

MB QUART DSH216

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Photos by Maxxsonics USA, Inc.



There has been an abundance of cool new product sent my way for review recently, and one of the latest to tell you about is the MB Quart DSH216 component speaker system from the good folks at Maxxsonics. As many of you are aware, the MB Quart brand has long been renowned for their German engineering, meticulous attention to detail, and what many consider to be great sounding loudspeakers, regardless of price. The new DSH216's are from MB Quart's mid level "Discus" series and are on the high value side of the price range, meaning they don't cost much for the solid performance you receive.

These impressive speakers are indeed still engineered and voiced by the same German team that has been doing it for years. I expect these new DSH216s will share much of the same coveted attributes as the previous models I've reviewed, and so I was looking forward to putting this system through its paces. The box the system comes in is ginormous to say the least, ensuring this system makes a grand entrance with every happy customer purchase.

After opening up dozens of MB Quart

systems over the last decade, I was a little surprised at the new packaging. But, everything inside was in perfect condition, and I just throw the box away anyway.

The MB Quart DSH216 midrange driver uses carbon fiber reinforced injection molded speaker frames, which provide for tighter assembly tolerances, and minimize differences from speaker to speaker. These frames are also lightweight, very rigid, and strong. And, with a mounting depth of 2.875-inch, these mids should fit in most any car. >>

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The motor assembly consists of a 10 ounce ferrite magnet, driving a 1-inch diameter, 2 layer copper clad aluminum voice coil, which is wound on an aluminum former to help dissipate heat, and increase reliability. Keeping the voice coil aligned properly in the gap is a raised “progressive compliance” spider, made of poly cotton. The outer edge of the spider is affixed to a mounting plate that has small vent holes in it to help dissipate heat by increasing airflow.

A parabolic shaped cone is used for the midrange driver, and is made of glass fiber reinforced IMPP (Injection Molded Polypropylene) that is exceptionally lightweight, yet very stiff. These cone material attributes are very important in a midrange driver to allow good efficiency with low distortion. It's attached to the speaker basket using an NBR (nitrile butyl rubber) surround. The cone is a dark slate color, with a tastefully done dark grey logo silk screened on it. The resulting cosmetic looks clean and classy.

The tweeter in the Discus series has been upgraded to the high-end titanium 30mm inverted dome “WideSphere” design that was previously only available on the much more expensive systems. The design claims to have very wide dispersion capability, making it easier to widen the “sweet spot” for listening. The impressive tweeter has a neodymium magnet with a 25mm voice coil diameter, and uses a fabric surround. Also included in the kit are the usual surface, flush mount, and angle mount tweeter cups.

Wire connections to both the midrange and tweeter are made via spade lugs, but curiously no wiring nor connectors of any kind were included in the box. While this is only a minor annoyance for someone with proper spade terminals in stock, it could be a serious pain for the



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do it yourselfer trying to get these installed on a weekend afternoon in his driveway. Come on guys, include some pre-terminated wire, or at least some crimp-on connectors for goodness sake! Or, if cost is the issue, I’d suggest omitting the expensive plastic grilles that no one ever installs, and including some nice wire instead! Wire we’ll use, grilles... not so much.

The crossover is a simple but well done affair, providing just a -12dB/octave high pass filter for the tweeter, and 3 tweeter level settings. The components of the crossover are typical MB Quart, with a nice air core inductor, and a high quality poly capacitor. The crossover is designed for a frequency of 3200Hz. Also included for the more “enthusiastic” users is a polyswitch for tweeter overdrive protection.

LISTENING

I mounted the system in my sound room’s listening panels, and connected the tweeters to the position indicated as 0dB. After a couple of hours of “break in” I sat down to

evaluate the sonics of this fairly economical system. The first track I played was Tracy Chapman’s “Fast Cars”. Immediately I realized that the old sonic signature of the MB Quart tweeter had certainly been retained. The high frequency was incredibly crisp and detailed, but a bit bright for my personal taste, especially when sitting dead on axis with them. I switched the crossovers to the -3dB position, and listened some more. While the tweeters still seemed pretty “in your face” I was impressed with the systems ability to reproduce the material with great clarity and intelligibility. The mid-range was smooth and natural sounding, and was easily good enough for a skilled listener to tell a Bosendorfer from a Yamaha piano. Ottmar Liebert’s amazing guitar work sounded very realistic and dynamic, and with acoustic instrument tracks, the tweeters really seemed to make a positive difference in the realism of the system. Bass heavy tracks sounded good as well, but caution should be used when driving the system without a high pass filter ➤



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on the midranges. My amplifiers output was unfiltered, and at high volume levels on hip hop tracks I could make the mids protest quite readily. In high powered systems, I'd suggest a crossover point of about 80Hz for the midranges, which will improve power handling and decrease distortion as well.

Overall, the Discus components sounded very good, especially considering the aggressive price. I found the tweeters a little hot sounding, but that is a constant opinion of mine when auditioning most MB Quart systems. In a vehicle, especially with the tweeters generally off axis, most people will welcome the additional output, and it will blend better with the midrange. There is also a -6dB position on the crossover as well, so it should be a simple matter to get them dialed in to suit most any application or personal taste.

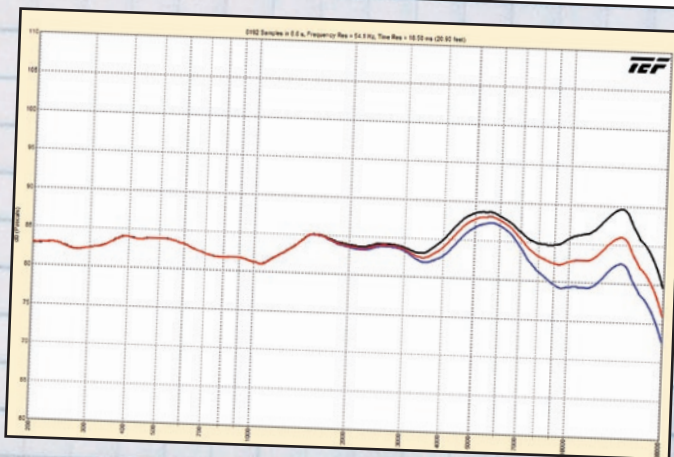
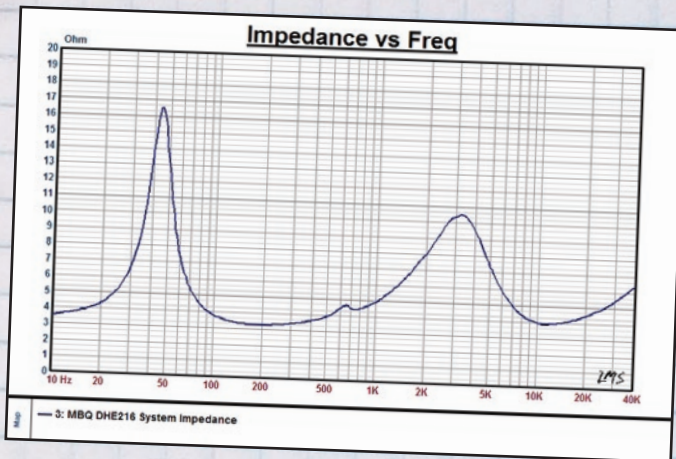
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ON THE BENCH

After the listening was completed, I moved the system into my anechoic room to measure frequency response. I'm pleased to report the system measured very well, and in fact was significantly flatter than some other systems I've measured costing twice as much. A check of the dispersion of the tweeter showed that it is in fact significantly wider than some more

common designs, so it should work better in a wider variety of mounting locations.

After the frequency response was measured, I connected the system to my trusty LMS analyzer to measure the impedance of the system across the entire frequency range. The plots of both of these graphs are shown below.



CONCLUSION

As it turns out, my fears of the change of manufacturing venue were pretty much unfounded, this system definitely sounds like an MB Quart system should, and the only things I noticed dramatically different were the packaging and the lack of wire. So fear not, if you were an MB Quart fan before, you still will be today. For the money, you'd be hard pressed to get a much better sounding 6.5" component set than the MB Quart Discus series. They are well made, good sounding, and if your tastes run to preferring a system with a strong yet smooth top end, they should be on the top of your list of systems to audition. **PAS**

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