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# PMC fact.12 Signature floorstanding loudspeaker

by Alan Sircom

**T**he three-strong fact range from PMC covers a lot of ground. Originally launched in the 'teens', the first fact-trio consisted of a fact.3 stand-mount, the fact.8 floorstander and the flagship fact.12 tower. Times have changed, though; the fact.3 is no more, the fact.8 and fact.12 are now both heavily revised in their Signature version and the fact.12 signature (tested here) relinquishes its top slot to the 'built with awesome in mind' Fenestria.

As ever with successive PMC generations; a quick visual inspection of old and new reveals little. And, with a name with the suffix 'Signature', one might be forgiven for thinking the fact.12 Signature was merely a slightly pimped up fact.12. Granted, the change to Signature status exists entirely in the crossover network design and construction, but the change is significant.

The truly 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' part of the fact.12 Signature's product development is those drivers. The 19mm SONOMEX soft dome tweeter (co-engineered with SEAS), and both the 50mm soft-dome midrange and twin 140mm long-throw, coated-alloy mid-bass units were designed for the original fact.12 for its 2013 launch.

Six years later, and the 2019 Munich High End Show launch of the fact.12 Signature was a testament to the implications of 'trickle down' from the Fenestria project. One of the big take-away points from the Fenestria is the significance of vibration in a loudspeaker system. We've always known it's important, but PMC's Big Kahuna shows it's even more vital than first imagined, and its impact reaches deeper than you might expect. ▶





*“As in the Fenestria, the components in the crossover are hand-tested and carefully matched... and then the results are logged .”*

▶ PMC's research showed the impact of vibration on the components in the crossover is pivotal in creating a loudspeaker with greater musical transparency. In short, no matter how well damped or mass-loaded a speaker design, the cabinet sings along with the music, and the crossover ends up singing along with the cabinet. This might be at low levels, but these low levels are still sonically deleterious. Moving to active design or physically extracting the crossover from the cabinet helps but comes at its own costs (usually in terms of space or cost). So, the company embarked on an investigation to find the least microphonic crossover components. In most companies, that would mean 'flipping through a few parts catalogues', but not PMC. While fine resistors with excellent low microphonic properties exist in the Mundorf MResist Supreme line, the quest to find a similarly low-microphony capacitor was not so simple. Two years of research with the University of Salford, extensive double-blind trials and a lot of laser interferometry later, and these ultra-high-grade capacitors were born. These capacitors – with their intricate internal construction designed to lower mechanical resonance – were produced specifically for the fact range. It's joined by custom air core inductors for the bass.

As in the Fenestria, the components in the crossover are hand-tested and carefully matched... and then the results are logged should repairs be necessary in the future. Like every part of the design – from the Advanced Transmission Line system to the steep 24dB per octave crossover slope that are retained from the original fact.12 – the choice and even orientation of the components in the crossover is the subject of an extensive and iterative test and listen programme at PMC.

The original fact models were always detail hounds, but the fact.12 Signature takes that search for detail to new levels. It has become a high-resolution musical processing engine, where whatever is on that disc is transcribed and presented with the absolute minimum of input from the loudspeakers. This had no favouritism about it; when you find yourself moving from a relatively obscure Polish jazztronica signing on Ninja Tunes ('Not Too Bad' from Skapel's eponymous 2004 debut) to Andreas Schiff playing the 'Appassionata' Sonata [ECM], via Michael Jackson, Depeche Mode, and Van Halen's 'Eruption' [*Van Halen*, Warner Bros] in a single session, you know this isn't a loudspeaker that takes sides. It's dynamic enough to play many of those tracks as loud or as quiet as befits both the music and the way you want to play it, too. This isn't just a 'how loud can you go' point because the fact.12 Signature shines at those late-night listening sessions played at low levels. This is one of its strongest points for some; often a three-way system begins to sound very separated when it gets outside its comfort zone, but unless played at the levels you could whisper over, the fact.12 Signature never divides into bass, mid, and treble. Its integration is absolutely first rate. ▶

*“People’s reactions to the fact.12 Signature’s performance were shaped by their own predilections.”*

► This product came and went before the Coronavirus lockdowns happened, so they were heard by friends and guests alike. And that provoked a fascinating response. People’s reactions to the fact.12 Signature’s performance were shaped by their own predilections. People who think good stereo imaging is uppermost loved its soundstaging properties. Those who go for vocal articulation were praising its presentation of vocals. Those who like deep bass were loving the depth and slam it produced. Even those who dismiss anything apart from a fully sealed box as ‘incapable of timing’ were nodding along in approval. It’s a fine ‘all things to all people’ approach.

This object flexibility runs deep in all aspects of the fact.12 Signature. Granted it needs good electronics to feed it and will show the sonic signature of a product without effort, but it’s not difficult to drive, not difficult to install and doesn’t make heavy demands on room size and shape. While the ‘perfect’ audiophile room is something we can all strive for, in the real world that sort of optimum listening space is rare. Whether due to costs involved or in the interests of domestic harmony, we often have to make compromises in terms of size, shape, and wall material or treatment. Granted, all these elements can transform the fact.12 Signature’s performance for the better or worse, but the joy of the design is it makes the best of a good or bad job regardless. These are loudspeakers that can happily live in a space that normally only mini-monitors occupy, or it can fill a surprisingly large barn of a room. This is helped by a subtle yet effective set of boost and cut settings to both HF and LF, with the LF boost being unique to the facts.

I have to admit that I’m struggling to express my admiration for this design without having to reach for the more ‘fruity’ end of the dictionary. The trouble is, sometimes saying how good something is without throwing in a few expletives doesn’t really get across how twuntin’ good the thing is. The fact.12 Signature is not the kind of loudspeaker that shows off its quality, but neither is it so British and reserved that it fails to rock out when needed. It just does all the right things in the right order, and does few of the wrong things. In fact (pun intended) when your criticisms circle around the limited number of finishes on offer, you know you are on to a winner.

OK, so scratching the surface, there are some observations to be made. The fact.12 Signature’s room-flexibility might weigh against it when shoe-horned into a really tiny room, or used where the Fenestria should sit; in other words, there are speakers that might be a better ‘fit’ for really challenging room volumes. The other observation is that if you hook the fact.12 Signature to some really meaty power amplification and play it loud, something’s gotta give... and that something is your ears. These speakers play clean, loud, and undistorted. If you like to play music at ‘a fair lick’ a lot the fact.12 Signature’s headroom means your usual ‘turn it down, it’s distorting’ point could be ‘turn it down, my ears are relaxing on each beat’.



## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Three-way transmission line floorstanding loudspeaker

**Tweeter:** 19mm Sonomex soft dome with 34mm roll surround, ferrofluid cooled

**Midrange driver:** 50mm soft dome, ferrofluid cooled

**Bass:** 2× 140mm super-long throw with coated aluminium cone

**Power handling:** not specified

**Sensitivity:** 84dB

**Nominal impedance:** 8 Ohm

**Frequency response (-6dB):** 26Hz–30kHz

**Connectors:** 3 pairs silver plated terminals (tri-amp/tri-wire)

**Finishes:** white silk, metallic graphite

**Dimensions (H×W×D):** 1110 × 168 × 420mm (+ spikes and terminals)

**Weight:** 26kg

**PRICE:** £14,995 per pair

**Manufactured by:** PMC

**Tel:** +44 (0)1767 686300

**URL:** pmc-speakers.com

PMC’s fact.12 Signature is a hard act to follow. Granted if you have a pair of fact.12’s the Signature edition isn’t a necessary upgrade, but it improves on the original substantially. Watch out, high-end speaker brands – The British Are Coming! +