



Close To Legendary

At the High End audio show in Munich, Piega shone with the new Coax series. Roger Kessler, head of development, likes to compare the top model, the 811, to the Porsche 911. Rightly so?

Michael Lang

Piega, located in the idyllic town of Horgen by Lake Zurich, is a family business, now managed in the second generation by Alexander and Manuel Greiner. The manufacturer has been the undisputed market leader in Switzerland in the field of high-quality speakers for years and has a firm grip on the global elite, who of course are also present there.

This not only stems from the Swiss attitude and the home advantage, but also from structures that have grown over more than 30 years: quality, reliability and the regular „doors open day“ for fans and people interested in the brand. And not to forget a network of loyal and reliable dealers who appreciate the advantage of having direct contact to the company and its development division.

Consistency and Progress

This has indeed not changed, even after the departure of the founders Leo Greiner – responsible for design and the business side – and Kurt Scheuch, developer. What has changed, in contrast, is the research and development work itself, which now achieves faster as well as surprisingly large advancements using the latest measurement technology. This highly modern technology can help to avoid some mistakes and to implement promising ideas more quickly, but it does however not render careful, elaborate development and extensive listening sessions

obsolete. Piega developer Roger Kessler and his team tinkered with every conceivable aspect in order to catapult the Coax series a good deal further forward in terms of sound quality.

The first step was the housing. To give the bass more depth and higher power reserves with lower distortion – thus more clarity and punch –, it is slightly larger than that of its quasi-“predecessor“ 711. Due to the increased volume, it also had to be reinforced in a different way. The aluminum extrusion of the housing is now subject to controlled tension, in order to eliminate vibrations. The shape of the cabinet has also been optimized from an



The „Tension Improve Module 2“ (TIM2) applies tension to the loudspeaker enclosure to optimally suppress cabinet vibrations.

**Preserving
the core of
the brand
while also
taking a
big step
forward**



HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT

Roger Kessler leads the developing department of the swiss company.

TEST DEVICES

Turntable:

Transrotor Rondino

Streamer/CD Player:

T+A MP 3100

Integrated Amps:

Musical Fidelity M8xi, Symphonic Line RG 14 Edition

Preamps:

Octave HP 300 SE, Accoustic Arts Tube-Preamp II

Phono Preamps:

Audionet Pam G2

Power Amps:

Accoustic Arts Amp II MK4, T+A M200, NAD M23 (2x)

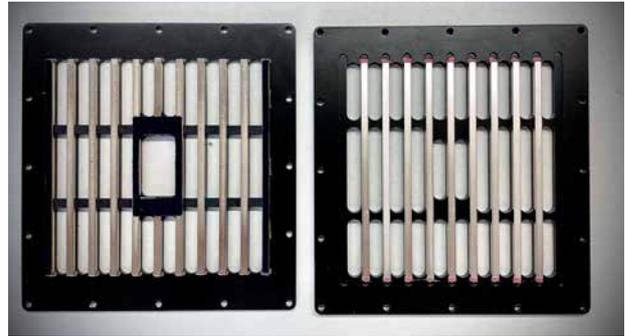
Loudspeakers:

B&W 801 D4

Cables:

AudioQuest, Cardas, HMS, Inak, Stockfisch, Supra

The design of the new C212+ coaxial driver (right) differs significantly from that of its predecessor.



acoustic point of view, particularly the rear sound component in the lower midrange is now absorbed better, as the Swiss manufacturer promises.

The two 22mm woofers manufactured by Seas according to Piega specifications are supported by two passive membranes of the same size per speaker. This arrangement is more complex and expensive than a bass reflex design, but brings sonic advantages according to the developers. Which is why the drivers were adapted from the also still available 711, but have a different operating point now, because the new coaxial driver reaches further down.

However, the coaxial ribbon unit responsible for the midrange and treble is undoubtedly the most relevant as well as eponymous component. Resulting from a cooperation with a Swiss university, detailed analyses were carried out and the right conclusions were drawn for a major

update. Thus, upon closer examination, nothing remained as it was. The mechanical separation of the magnetic rods was reworked and the front panel was stiffened with a horizontal brace. This enabled the use of a new type of adhesive that softly bonds the magnets, which aims to reduce resonances and further optimize the damping properties of the newly developed and specially coated foil. As we are told, this has the advantage that the frequency response of the driver could be linearized in its lower operating range, while the coupling to the woofer now happens at 470-480 Hertz.

As a result, this also reduces distortion, increases the amount of details and resolution in conjunction with an even more natural reproduction of voices.

Efficient and Dynamic

There have also been some improvements in terms of efficiency. An additional neodymium magnet above the tweeter added a few decibels of efficiency, which is supposed to assist in improving the dynamic characteristics and impulse response. And don't forget:

Each individual coaxial driver is manufactured meticulously by hand. If the person responsible has a bad day and does not work with the necessary amount of Swiss precision, the daily production inevitably fails – fortunately, this is only the case extremely rarely. Of course, however, it takes quite a lot longer to assemble such a complex driver by hand than to use a normal, mass-produced driver. And everyone who has ever been interested in a watch from this country knows that a product „handmade in Switzerland“ certainly has its price.

Let's take a look at the crossovers working in the shadows: Separate circuit boards for bass and midrange/tweeter are used here.



The grilles can be pulled off with the strong magnetic tool.

In combination with the cabinet properties, they are tuned to a Linkwitz-Riley characteristic. The midrange/tweeter part works with high-quality MKT capacitors and air core coils, while special electrolytic capacitors and iron core coils are used for the low frequency range.

The update is therefore more of an all-round redesign, which is why naming it as an MK-something version would also have been somewhat misplaced.

And with correspondingly high expectations, we went into the listening sessions. Of course only after the always necessary search for the optimal placement, angle and distance to the listening position. We started with testing the impulsivity and reproduction of voices, for which we used an excerpt from the radio play „Der Himmel deckt alles mit Stille zu“ („The sky covers everything in silence“) by German public broadcasting station SWF.

Suspense and Homogeneity

The Piega brought out the lingering suspense of the performance, expressed through the voices of the male speaker and his female counterpart, very effectively. Even the closing door – initially merely squeaking and finally slamming shut – is reproduced with such impulse fidelity that a small moment of shock occurs even if one has already heard the recording dozens of times. The homogeneity and flawlessness with which the 811 performs here and gives voices authority as



The bi-wiring terminals have a copper base and are platinum-plated, which aims to ensure particularly good contact.

well as credibility is also more convincing than ever before heard over a Piega speaker. This extremely positive impression was confirmed when we turned our attention to Martha Argerich and her interpretation of Chopin's Piano Concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra under Claudio Abbado. The grand piano stood tall and almost tangible in our listening room, the delicacy of Argerich's playing was always recognizable despite all the power, as was the precise work that Abbado and the orchestra delivered.

Switching over to guitar and catchy jazz, we put on a record from „The Village Gate“ by the Charlie Byrd Trio along with guests from 1963. Lots of atmosphere, ambient sounds and the legendary Clark Terry on trumpet made us sway along with the music; and sent us diving into the New York jazz



CLASSIC DESIGN

The 811 is slightly more voluminous than the Coax 711.

basement to retreat from the dreary look outside the office window in the cold and wet September of 2022 for a while. What about you? Are you satisfied with a loudspeaker equivalent to a VW Golf in cost if everything is just right up to a decent indoor volume, and is a sound pressure level beyond that of no great importance to you? Then you're missing out on a lot of fun with the 811, because it has about as much to offer in terms of sound pressure potential as a certain vehicle from Stuttgart carrying the world-famous number 911 when it comes to speed.

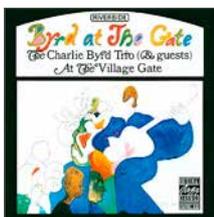
Plenty of Casualness

Even well above the 100 decibel mark the 811 plays very energetic still, but completely relaxed at the same time, as we detected with Joe Jackson's „Steppin' out“. The bass is not only powerful here, but also very controlled and coupled to the extremely high-resolution coax ribbon in a way that the 711, which is also still available, only manages to achieve to a very limited extent. It should not remain unmentioned that the 811's spatial imaging, proportions and playfulness also skyrocket, without ever forcefully trying to take the spotlight.

Indeed, the 811 costs quite a bit more than the tried-and-true 711. If the price is however still within your range I'm very sure that, with the 811, you'll do everything you can to acquire a speaker that's just as convincing as the 911 is on four wheels. ■

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

Charlie Byrd Trio: The Village Gate



Recorded live, this 1963 recording is musically and sonically convincing to this day.

Manger: Music from another world



One of the best and most diverse samplers ever.



The new, completely revised C 212+ coax ribbon driver in all its glory.

Piega Coax 811

Price: starting at €26,900 (price for aluminium silver; aluminium black or white lacquered available for €27,500)

Dimensions: 29 x 127 x 43 cm (WxHxD)

Warranty: 6 Years

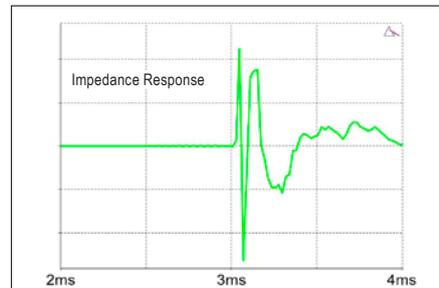
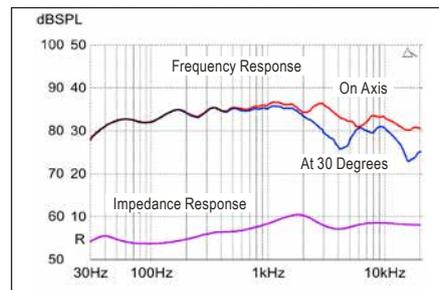
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This is what progress looks like: more precision, homogeneity and playfulness than ever before with the familiar excellent workmanship. For all its qualities, still comparatively compact and suitable for living rooms.

Measurement Results



Rated impedance at DC	6 ohms
Minimum impedance	3,9 ohms at 94 Hz
Maximum impedance	10,7 ohms at 1731 Hz
Sound pressure characteristic (2,83 V/m)	86,4 dB SPL
Power for 94 dB SPL	7,54 W
Lower cut-off frequency (-3dB SPL)	43 Hz
Distortion factor at 63/3k/10k Hz	0,38/0,09/0,09 %

Lab Comment

Very low distortion, good efficiency and uncritical impedance response. Frequency response is ok, but there is still room for improvement in the impulse response. Should be angled to the listening position, the ribbon focuses sound.

Features

Three-way speaker with two passive bass radiators and coaxial ribbon unit for mids and highs. Bi-wiring terminal; cover removable; spikes included.

STEREO - TEST

SOUND LEVEL	99%
PRICE/PERFORMANCE	
★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	
EXCELLENT	