

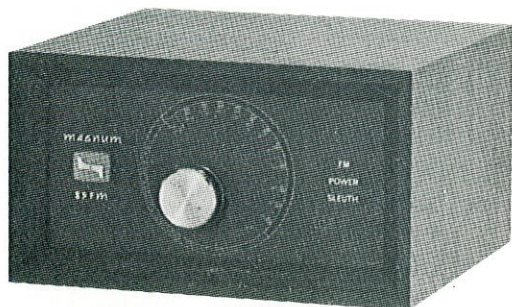
DECEMBER

the **fm** guide

THE GUIDE TO QUALITY HOME ENTERTAINMENT



BEETHOVEN DAY CJRT DECEMBER 19th.



NEW & INTERESTING

Magnum Electronic's
"Sleuth"
FM signal booster

The OHM 'F' Speaker System

A name that does not often come up in discussions of speakers is OHM. And usually, when it is mentioned the first thing asked is, "How do you spell it?" So, as we knew nothing about their performance, we decided to find out and, if it was really worthwhile, pass it on.

Ohm speakers are made in Brooklyn, N.Y. and their controversial model is the Ohm F, which is the one meant when Ohms are referred to. It is controversial in that the listener is hearing the "wrong" side of the cone. The single driver is facing straight into a sealed enclosure filled with sound absorbing material. The cone itself is shaped like a truncated dunce's cap and is made of titanium foil, aluminum foil and fibrous paper.

Ohm issues a booklet describing the evolution and rationale of the 'F', which is their second generation Walsh driver. The first was the 'A', the speaker for which the Ohm Company was created by the late Lincoln Walsh and his partner for the sole purpose of putting Walsh's theory into practice. It is not our intention to go over the impressive specs (including the unique ability to produce a square wave) to confirm or confute but simply to tell you *how they make music*.

We had been told that 75 watts per channel was ample and so we connected them to an existing system using SAE MK IV's (75 watts per channel). At low volumes they sounded, well, just OK, but at any reasonable volume the sound produced was a horrible hash. No need to go any further we thought: the whole Ohm thing is just another one of those products foisted off on the unsuspecting audiophile. We say audiophile because at something under \$1300 a pair they are not for the man in the street!



Cabinet of the OHM F - 17 3/4" square at the base, tapering to 13" sq. at the top. It is 44" high. The base is walnut (other woods to order). There are no frequency controls as the response is virtually flat from 37 to 19,000 Hz.

We were feeling very hostile towards these 'nothing' speakers when the obvious became obvious. The power just wasn't enough to get them going. If any amp could bring them to life it was the Phase Linear 400 and for the next audition we were set up with one of these impressive powerhouses. And bring them to life it did!

The sound from these speakers is unusual in as much as they radiate perfectly in a 360° pattern. Wherever you stand you hear them as well and with the same balance across the audio spectrum. It is really quite uncanny. Being between them is like being right in the orchestra.

The sound, not aggressive, as

some of the popular multi-driver arrays can be, but they have one great quality, a quality which puts them right in the front line of desirable speakers. *They sound musical*. What comes out *is music* and not the often heard electronic synthesizations and approximations.

We tried different placements. The closer to the wall the less their 3D effect but the more sharply delineated the sound. Strangely enough when spaced apart, as we usually like our speakers, there was a distinct hole in the middle. About 40° to the listener is about as far apart as they can be comfortably heard. Remember though, that as they radiate all around, the sound image is much wider than the physical 'stage' between the speakers. Some sound is reflected off the side walls.

Placing them six feet apart, one foot from the wall behind, we were able to get an impressive image almost 15 feet wide, regardless (almost) of where we listened. A kind of variation, or application, of the Blumlein theory.

As well as width, the Ohms produced a very satisfying and convincing illusion of depth with the individual instruments alive and in place. . .without "sticking out." In fact "nothing sticking out" is one of the reasons why these speakers are so truthful.

It is absolutely necessary that they be driven by an amp of the quality and output of the Phase Linear 400, which we later discovered delivered 400 watts per channel into the 4 Ohm Ohm F's.

In sum then, while not the ultimate in razor sharp quality, perhaps because they do not beam in only one direction, a pair of Ohm F's can re-create a live musical performance free of the usual spatial limitations imposed by conventional speakers.