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Because You Care
About Music™





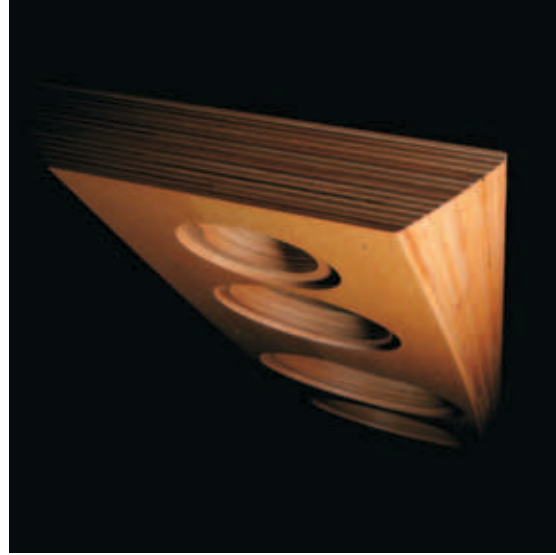
We invite you to audition the SS-AR1 Loudspeaker

You know the sense of anticipation before a live performance, the feeling of entering a great concert hall, and the catch of your breath as the performance begins. You also know the pleasure of carefully, deliberately selecting an outstanding recording; then listening to it with complete attention.

Sony knows this as well. The same passion for music motivated us to create the SS-AR1 Loudspeaker. We developed the AR1 to recreate, as faithfully as possible, your favorite music – just as it was originally recorded.

So take a moment to discover why the SS-AR1 is being embraced by enthusiasts and professionals alike. It will immediately remind you of why you care so much about music.





The wood behind the sound

Like a priceless piano, the SS-AR1 Loudspeaker is chiefly crafted out of wood. And like any rare instrument, its sound quality is inextricably linked to a unique combination of materials.

The wood for the baffle board comes from Japan's island of Hokkaido. Winters are extremely cold, a condition reflected in the tight grain, hardness and rigidity of the indigenous maple. With the assistance of local wood specialists, Sony hand-selected raw maple logs from Hokkaido's forests. The trees are felled in November, when their growth slows and the grain is at its tightest. Then the maple is laminated to a thickness of 50 mm.

However, building the entire enclosure from a single type of wood can result in an excessively rigid and hard sound. For this reason, we selected another, somewhat softer cold-climate wood, Finnish birch, for the speaker's side and rear panels. The birch is laminated, compressed to a thickness of 32 mm and curved.

This unique choice of woods insures exceptional freedom from unwanted vibrations, as well as a natural, balanced, musically expressive tone.

You'll remember the density of these woods every time you move the speaker. Although it stands just 3½ feet tall, an SS-AR1 weighs almost 125 pounds.



The Sonoma™ multi-track DSD recording system used by Gus Skinas has served as the foundation for numerous SACD releases.

"The AR1 brings high resolution music home... They're very impressive."

Gus Skinas

The heart of every Super Audio Compact Disc (SACD) is its one-bit Direct Stream Digital® (DSD) technology. And from the format's inception, the point man on DSD recording has been Gus Skinas, who has worked on countless SACD releases.

His credits include reissues of nearly two dozen Rolling Stones titles, plus numerous classics from Nat King Cole to Pink Floyd, Aerosmith, Sheryl Crow and George Harrison. Skinas is the driving force behind today's premiere DSD recording system, the Sonoma™ multi-track workstation.

"Once a recording artist experiences high resolution audio, they can't go back," says Skinas. "The SS-AR1 brings this high resolution music home. I've listened to some great recordings on the AR1 and they're very impressive."

*"Brings new life to music
I know intimately."*

Cookie Marengo

As a former A&R executive for Windham Hill Records and an award-winning recording engineer, Cookie Marengo has worked with the likes of Mary Chapin Carpenter, Max Roach and hundreds of other artists. Nearly a decade ago, she sought to take multi-channel sound to the next level by developing the acclaimed Extended Sound Environment (ESE) surround sound mixing system. This proprietary recording technique has been used to produce a series of exceptional titles for Cookie's own Blue Coast Records.

"You must hear these speakers to believe the incredible detail in dynamics and frequency range," said Marengo. "My recordings sounded fresh and vital, bringing new life to this music I know intimately."



Built like the musical instrument it is

The dimensions of a speaker cabinet are rarely perfect. For easier assembly, designers typically make a slight allowance for error. This can leave loose joints that are usually filled with glue. The result is an acceptable, if ever-so slightly imperfect cabinet.

For the SS-AR1, Sony demanded nothing less than the highest possible accuracy in woodworking. So our engineers reached out to a cabinet-making company that provides precision components for musical instruments. As an exploratory exercise, we asked them to build a prototype but to leave the pieces unglued for our inspection.

When the Sony project leader visited their workshop, he found a completely assembled cabinet and demanded an explanation. His host simply smiled as a workman with a rubber mallet disassembled the cabinet in a few seconds. The prototype was so precise, all of the pieces held tightly together without any glue at all.

In addition to meticulous accuracy, this cabinetmaker is also responsible for the AR1's exquisite piano black finish. But you'd expect no less from craftsmen who help build grand pianos.

Cookie Marengo's Blue Coast Records captures multi-channel music with sonic precision.





Different by design

A loudspeaker's timbre is largely determined by the sound pressure that radiates from the front of its drivers. However, sound pressure that radiates back into the cabinet from the woofer can produce unwanted resonance, which may interfere with the movement of the midrange and tweeter. The location, size and shape of the bass reflex port can also add distortion and coloration.

To combat this, the SS-AR1 utilizes a unique design that helps to control resonance and maintain a balanced, natural sound. What appears from the outside to be a single enclosure is actually divided inside by two thick pieces of birch separated by an air cavity. This creates two separate enclosures: one for the woofers and one for the midrange/tweeter. Each sub-enclosure is also vented with a bass reflex port that's been carefully tuned and positioned.

From your listening chair, you can't see any of these extraordinary measures. But you can certainly hear them.



"Every time we listened, I had a greater level of appreciation."

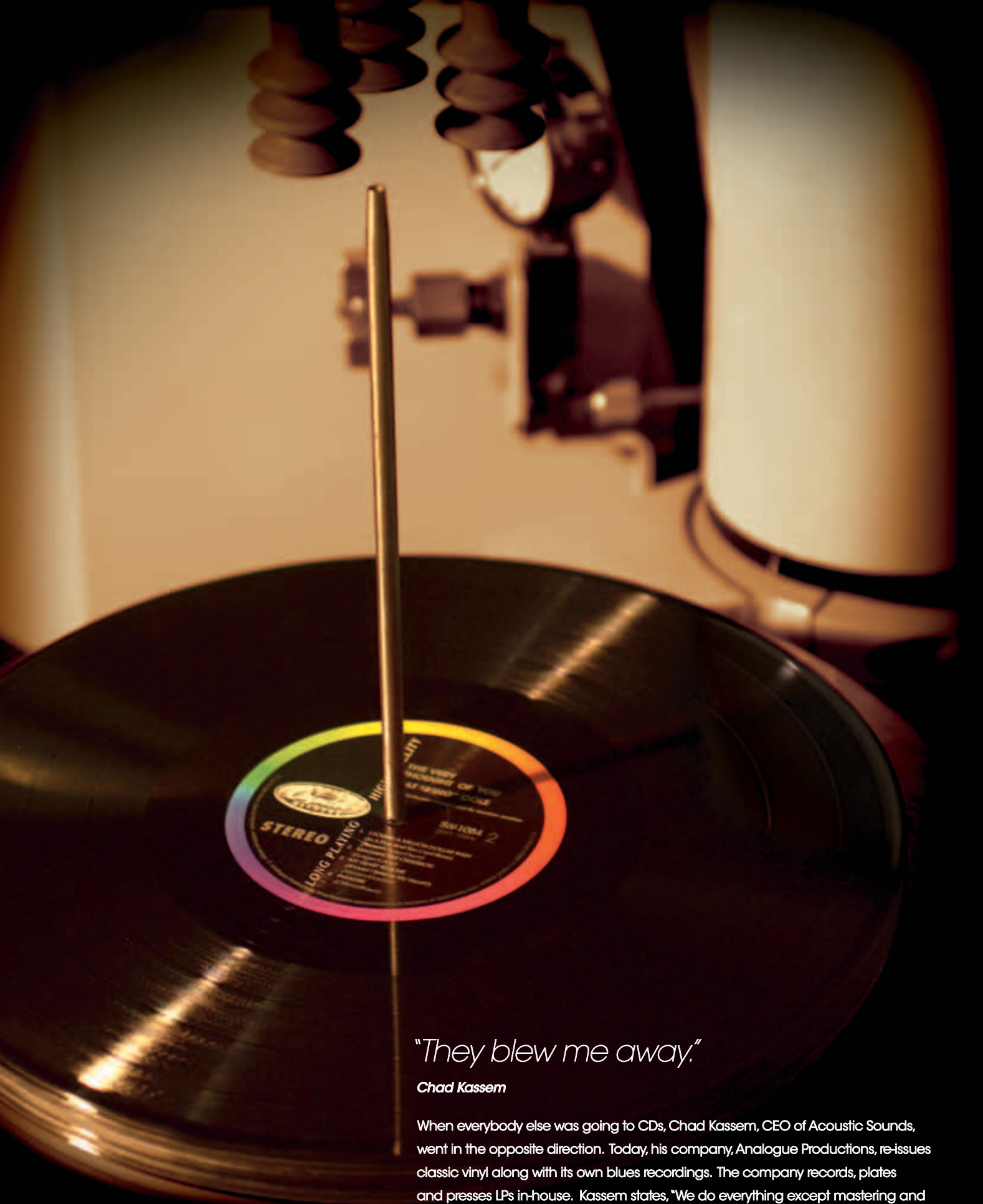
Ray Kimber

More than three decades ago, Ray Kimber started braiding audio cables to prevent strobe lights from causing interference with commercial sound installations. He never looked back. Today, Kimber Kable is famous for their reproduction quality and Ray's IsoMike record label is a showcase for his unique four-channel microphone technique.

"We put on our music and every time we listened to the AR1's, I had a greater level of appreciation," Kimber stated. "They reproduced every nuance from the original recording session. We've used them in our recording studios and shipped them to trade shows everywhere. We've even turned up the volume to the limits of insanity and they do everything we ask."



Ray Kimber's IsoMike surround sound recording technique uses four microphones isolated by egg- and heart-shaped acoustic baffles.



"They blew me away."

Chad Kassem

When everybody else was going to CDs, Chad Kassem, CEO of Acoustic Sounds, went in the opposite direction. Today, his company, Analogue Productions, re-issues classic vinyl along with its own blues recordings. The company records, plates and presses LPs in-house. Kassem states, "We do everything except mastering and printing jackets."

"At the Rocky Mountain Audio Fest," remembers Kassem, "I brought some of my own records and asked Ray Kimber to let me listen to them on a pair of speakers. Afterwards, Ray said, 'You have to hear the Sonys.' I told him I had wasted enough of his time. He said, 'You really have to hear the Sonys.' After he insisted a third time, I sat down for a listen. They blew me away. Wow. I was impressed."

Chad Kassem's Analogue Productions has in-house facilities to record, plate and press vinyl.



Drivers that deliver precision performance

Fabricating precision drivers for the SS-AR1 required particular expertise. So the Sony team reached out to a transducer specialist in Scandinavia. Working in close collaboration, they produced a four-unit/three-way system that exceeded our own high expectations.

The twin 200 mm aluminum woofers are remarkably strong, with a robust magnetic circuit. A copper ring optimizes the symmetry of the magnetic field, reducing distortion. Aluminum diaphragms, a rigid enclosure and a common port on the rear panel help generate bass response with power, authority and clarity.

The 130 mm midrange driver incorporates an exclusive sliced paper cone. The material is deliberately cut and re-adhered to suppress resonance and realize flat response. A copper ring in the magnetic circuit reduces distortion further.

The 25 mm soft dome tweeter includes a special back chamber, which smooths out the air pressure behind the diaphragm and around the magnetic circuit. Six neodymium magnets arranged concentrically also produce high flux density in minimal space. Plus, a distinctive diaphragm adhesion and edge integration method help extend frequency response to 60 kHz.

All of this results in a more realistic soundfield, helping music achieve an almost life-like presence.





SS-AR1

Loudspeaker

Specifications

System:

4-unit, 3-way, floor-standing
vented box speaker system

Drivers:

25 mm (1-inch) soft dome
130 mm (5-inch) sliced-paper cone
Twin 200 mm (8-inch) aluminum cones

Frequency Response:

28 Hz to 60 kHz

Crossover Frequency:

400 Hz, 4 kHz multi-slope network

Sensitivity:

88 dB (2.83 V/m)

Nominal Impedance:

4 ohms

Maximum Input Power:

200 W

Dimensions (WxHxD):

Excluding projecting parts

12⁵/₈ x 41¹/₂ x 17³/₄ inches
(320 x 1055 x 450 mm)

Including projecting parts

12⁵/₈ x 42¹/₂ x 19¹/₄ inches
(320 x 1080 x 490 mm)

Weight:

125 lbs. (57 kg)

Supplied Accessories:

Speaker grills (2)
Cleaning cloth