

TEST REPORT

Sophistication From Above

By Darryl Wilkinson

RATING

Origin Acoustics/Bang & Olufsen
BOC106 In-Ceiling Speaker
 Performance ★★★★★
 Build Quality ★★★★★
 Value ★★★☆☆

Origin Acoustics/Bang & Olufsen BOC106 In-Ceiling Speaker

PRICE \$1,595/each (\$7,975 as reviewed)

ALTHOUGH THE STORY OF ITS beginning may sound like it, Bang & Olufsen isn't one of those up-and-coming startups that briefly create a lot of noise and then are never heard from again. B&O's is a classic tale, though. Two engineers, Peter Bang and Svend Olufsen, tinkering in the Olufsen family's attic (not garage) in Struer, Denmark, start building and selling radios. They didn't do a Kickstarter campaign because, well, it was 1925, and Kickstarter hadn't been kickstarted yet. The fledgling company's first "commercially viable" product was the ominous-sounding B&O Eliminator, a device that allowed a radio to run off of AC (alternating current) from a wall outlet instead of DC (direct current) from expensive batteries. This early innovation set the tone for Bang & Olufsen ever since: be innovative, use quality materials, and above all (some would argue), do things your own (e.g., the Bang & Olufsen way).

For a variety of reasons, Bang & Olufsen hasn't been much of a force in custom-installation and whole-home audio—in North America, anyway. They've definitely made some cool built-in-able stuff, like the to-drool-for BeoLab 15 motorized in-wall speaker that tilted out of the wall whenever audio was playing, but the multiroom applications were usually limited. As a result, had I not been given an early heads-up, I'd have been seriously befuddled when five Bang & Olufsen Celestial BOC106 in-ceiling speakers arrived at my door. The fact that the boxes had Bang & Olufsen and Origin Acoustics

logos on them would have made the situation even more of a head-scratcher. Under normal circumstances, I also would have been totally bamboozled as to where I'd find enough pristine ceiling space in my theater room to saw five more holes. But normal isn't what it used to be anymore.

The Originals

B&O, it seems, is getting serious about American-style custom installation and architectural speakers. To begin with, the company is introducing the Celestial range of in-ceiling speakers. After that will come the Palatial range of in-wall speakers. For both lines, Bang & Olufsen chose to partner with a relatively new company in the architectural speaker industry: Origin Acoustics. If you've read my highly entertaining November 2015 review of a 5.0.4 all-in-ceiling Dolby Atmos system (whose f'ing crazy idea was that?) with nine Origin Acoustics Director D108 10-inch in-ceiling speakers, you'll catch the joke in saying Origin Acoustics a "relatively new" company. The old fogies behind Origin Acoustics are the very same dudes (young fogies, then) who helped create and develop the architectural speaker industry starting in the late 1970s and continuing to the current day. Combined, these guys can arguably claim to have introduced "the first flush-mount high-fidelity

in-ceiling speakers" in 1978, the first in-wall speaker in 1982, and the first in-wall subwoofer system in 1986. Eight years later, they formed the highly successful company, SpeakerCraft—and blah, blah, blah, blah. If you're interested in the backstory, read my Origin Acoustics Director D108 review—you'll get a better understanding of why the company is such a good fit with Bang & Olufsen for architectural speakers.

Gotta' Keep 'Em Perforated

Instead of rebadging an assortment of existing Origin Acoustics speakers, the two companies rejiggered and re-tweaked much of

AT A GLANCE



Plus

- Zip-Cliq mount for easy install
- IPX6 rated for use in high-moisture locations
- 10-inch woofer
- Optional billet aluminum Advanced Grille



Minus

- Expensive

the basic designs to produce speakers that are somewhat similar to but also, importantly, somewhat different from what Origin Acoustics currently offers in its own line. Neither company is shy about admitting this partnership, either. Not only are the boxes co-branded, but the Celestial speakers themselves have both companies' logos embossed along the outer rim of the



● The BOC106's 10-inch woofer, 4-inch midrange, and 1-inch tweeter are arranged concentrically in a TriLinear Configuration.