

STEREO SPEAKERS  
WILSON  
BENESCH  
SQUARE TWO  
★★★★★  
£ 2199

**↑ FOR**  
As agile, insightful and articulate a performer as you'll find for the money; not particularly fussy about placement

**↓ AGAINST**  
Need careful system matching; more bass weight is available for the money; easy to knock over

**→ VERDICT**  
Wilson Benesch's entry-level floorstander turns out to be one of its finest. We can't wait for the rest of the range

# Far too hip to be Square

**WHATEVER YOU DO**, don't listen to a brand new pair of Square Twos. They sound terrible. Straight from the box, these Wilson Benesch speakers are aggressively bright and have little real bass to speak of. The idea of a plain wooden box speaker from the kings of carbon fibre is bad enough, but the thought of such a poor speaker from a brand that has delivered an unbroken line of winners is almost unbelievable.

**"They deliver one of the finest sounds ever available at this price"**

Thankfully, this story ends well. Given a lengthy run-in – about 70 hours is preferable – the Square Twos turn in a performance that, in some ways, is quite amazing at this price point.

## Keen eye for detail

When it comes to dynamics, detail resolution or agility, these are good enough to worry many a true high-end speaker – and yes, that includes some of Wilson Benesch's own models. Rarely do we hear *Gladiator's* OST sound so rousing while remaining so utterly composed. Instruments are defined superbly and it's easy to follow musical strands, even when the soundtrack gets busy.

Did we mention the Square Twos are fast? Sorry, that's an understatement. To paraphrase

Lightning McQueen, the animated lead in Pixar's *Cars*, they're faster than fast – they are speed. We've only heard a handful of speakers that come close to the Square Two's almost supernatural ability to respond to the leading edge of notes. It's a quality that works particularly well on rhythm-driven music like Prince's *Lolita* or even James Brown's *Cold Sweat*.

As you can probably guess, we like these towers an awful lot. However, their presentation may not be to all tastes. The bass end is very taut, but not the weightiest around. ATC's SCM 40s sound more authoritative and make a better job of delivering scale – though unlike the Squares, they can't be used close to a rear wall.

Also, part of this speaker's lively nature and resolution is a result of a rather enthusiastic treble performance. The top-quality tweeter stops this from being a problem in a well-matched set-up, but if you favour a rich, warm sound or have a hint of aggression in your electronics, these floorstanders probably aren't for you.

## Off-limits to pets or children

And finally, the Square Twos have a relatively small footprint and just three spikes – a design that brings certain sonic benefits, but which also makes them very easy to knock over. You should bear this in mind if you have kids, pets or both, and value their safety.

**ALSO CONSIDER ?**

**ATC SCM 40**  
★★★★★  
£2000

**Awards 06**  
These ATCs are very talented floorstanders. Their analytical approach to replay won't suit all tastes, though

**DALI MENTOR 6**  
★★★★★  
£2200

**Feb 07**  
Like the WBs, these Dalis don't deliver masses of bass weight, but they compensate with a lively, musical delivery

Practical issues aside, though; partner them with the right kit, and we truly believe the Wilson Benesch Square Twos will deliver one of the finest sounds ever available at this price level – possibly even to a much higher level, but we'll have to wait and see. Hear them in full flow and we're sure you'll agree.



Who said square has to be boring? Maybe us, but either way, these speakers are far too cool for school

## KNOW HOW THE SQUARE RANGE



### Wilson Benesch eyes mid-range price-point

**THE SQUARE RANGE** is WB's new entry-level series. It consists of a standmount, the £1500 One, the floorstanding Two tested here, and a centre speaker, the £1199 Centre Square. Each model uses existing drivers from the company's upmarket speakers – the cheapest model to date has been the Arc at £2400 – but the real news is the use of conventional wooden cabinets. Wilson Benesch has long gone on about the flaws of these – structural resonance and lack of rigidity being the prime complaints – and has previously sung the praises of using curved composite carbon fibre enclosures to avoid these shortcomings.

**HOWEVER, PRODUCING A** cheaper range with carbon fibre wasn't possible: the material is too expensive for a budget range. So the decision to go for a conventional wooden construction was taken, and a lot of thought was given to how the weaknesses could be reduced. The company decided that the main problem was the reflected energy that comes off the panel behind the main driver, which can encourage box resonance and standing waves. The solution was to replace the panel with a passive radiator. Such radiators have been used for years as a better quality, dearer alternative to reflex ports, although this approach is unusual. It's a bonus that such a unit adds well-controlled bass reinforcement.

**TECH SPECS**

**TYPE** Floorstander  
**BIWIRE** Yes  
**SENSITIVITY** 86dB/W/m  
**IMPEDANCE** 6 ohms  
**POWER HANDLING** 200 watts  
**DIMENSIONS** 97.5 x 20 x 25.5 cm  
**FINISHES** Three – piano black; burr walnut gloss; maple