



# The Energizer

The Smart GLE 3 from Canton is not only the last, but also the largest and most expensive active speaker in our series on „Hi-Fi for the home office“. Does this increase in price and size also lead to advantages when placed onto our work desks?

*Julian Kienzle*



## OLD FRIEND

The heavy and very intuitive remote is identical for all models that are part of the „Smart“ range; it is therefore also in use here.

A simple, compact housing, two drivers in the typical Canton-aluminum-silver and ... a display?

That's right, recently the affordable GLE series has also received an active counterpart, such as we know from Canton: the German company now presents us with the Smart GLE 3, offering technologies of the larger „Smart“ models made to fit smaller budgets or tighter spaces – or, indeed, your home office. Alright, we gotta admit: the Smart GLE 3 is only really small compared to other Canton speakers; which sometimes compete with your fridge in terms of size. Next to miniature models such as the KEF

LSX, the compact Smart GLE 3 seems downright huge. It therefore requires a bit more desk space – but it's worth the effort. More on that later.

We placed them onto our work desk using the „Line 2“ absorber bases from bFly Audio. Despite the size, the speakers didn't visually dominate our place of work; they also were rather forgiving when placed somewhat close to the wall. You can hardly prevent doing that with speakers of this size, as long as you don't have your desk standing freely in the room. The three-digit display provides information about the countless features of the Smart GLE 3.

The many options for optimizing the sound properties are a particularly helpful part of these functions. You can choose, for example, between three equalizer presets, adjusting the sound to three respective placements: standing freely in the room, against a wall or in the corner. The proper „Sound“ settings can be accessed with just the press of a button on the remote. These then offer valuable options for fine-tuning bass, mids and treble. Having certainly been originally developed with TV sound in mind, the option that improves speech intelligibility also displays its qualities in times of constant video conferencing on your home computer.

## Stereo or Surround

When browsing through the options with the familiar and proven remote, we can't help but notice the recurring allusions to multi-channel uses. And these will even make the mouths of hardcore stereo-fans water for 3D sound, thunderous explosions and cinema feeling. Yeah, yeah, home office and home cinema don't really go well together. Although, procrastinating with surround sound would also have its appeal ...

All jokes aside, the Smart GLE 3 of course also works fabulously outside of a multi-channel setups. We certainly like the bonus of being able to place them in one, though, and even wirelessly at that. Who knows, maybe this pandemic will soon be over; our home offices will be deserted again; and the poor speakers will be robbed of their intended purpose? Then you can simply breathe new life into them by setting them up as (surround) speakers on your TV.

For now, however, this is unfortunately only a dreamy vision of the future and working from home remains the reality for thousands of music lovers around the world. Therefore, we are particularly happy to discover the USB input on the Smart GLE: this allows us to feed music to it directly from the computer, without having to resort to wireless connections. Of course, Bluetooth aptX is also available as an option.

There is also no connecting cable between the two speakers – the master receives the signal from our computer via USB and shares it wirelessly with its partner. We were pleased to note that, since it makes the desk look particularly tidy.

What we sadly will not need in this context are the many other physical inputs. Still: they can more than keep up with many high-quality hi-fi preamps in terms of their configuration and flexibility. Just like the home theater functionality, they keep the way open for differing future uses.

Canton does include an approach that is almost unusual in the active world these days, but absolutely consistent in itself: the complete lack of network functions, apps or similar gimmicks. I would definitely call myself a „digital geek“, but I still consider this a great choice! Such an app is something nice, but only if it is really well made. Even then, only very few can keep up with the solutions that proper streaming specialists offer. We, for one, never missed these features, while still being completely satisfied!

Not only on the functional side, but also in terms of sound, by the way. The 350 watts of Class D power per channel tease out a truly tremendous drive. They provide us with absolute rhythmic certainty paired with a snappy, crisp, while still full and deep bass. Now, with all that coming from the two drivers and the bass reflex port of the Smart GLE 3, doing your job suddenly is twice as fun. This performance certainly keeps you fresh and lively even after a long day of working.

The Canton also benefits from the fact that it remains dynamic and that nothing becomes „blurred“, even when listening at lower volumes. The excellent abaxial radiation of the GLE 3 also has advantages here. To improve the long-term suitability a bit, a slight reduction of the treble – compared to the factory settings – might be nice, but that's what the sound settings are for, right?



**In the Smart series, both speakers feature the same equipment – except for the USB input, which is only available once, on the master.**

## WHAT WE'VE HEARD

**Greta van Fleet:  
The Battle At  
Garden's Gate**



This is an album that seems to have come from another time: it has all the epic spirit of the golden days of rock, clad in a fairly modern sound.

## TEST DEVICES

### Active Speakers:

KEF LS50 Wireless II, KEF LSX, Triangle LN01A, Canton Smart Vento 3

### Sources:

Bluesound Node, Canor CD 2.10

### Cables:

JIB, Audioquest, Oehlbach, van den Hul, In-Akustik



This menu item hides some of the most important options the Canton offers: most of the settings for the sound adjustments.

Especially for listening „on the side“ and close to the speakers, we appreciated the „Virtualizer“ in the „Music“ mode. Yes, details are somewhat lost, the spatial representation is distorted, and everything seems larger and rounder. But: as long as you don't want to go on a true audiophile journey, it has that certain something. Just try it out, changing the settings is free after all!

## Inciting Fun All Around

In the listening room, we expectedly set all settings back to „zero“ – and were impressed again. Here, the Canton seemed amazingly large and expansive, very neutral, fast and full of captivating energy. In the intro to „Tears Of Rain“ from Greta van Fleet's latest masterpiece „The Battle At Garden's Gate“, we could see every single guitar string being hit clearly outlined in front of us. Every crack in the voice of the talented young singer Joshua Kiszka, to whom even Robert

Plant personally paid his respect in an interview, appears cheeky and precise.

Next up were Beethoven's „9 Symphonies“ under Herbert von Karajan with the Berlin Philharmonic. The Canton there scores with its dynamic, direct style of playing and pushed the orchestra into our room with pressure and verve on the one hand, while also giving us a well-drawn resolution on the other. The stage imaging was quite successful, even if something like a Smart Vento 3, for example, unsurprisingly fanned out the performance even more relaxed and transparent. After all, it does cost you almost twice as much.

This Smart GLE 3 is an excellent source of fun that can do much more than just enrich your home office. Therein, it sweetens the workday with catchy energy and a sparkling, lively way of playing. Great! ■



## GLE SERIES

Canton recently upgraded the passive GLE series. The speakers now include titanium membranes and oval magnetic covers, among other things. The active GLE remains unchanged for the time being, but will also benefit from the innovations of its amplifier-less siblings by the end of 2021 (at the latest), according to Canton.

## Canton Smart GLE 3

**Price:** around 1250€ (in White or Black Ash)

**Dimensions:** 19x36x28 cm (WxHxD)

**Warranty:** 2 Years

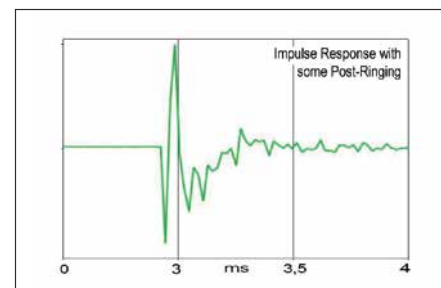
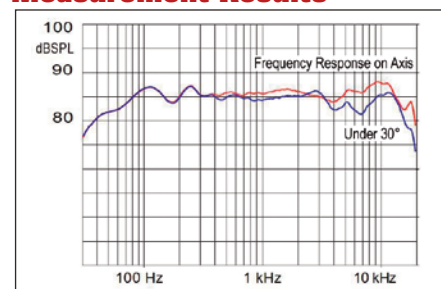
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A great all-rounder that masters home theater just as well as musical enjoyment at the desk or in the listening room. It is neutral, brisk and driving with a clean, rich bass and bubbling energy. A speaker that is fun to listen to, while also skilfully being able to correctly highlight aspects of classical music or quieter sounds!

## Measurement Results



Sound Pressure Characteristic (2,83 V/m)	95 dB SPL
Lower cut-off Frequency (-3dB SPL)	43 Hz
Distortion Factor at 63/3k/10k Hz	1,4/0,3/0,1 %
Power Consumption (Sby/Idling)	<0.1 W/5.1 W(226 Volt)

## Lab Comment



Quite linear frequency response, even abaxially; solid distortion values and,

considering the size, a decent lower cutoff frequency of a full 43 Hertz.

## Features

Wireless between the speakers, Bluetooth aptX, digital inputs: USB, optical and coaxial, analog inputs: RCA and XLR, support for multichannel – also wireless –, virtualizer, equalizer, extremely versatile settings, LED display, remote control.

## STEREO - TEST

SOUND LEVEL 63%

PRICE/PERFORMANCE



OUTSTANDING