



Richter Harlequin S6

The Harlequins, from Australia's own Richter Audio, are outstandingly good speakers. We liked everything about this latest 'Series 6' release: sound quality, appearance, power handling ability, and efficiency. And we most particularly liked the price of \$1899.

They are floorstanders, combining in a slim cabinet the company's new low-distortion soft-dome tweeter partnered with an also newly-developed 6.5-inch mid/bass driver. Don't expect the bass extension and sheer 'thwack' that you'd get from, say, a pair of Richter Wizards, but you're going to be very pleased with the bass you will hear when you audition the Harlequins, because it is tight and rhythmic, the type of slam and pace you'd expect to find only in a much larger and more expensive pair of speakers. Plus its bass goes deeper than you're likely to need for music, while for movie systems requiring a subwoofer, Richter's Thor 6 subwoofer (an award-winner last year) would be the go.

We fired up one of our favourite bass testers, *Act Like You Know* by Fat Larry's Band, notable not only for Larry's drumming but for the fabulously fluid, inventive and complex bass lines by Larry La Bes. Listen to the depth of the skin sound on Larry's kick drum and the 'string' sound of La Bes' bass, as well as the way you can hear the attack on the bass strings distinct from the fundamental. Impressive stuff.

Later on when the boogie synth line kicks in and then the horns, you'll get to hear the Harlequins' great midrange delivery. In this regard we'd also recommend Sarah McLaughlin's sad but beautiful song *Angel*: the Harlequins revealed her fragile voice to perfection, especially when she shifts register. You'll also hear the sympathetic way the Richters handle the rather poorly recorded piano sound.

Can the Harlequins rock? You bet they can. We fired up *Sympathy for the Devil* and cranked the volume as high as we dared. The scream of Keef's guitar leapt out from the Harlequins like a banshee, so clean yet so raw we were surprised — even though we know it so well. The Richters delivered the totality of the sound field and all the instruments with accuracy and precision throughout the entire track.

If you find the Harlequins' highest frequencies a little forward, leave the grilles on and/or turn the speakers so that your listening position is a little off-axis. Arrange your preference so, and you will hear their beautifully crystalline treble that transmits the air around the highest notes transparently. Richter's Series 6 Harlequins are simply outstandingly good floorstanders at the price. More info: www.richter.com.au

JUDGES' COMMENT

The latest Aussie-designed Harlequins deliver Richter's signature size and quality of sound from a stylish and usefully compact floorstander.