



Jennifer Warnes cover of Leonard Cohen's *Ain't No Cure For Love* (from *Famous Blue Raincoat*). And yes, it works wonderfully with more straightforward rock material – Marc Cohn's eponymous album, Eric Bibb's *Good Stuff* – but no less would be expected of any loudspeaker that is so obviously at home with the other examples mentioned.

What about the wider picture? Here matters are a little more equivocal. There is more to the job requirements of any good loudspeaker than drive, or – if you prefer – the ability to rock and roll. On the plus side, and it's a very big plus indeed, the Silver RS8 has excellent timing. It simultaneously sounds measured and propulsive, with wonderfully 'on the balls of the feet' timing. It's almost as though the RS8 is leaning into the rhythm, driving it along, rather than being pulled behind, reluctantly obeying its master's voice. This almost seems to inject its own feeling of enthusiasm into the music, which as you might have guessed works better with some types of music (often the kind of music indicated in the examples above) than others. And it does this without demanding a massive amplifier to generate the power. If anything, it's just the opposite. Some of the best results achieved on test were with amplification at the £500 – rather than £5,000 – level, so long as the design's principal reverts are refinement and clarity rather than outright earth moving horsepower.

The RS8 has some other strong dynamic qualities too. Imaging, for example, is explicit and stable, and it has all the hallmarks of a loudspeaker that is easy to drive, one that gives

**“This loudspeaker goes consistently louder, deeper and fuller than you would reasonably credit from a box this size.”**

amplifiers an easy time. The result is a style of music making that is naturally bold and open, that remains consistent over a wide range of volume levels, and that – coincidentally or otherwise – is relatively unfussed about positioning. It likes some room to breathe and moderate toe-in, but it doesn't really need any special mollycoddling. In addition, it works well with the baffle cover in place, and we have to say that this is a blessing. With the cover removed, it really is a bit of an eyeful – overdressed and very 'in yer face'. With the covers on, appearance is more restrained, and arguably in better taste.

It images well, and tonally it is not far from neutral, allowing for some slight touch of mid-forwardness. But there is a *quid quo pro* here. As has already been hinted at, this is not the most sophisticated loudspeaker around. The tweeter has a certain 'bite', an obviousness that shouldn't be there. The baffle cover actually helps a little here by taming the treble, though inevitably it adds a smearing effect in the upper midband, probably caused by delayed reflections from the back of the baffle cloth and frame. More generally, the RS8 has a slightly roughly hewn quality, a degree of coarseness that is in tune with its excellent dynamic qualities, but arguably out of kilter with design trends at this price level.

Don't let this bite and seemingly rather obvious nature put you off the RS8, though. This is a clean, agile and dynamic speaker, with an extended low frequency bandwidth and good loudness capability. It is tonally near neutral – a little mid-forward, but close – and imaging is clean and explicit. It conveys enthusiasm and drive in appropriate musical performances, better perhaps than it deals with more subtle detail. But at this price level, you can't expect everything. **HFC**

Alvin Gold

VERDICT	
<b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 85%</b> 	<b>PRO</b> Bold, dynamic loudspeaker that has potent bass and mid, and sounds surprisingly comfortable in its own skin. A very easy speaker to drive and good material value, too.
<b>EASE OF DRIVE &gt;&gt; 91%</b> 	<b>CON</b> Bold, rather brash appearance with the front covers removed (though build and finish are fine). Slightly aggressive upper mid and treble voicing.
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 85%</b> 	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 88%</b> 	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> The RS8 has a very distinct personality that stresses dynamics and bass delivery over finesse and sophistication. Its great in larger-sized rooms for use at moderate to high volume levels, even with a medium-power amplifier.	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE &gt;&gt; 87%</b>	