

2018 ANNUAL EDITION

# the absolute sound

## 2018 HIGH-END AUDIO BUYER'S GUIDE

700  
REVIEWS



2018 BUYER'S GUIDE  
DISPLAY UNTIL MARCH 31, 2018



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REL Acoustics S/5 SHO



MartinLogan BalancedForce 210



### JL Audio Fathom f112/f113v2

**\$3700 (f112v2); \$4500 (f113v2)**

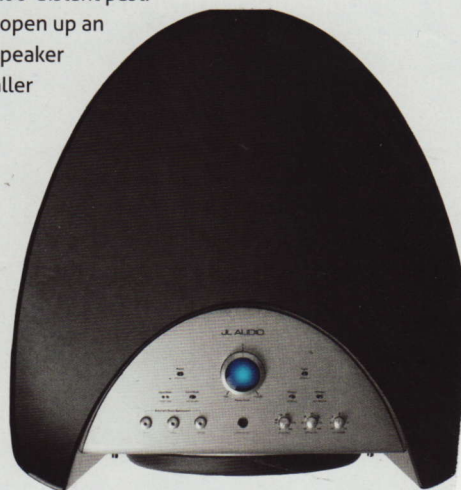
These two subs—identical except for woofer size (12" vs. 13.5") and amplifier power (1500W vs. 2500W)—raise the bar in subwoofer performance with their unlikely combination of brute-force power and tonal and dynamic finesse. Capable of delivering high SPLs at very low frequencies without strain, the Fathoms are adept at resolving the pitches, dynamics, and timbre of an acoustic bass. Loaded with useful adjustments, including low-pass filter, polarity, variable phase, and ELF trim. Built-in DARO room correction, considerably upgraded in the newer V2 models, greatly smoothes in-room response and makes for easier integration with your main speakers. Reference-quality performance at a reasonable price. (forthcoming)

### JL Audio Gotham g213v2

**\$15,000**

This gigantic \$15k subwoofer with two 13.5" drivers has simply redefined subwoofering for JV. Never a fan of subs, he's been turned around by this wonderful product, which in combination with JL's CR-1 crossover, is capable of a more seamless blend with main speakers (be they two-ways, panels, or multiways) than anything he's yet heard (in fact, than anything he imagined possible), with next-to-none of the midrange veiling—the loss of resolution and transparency—that was inevitably part-and-parcel of subwoofering in the not-too-distant past.

What the Gotham does is open up an entire new world of loudspeaker possibilities, wherein smaller and/or less expensive mains can be made to sound a whole lot like Raidho D-5.1s or Wilson Alexandrias or Rockport Arrakis or Magico M Projects, for a lot less dough. JV's reference. (254)



### JL Audio CR-1 Crossover

**\$3000**

Though they used to be relatively plentiful in the 60s, 70s, and 80s, outboard active analog crossovers are scarce on the ground nowadays. Which is why JL Audio's CR-1 outboard active analog subwoofer crossover comes as such a surprise. You've got to hand it to Brett Hanes and his fellow engineers at JL Audio: They are *serious* about subwoofering, and the CR-1, which took years to perfect, is a *serious* effort to optimize the interface between your main speakers and your subs. Built around two banks of extremely high-precision Linkwitz-Riley low-pass and high-pass filters, the CR-1 gives you an entire toolbox of controls that allows you to dial-in the hinge frequencies, slopes, output, and damping (Q) of both the mains and the subs. Though JV has never loved outboard crossovers because of the price they so often exact in transparency, resolution, and dynamic range, the CR-1 appears to be an exception. It is *highly* transparent, and the improvements the CR-1 can make in achieving a truly seamless blend through the crossover region are considerable—and quite audible. (254)

