

"THE OPEN CONSTRUCTION CONCEPT"

Jürgen Franzen of FaitalPRO meets Viesturs Balodis of Reflector Audio (Part 1)

Reflector Audio is a manufacturer of loudspeaker systems for professional and consumer markets and has its headquarters located in Riga, the capital city of Latvia.

Geographically Latvia is on the Baltic Sea and lies between Estonia and Lithuania.

After centuries of Swedish, Polish, Russian rule it is now an independent country and a member of the European Union.

Reflector Audio has developed very unique loudspeaker systems based on their patented concept that does not use enclosures instead it relies on a mix of open baffle and horn technologies. They make extensive use of Italian professional loudspeakers by FaitalPRO in their products and Jürgen Franzen, area manager of FaitalPRO asked Viesturs Balodis, co-founder and manager of the company, some details.



Viesturs Balodis started: “The key people of our company are located in three locations - Riga, Latvia and USA - New York City and Los Angeles. All locations are responsible for the success of Reflector Audio, while our Riga headquarters is mostly focused on research, development, manufacturing, quality control, the team in New York City and Los Angeles is centered more on building our brand and getting our products established in one of the most important markets and communities in the audio industry. Step by step we plan to establish showrooms in all important locations so that the professionals can come to audition our unusual loudspeaker systems.”

The company history is rather recent, since Reflector Audio was founded only in 2015 by three people with previous valuable experience in designing, developing and promoting products for hi-end consumer, car and professional audio markets. Prior knowledge and experience in loudspeaker building, modern measurement and equalization technologies resulted in invention of unusual open construction loudspeaker concepts of Reflector Audio.

Latvia is a very small country and important markets for Reflector Audio products and respective communities are mostly all abroad, which is the reason why Reflector Audio is developing and doing

99% of the business abroad. The main focus of the company is a professional recording and mastering studios where the flagship Q1818 loudspeaker system is being actively promoted at the moment. Q1818 and other models employ the finest Italian professional loudspeaker drivers by FitalPRO.

Viesturs Balodis continues: “Prior to Reflector Audio, me and Rolands Janevics, the inventor of all Reflector Audio loudspeakers, were working, creating products for several pro and consumer orientated companies. This extensive experience allowed us to come up with our own unique open construction loudspeaker system. Therefore we also applied and we were granted a technical patent. With this new product we started with the consumer market back in 2016 and spent a little more than a year by actively promoting it in this segment. In late 2017 we had a chance to demonstrate the speakers in New York City in Platinum Sound recording studio to around 100 professionals during the AES convention. Due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback we made a decision to focus and pursue the professional recording market for a few reasons - we wanted to be at the very heart of the music creation process and for our personal passion for pro audio.

After first NYC auditions we also understood how important is the capability of our open construction loudspeaker system to produce crazy SPL levels in lowest frequency range to also be adequate for urban music, hip hop etc. And we spent a good part of 2018 by transforming our 2-way speaker to a 3-way system which is now the flagship Q1818. It was not only the low frequency extension or sub we needed to create, but as well to completely change all electronics.”

Jürgen Franzen: “Today it seems Reflector Audio is the only company, or pioneer if you wish, that provides full frequency and extreme SPL in open construction. As far I know there are no such loudspeakers made by any company at the moment on the globe.”

Viesturs Balodis: “Actually the DSP is the major component to tune the system at a customer's location to a specific response in time and frequency domains, to provide various tuning presets etc.

Every single room and every audio engineer is different. Therefore it is a must to have the opportunity to combine subjective evaluation needs with reasonable technical parameters for best possible results for every single audio engineer. We at Reflector Audio consider our loudspeaker system as a perfect tool for recording and mastering studios, a tool that has unmatched resolution and ability to deliver maximum information for the audio engineer doing critical audio work.



PROFESSIONAL LOUDSPEAKERS

 *Made in Italy*

We did a lot of hard work in the time and frequency domain correction in order to get the best performance. I perfectly recall, for example, one of the first outings in a trade fair in Prague where people at Reflector Audio booth could not believe the systems delivered such good imaging and bass response and they kept asking how it is possible and where was the subwoofer, when there was none!"

Jürgen Franzen: "Listening to your systems you get the impression of a sound reproduction which is very precise, fast, energetic, and very clear throughout the whole frequency range."

Viesturs Balodis: "Yes! Due to all components, smooth off axis response, concentric approach, time domain linearity and undistorted high SPL capability, "3D imaging" of open construction is unbelievable, with life like phantom sound sources freed in open air in the room around the listener, while many other traditional enclosure concepts somehow "trap the sound" and give a slightly "tunneled vision". The sound impresses most sound engineers and in an ideal world every studio should have at least one such system since it reproduces music so insightfully that this becomes a totally new way of monitoring and controlling recordings."

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www.reflectoraudiousa.com

usainfo@reflector.audio