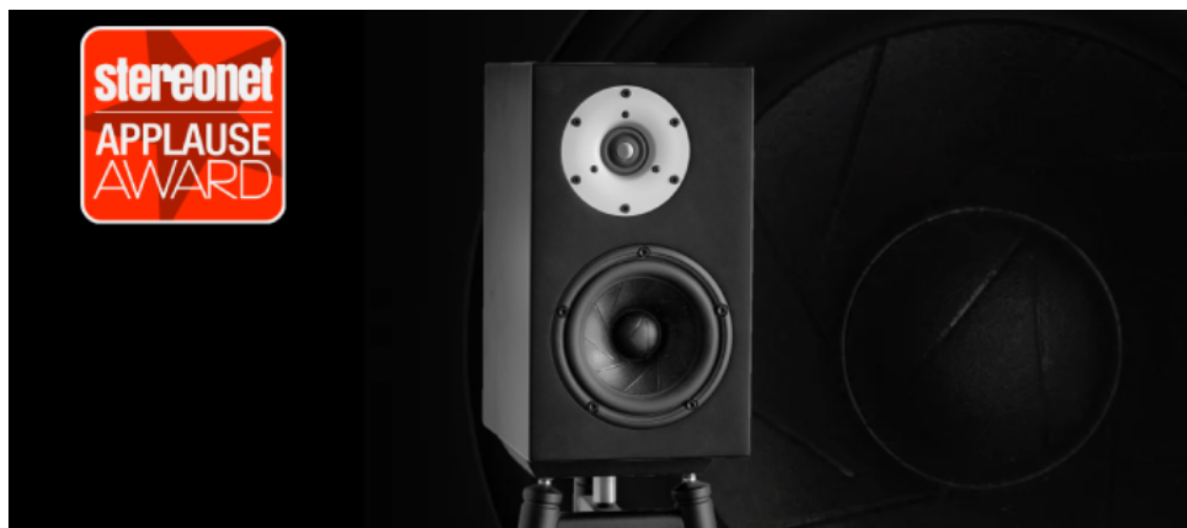


Serhan Swift Mu2 MkII Bookshelf Loudspeakers Review

Posted on 19th July, 2022



Jay Garrett samples the latest version of this highly respected Australian standmount loudspeaker...

Serhan Swift Mu2 MkII Standmount Loudspeakers

£6,499

Serhan Swift's original [Mu2](#) was an antipodean masterclass in constructing a relatively compact stand-mounting loudspeaker. Sonically it punched well beyond its price point and was beautifully built in Australia with an attention to detail that ought to be more common at this price. However, five years later, an updated and upgraded model was deemed necessary due to the continued research and development of the design. The new £6,499 [Mu2 MkII](#) retains the physical dimensions of the previous iteration (322x180x236mm, HxWxD), but everything else apparently is new – including the gorgeous matt black and matt white finish. This Sydney-built bookshelf speaker sports a new type of 'box, in a box, in a box, in a box' construction of differing materials and thicknesses, plus new drivers and crossover. As well as lessons learned from making the Mu2 and Special Edition, continuing research into the effect that vibration has on components has been applied for the MkII. One result of this is a new

constrained layer damping material, custom manufactured by Les Davis Audio, alongside upgraded asymmetric bracing.

The new drivers come from Scanspeak's latest Revelator series in the shape of a 125mm mid/bass unit and 25mm Ring Radiator tweeter, as used in designs at least three times the price of this speaker. These have been chosen for their "improved and even-flatter frequency response, smoother roll-offs at both ends of the audio spectrum, and lower distortion across the range", the manufacturer says.



After extensive experimentation with low and high-order crossover configurations, the winner was a high-order type featuring Solen air-core inductors, polypropylene capacitors and non-inductive resistors. I'm told this allows for steeper slopes, keeping the drive units in their respective power bands and minimising out-of-band distortion. In addition, bass and treble sections are kept separate and point-to-point hand-wired, then silver soldered on 5mm thick high-density substrates with micro-vibration control also applied.



The result is a very solidly built, compact stand-mounter that weighs 7.8kg. Each pair apparently takes three days to build under the watchful eyes of chief loudspeaker designer **Brad Serhan** and engineering director **Morris Swift**. Before they're passed onto their new owner, Brad performs final testing, and then he and Morris proudly sign each unit.

THE LISTENING

This is a great premium standmount loudspeaker and much improved compared to its predecessor. Where the MkI did well – especially in midband clarity and low-end punch – the MkII is even more capable, further uncovering micro-detail. Its even-more refined midband performance clears the way for a less cluttered presentation at either frequency extreme. The MkI was no slouch in this regard; it's just that the MkII is even better. It's as if the MkI was a Porsche 911 (992) – an extraordinarily competent machine that's highly rewarding to own – and then comes along the new MkII, a sort of Porsche Taycan in sportscar terms. It is technically superior and offers instant power that's far more accessible to the driver.



A key part of the new speaker's skill set is its ability to stop and start quickly and cleanly without blurring or overhang. This was revealed in an increased talent for dynamics, especially in more challenging arrangements. Try **The Mars Volta's** *Take the Veil Cerpin Taxt*, for instance. It might hit you as an unapologetic slab of noisy progressive rock, but plenty is going on here that can wrong-foot lesser speakers...

Firstly, while the jangly treble of the guitar might grab the listener's attention, the speakers should also be showing plenty of low-end muscle. Yet it's the tidiness of the rhythms that really tests transducers, especially the middle-eight, where everything drops away, leaving the guitar and drums with nowhere to hide. The Mu2 MkII did exceptionally well here and didn't just hang on for the ride. This Aussie speaker conducted itself superbly; I especially appreciated how the bass guitar sounded after the break at around 4:37, as it's like a round, cooling balm after the moment of madness.



While it might lack the low-end extension and power of floorstanders due to its lack of cabinet volume, this wee speaker's bass is still articulate and tuneful. The *Mathame Remix* of **Moby's** *Lift Me Up* proved that this standmounter could reproduce the dancey low-down throb in this track. And the slinky bass of **Norman Watt-Roy** on **Ian Dury's** *What A Waste* showed that the Mu2 MkII isn't simply adept at electronic bass. The unmistakable sound of that Fender Precision bubbling away – creating a foundation for Dury's singular vocal delivery – sounded rich and soulful. Things came over as fast and supple, with the satisfying bounce and snap that a smaller woofer can bring to the table.

Another area that the Mu2 MkII impressed in was its ability to take power without faltering. In fact, this speaker really seems to enjoy being driven hard. The *Strange Days* album by **The Doors** was particularly fun as I only intended to play *Love Me Two Times* but ended up belting out the entire album at a raucous level. As I performed my personal *karaoke*, I also noticed that the on-axis to off-axis transition is pretty seamless – this speaker works well across a wide listening space.



The Doors' album was a real treat thanks to the Mu2 MkII's insightful midband – likely due to excellent driver integration and the uprated cabinet's rigidity and vibration control. There was plenty of detail laid out before me during *People Are Strange*. I could clearly hear the guitar string rattle against the frets and the slight reverb on lead vocals in the song intro. Even from this late nineteen-sixties recording, it was easy to discern lots of subtle detail. For example, I could hear the 'tack piano' continuing in the background when **Ray Manzarek** adds the Vox Continental combo organ melody line on top. This ability to relay information is nicely balanced with an enjoyable musicality, unlike some high-end designs that prefer to 'name and shame' poorly mastered recordings.

The Scanspeak Radiator tweeter proves why it's found in some more expensive builds, as the opening to **Rush's** *YYZ* pinged from speaker to speaker. The proceeding cymbal crashes and splashes allied to the tight metronomic hi-hats were a reminder that dome tweeters constructed from fancy materials are not the only way to produce classy high frequencies.

I have to whisper that last bit as I pitted the Serhan Swift speakers against my [Marten Duke 2s](#) that sport ceramic drivers from Accuton. Furthermore, since the Duke 2 joined Marten's Heritage line, they also cost the same as the Mu2 MkII in the UK. When comparing these designs, I'd say that the Marten covers a broader frequency range and is better at plumbing the depths than the Serhan Swift. However, as I stated earlier, the quality of low-end that the Mu2 MkII delivers appears cleaner and faster than my Martens, which still can put a massive smile on my face.

Whereas the trick of impressively integrated drivers is shared between the Australian and Swedish standmounters, it's the former's presentation that I believe most people will warm to. Indeed, the Mu2 MkII's joie de vivre and tonal seamlessness mean that one moment it can rock out to **Tool's** *The Grudge*, and then next chill to **Joni Mitchell's** *Sisotowbell Lane*. This almost split personality means Joni's track comes through with delicate sophistication. Meanwhile, the enraged song from **Tool** comes through with as much visceral energy as one would want.



Last but not least, this little loudspeaker is very good at soundstaging. Although it didn't quite manage the full physical scale of [Audiovector's R6 Arreté](#), **John Williams' Live in Vienna** was still eminently enjoyable with *Dartmoor, 1912* from *War Horse* painting a remarkable picture. I heard highly impressive imaging and depth perspective, alongside a well-ordered sound that practically put me up on the conductor's platform.

THE VERDICT

Serhan Swift's original Mu2 was hard not to like, but the new MkII is even better. It retains all the former's good points and further refines them. You still get plenty of low-end punch, midband clarity and an incisive top, but this is all set to an even quieter backdrop, as things start and stop so much faster. Overall then, this little loudspeaker thrives in compact listening rooms, and offers a performance that's up there with anything else at the price that I've heard. An essential audition, for those who believe that less is more

