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BANG & OLUFSEN



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**Date:** Jan 07 2000 11:01:02 EST  
**From:** "Chad Burkey" <burkey@cstar.ac.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Penta vs BeoLab 8000

Hi Paul and all,

I have been fortunate enough to have owned and lived with all of the Beolab speakers, with the exception of the Beolab 1's. In the last year I did exactly what you are contemplating.

Pentas, although aesthetically quite pleasing, are dated technology and don't sound all that good as is. This is primarily due to them being monoamplified. I was able to dramatically improve their sound by building a breakout box that accepted PowerLink in, filtered out the bass frequencies in both signal channels, and then output PowerLink. The bass frequencies were then routed to and handled by my Sunfire subwoofer. This allowed the Pentas to operate in the mid and high frequencies without those frequencies being compromised by the amplifier using too much power trying to recreate deep bass (for which the subwoofer was designed). This had the effect of dramatically reducing the "colorization" that the Pentas nine drivers are known to cause at times. It also made their imaging much stronger without being harsh.

However much this improved the sound, however, I had moved out of a large loft space in Chicago and into a small cottage in Palo Alto and the Pentas were just too big for a normal-sized room. It was time for a change, so I traded my Pentas in for a pair of 8000s. The only thing I miss about the Pentas is that tres cool display. I also dramatically improved the sound of all my speakers by dumping that damn AV7000 (piece of shit) and replacing it with a Theta Casanova and by replacing all the PowerLink cables with quality interconnect cables. I am not sure which of these made the biggest difference, but the change is simply amazing.

Here is a rundown of my system...

- 8000s for front
- 2 4000s operating together as a center channel (this is important because I don't believe that a single 4000 is powerful enough to handle the necessary fill and match with the 8000s)
- 6000s for surround channels (a long time ago these were my fronts and I had another pair for the rears)
- Sunfire sub
- Theta Casanova which is now handling all crossovers and other sound processing/management

Here is my rundown of how each of the B&O speakers typically sound..

- Pentas. Pentas are certainly a unique speaker. Operating with a driver

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array rather than with fewer, larger drivers yields certain advantages, but suffers from some disadvantages as mentioned above. Pentas have a warm, analog sound that is very pleasing to vinyl lovers. Many younger listeners tend to feel they sound somewhat "muffled". I liked their sound until I crossed them over. Then I loved their sound, although I didn't feel they were perfect. I think they lack some crispness, they don't image very well, and they aren't very airy. They do have, however, a huge dynamic range and work very well in mixed music and home theater setting. You almost, I said almost, don't need a subwoofer with these.

- 8000s. For years these were the neatest looking speaker around. I now think the design is looking a little dated, but I still love them. 8000s, like the Pentas but to a much lesser degree, have a warm feel to them, which I believe is by design. They image pretty well with PowerLink and very well with quality rca cables. They are also reasonably detailed and airy, both of which increase with rca cables. They have plenty of power unless you have a very large room. These speakers, like all B&O speakers work very well in mixed listening environments, although for home theater you will need to supplement with a subwoofer. I have been very pleased with their performance. I have been curious at times what the results of replacing these with two pairs of 6000s would be.

- 6000s. Damn fine speakers. These are, by far, the best sounding Beolab speakers B&O has ever made (I's excepted because I'm not sure how I feel about them yet...right now I think they are very harsh sounding). They image extremely well and reveal so much detail it is breath taking even when using PowerLink. They do lack some power and bass, but their quality more than makes up for it. Although they sound great with music, they really should be augmented with a good servo-controlled subwoofer for home theater (which will, in turn, also help out with more "challenging" music). Using these as front channel speakers in home theater can cause them to sound a little thin during louder passages in action-type movies and that's why I use 8000s instead. As I stated earlier, I do wonder what two pairs would sound like...perhaps one day :) I used to dislike what I perceived to be their rather plain look, but I now truly appreciate it and love how they just disappear into a room. Look for colored versions of these and all the B&O speakers coming soon, even though we all know that silver is the only real color for a B&O speaker :)

- 4000s. A wonderfully small, innovative speaker that sounds \*very\* similar to the 8000s. They have the same warm feel as the 8000s and image very well due to their physical design. They sound isn't as crisp and clean as the 6000s, but I feel they are still quite good. I have another pair of these running in my office with my old Beosystem 2500 and think they sound great even as a near field monitors. I have heard rumors of B&O having set up a home theater demonstration in Mount Prospect using 5 4000s and having it sound very good. As many of you know, matching the timbre of all speakers, but especially the front three positions, is crucial for realism in home theater and using all identical speakers is ideal. I would bet that, as good as this probably sounds, it wouldn't have the power necessary to handle heavy-action films. Because these speakers do sound so similar to the 8000s they are particularly well suited as center channel speakers in systems which employ 8000s as the fronts.

I won't bother going into the 2500, or either of the beolink products unless someone would like me to. I will say this though: the Beolab 3500 is a near masterpiece of engineering.

So there you have it. These are my opinions and your mileage may vary.

Hope it helps,

Chad

-----Original Message-----

From: Paul Gilsdorf [mailto:pgilsdorf@uswest.net]

Sent: Friday, January 7, 2000 6:37 am

To: beo@listbot.com