularly where the cone is large enough not only for midrange duty but also deep bass. Amplitude modulation, caused by the treble dome protruding from and then receding into the voice-coil former of the cone, is often cited as the biggest drawback. Andrew Jones, MoFi's speaker designer, clearly takes a more holistic approach, acknowledging the subjective impact of AM distortion but trading this against the benefits of a 'point source' radiator – achieved by aligning the acoustic centres of the two drivers – and the prospect of delivering a far more predictable and consistent on- and off-axis frequency response.

In the SourcePoint 8, Jones has retained the same 32mm tweeter that he used in the '10, which has the scope and excursion to operate at the same low 1.6kHz, although the crossover alignment has been revised to maintain a consistent 'voicing' between the two models. To achieve a bass performance that's very close to that of the '10, with its larger cone and cabinet, without dramatically increasing the 'throw' of the '8's cone – and courting higher AM distortion – means accepting a far lower sensitivity. The SourcePoint 10 is rated at 91dB/2.83V/1m while the '8 is just 87dB – a perceptible difference [see Lab Report, p71]. But all speaker design is a compromise, and Andrew Jones, ex of KEF and TAD, is a proven master of the art. PM



MOFI SOURCEPOINT 8



LEFT: A pair of substantial 4mm cable binding posts connect to the relatively simple 1.6kHz crossover. The cabinet tapers slightly to the rear where two large ports provide the 200mm bass/mid driver's reflex loading

rhythm and pacing either – important for every genre, but arguably more so when diving into the boundaries between jazz and what Westerners glibly call ‘World Music’. There’s a lot of those crossover subgenres explored on *Jazz Is Dead 001* [JID001; 44.1kHz/16-bit], the first disc of a series from Adrian Younge and Ali Shaheed Muhammad putting modern jazz compositions in the limelight, and the SourcePoint 8 articulated the off-beat drumming on ‘Distant Mode’ and the counterpoint alto saxophone of Gary Bartz without sounding muddy or just plain wrong. Holding things together

and presenting challenging compositions lucidly is what the speaker does well – it certainly kept the funky jazz rhythms on ‘Conexão’ flowing and got my foot tapping. That the SourcePoint 8 doesn’t swell the soundstage to an epic scale, but keeps it focused, works to its advantage with most albums. Playing music a tad more ‘up front’ and immediate – but never forced or brash – these MoFi cabinets typically kept me engaged, as if I was up close to the stage. Which is exactly where the fun is to be had. ⚡

CAVE EXPLORATION

Unsurprisingly, as both albums have a similar tone, Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds’ excellent *Push The Sky Away* [Bad Seeds Ltd; BS001CE] sounding equally absorbing. Most music mentioned here was streamed via Roon, but this is one of those albums which just gets better on vinyl. From the first notes on the turgid ‘We No Who U R’, spinning on a Pro-Ject X2 B [HFN Sep ’22], MoFi’s speakers fully immersed me in the melancholic mood that Cave always exudes – although this set is relatively upbeat compared to the downright depressing *Skeleton Key* which followed later!

There’s no criticising the speaker’s ability to communicate

from the ex-Screaming Trees singer, which I’ve noticed doesn’t translate well on every loudspeaker. But the SourcePoint 8 was up for it, possessing just the right sense of balance, adding a touch of gravitas both to the supporting bassline and the American singer’s vocals on ‘One Hundred Days’. Next to being a first-rate vocalist, Lanegan was a skilful lyricist and it was easy to appreciate this while being immersed in the busy pool of sound.

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HI-FI NEWS VERDICT

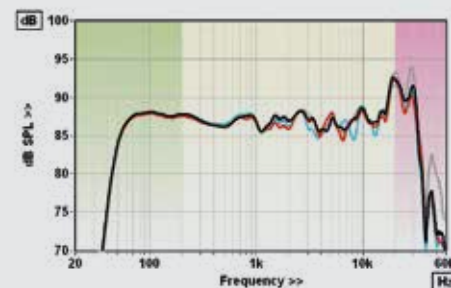
Taking Andrew Jones’ devotion to coaxial driver design to a new level, the SourcePoint 8 packs a surprising punch for a modest box that’s suited to both small and medium-sized rooms. Pair these stylish, technically innovative speakers with a capable amp, and you’ll be served a listen that captivates with its immediacy. Thanks to its great coherence and pacing, you won’t be able to stop dancing – in spirit, at least!

Sound Quality: 88%

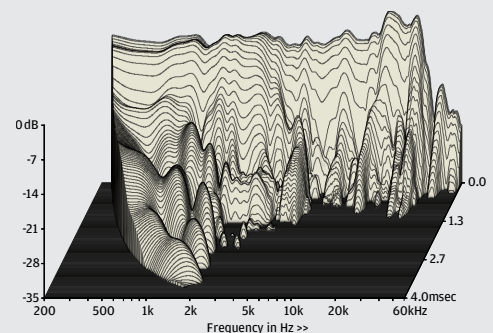


The flare of the 200mm cone, the low-profile multiroll surround and even the faceted baffle itself are all part of the ‘waveguide’ for the embedded 32mm tweeter. In this ‘miniaturised’ version of the SourcePoint 10 [HFN Apr ’23] all these factors contribute to a reduction in the axial ripples seen in the bigger speaker, ensuring that the ‘8’s on- and off-axis responses are potentially more consistent [grey vs. black traces, Graph 1]. Otherwise the response shares the flatness achieved by the ‘10, with errors of just ±1.6dB and ±1.9dB, respectively, from 200Hz–17kHz (discounting the +5.5dB/20kHz peak). Pair matching was a slightly wayward 1.5dB here but, again, the plastic-framed grille disrupts the response further [blue trace, Graph 1] and should be removed for keen listening. MoFi has specified a lower/realistic 87dB sensitivity for the ‘8 [see boxout, p69] which concurs with my figures of 86.7dB/1kHz and 86.8dB/500Hz–8kHz.

The SourcePoint 8 also meets its 8ohm nominal/6.4ohm min. rating with a dip to just 7.5ohm/138Hz, and despite the high +50° phase angle from 530Hz–1.30kHz the minimum EPDR is just 3.65ohm at 241Hz. This is an ‘easier’ drive than the ‘10 though, again, the big rise in impedance to 78ohm/1.8kHz may still result in an emphasis in upper mid (vocal) response depending on the magnitude of the partnering amp’s source impedance. Tube amps, in particular... THD is a modest 0.25% through the midrange (re. 90dB/1m) increasing to ~0.8% at bass freqs where the very wide 66Hz–3.4kHz/–6dB bandwidth of the 200mm woofer is met by the clean 52Hz tuning of the two rear-facing ports to deliver a fine 47Hz extension (–6dB re. 200Hz). PM



ABOVE: On, grey; off-axis resp inc. nearfield summed driver/ports [green], freefield corr. to 1m at 2.83V [yellow], ultrasonic [pink]. L, black; R, red; grille, blue



ABOVE: Cabinet and port modes are well suppressed in the 8, leaving cone modes above the crossover

HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Sensitivity (SPL/1m/2.83V – 1kHz/Mean/IEC)	86.7dB / 86.8dB / 85.4dB
Impedance modulus: minimum & maximum (20Hz–20kHz)	7.5ohm @ 138Hz 78ohm @ 1.76kHz
Impedance phase: minimum & maximum (20Hz–20kHz)	–37° @ 3.52kHz +53° @ 985Hz
Pair matching/Resp. error (200Hz–20kHz)	1.5dB / ±1.9dB/±1.6dB
LF/HF extension (–6dB ref 200Hz/10kHz)	47Hz / 33.8kHz/35.7kHz
THD 100Hz/1kHz/10kHz (for 90dB SPL/1m)	0.8% / 0.25% / 0.4%
Dimensions (HWD) / Weight (each)	456x290x335mm / 13kg