

Client name: Monitor Audio
Word count: 390
Page count: 1
Writer Adam Thorn
Deal number: RREC9/EJ/79

Monitor Audio's monolithic Platinum II speakers were built using the smallest, lightest and most advanced metal components available, but its production process began with something altogether more low-tech: a recce.

'We have a product development team, based in Rayleigh, Essex, who we give complete ownership of each project to,' explains Alex Emson, Monitor Audio's director of global sales and marketing, 'but they start by going out and sourcing products. They discovered the best manufacturer of leather is a Scottish business called Andrew Muirhead and Sons.'

The company, founded in 1840, has furnished the Houses of Parliament, the Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai and the Boeing 307 Stratoliner.

'So we had samples sent down, analysed, and, only then, did we decided if its products worked within <our> products, too, under our ethics.'

That leather covers just the front baffles, and it's just one example that demonstrates Monitor's obsession with attention to detail. Another is the case, crafted from Santos rosewood and natural ebony, coated 11 times in clear gloss piano lacquer, which not only looks beautiful, but allows it to withstand bumps. Then there's the stuff inside. The seven products in the range, from the PL100 II bookshelf speakers to the 2 metre-tall floorstanding PL500 II, feature ceramic-coated aluminium magnesium metal alloy driver cones, which, unlike the cheaper plastic versions used by its competitors, are lighter, more rigid and stronger. This doesn't just make the sound better but, crucially, the silences, too.

'Imagine you're listening to a recording of a clarinet solo backed by an orchestra,' says Emson. 'With our speakers, you're going to be able to shut your eyes and pinpoint where that clarinet actually is, as if it's a performance in your living room.'

The range took three years to develop, but it builds on the first Platinum series, which itself took six years to create. In fact, the British-based company has been revolutionising speakers since 1972. Today its 60-strong team distribute to 75 countries, including as far afield as Brazil, Japan and China.

But why put so much effort into premium audio, when they could surely generate larger profits through simpler kit?

'You can't invite The Beatles, Queen or ELO into your living room,' concludes Emson. 'Our job is to give people the best experience we can.'