

»»»» DIGITAL EDITION

TED

TRENDS ELECTRONICS & DESIGN

HI-FI • HOME THEATRE • SMART HOME | JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022
WHAT'S NEW? • AND MORE... | VOLUME 03 NO 01

AUDEL SONIKA MK2

**A FRAGRANT
MELODY
FROM SICILY**

THORENS TD-124DD

**THE EXPERTISE
SINCE 1883**



RHYTHM & MUSIC: CLASSICAL, BLUES, JAZZ & PROGRESSIVE ROCK

AUDEL SONIKA MK2 ART EDITION LOUDSPEAKERS AND **LIGHT** STAND

A fragrant melody from Sicily

By JEAN-DENIS DOYLE

As soon as you open the package of these beautiful little loudspeakers, you can smell the honey, wood and beeswax. These **Audel** loudspeakers smell amazing! They breathe the meticulous work of craftsmen and the expertise of a cabinet-maker from Italy. Here is a product which is really out of the ordinary, with musical qualities all in delicacy which is addressed to the amateurs of beautiful objects. The appearance of the **Audel Sonika mk2** is impeccable and the quality of the construction stands out from other speakers on the market. Newcomer on the Canadian territory, the **Audel** brand comes to us with very interesting products thanks, among other things, to the use of high-quality transducers and a flawless tuning. So let's take a look, and a listen, at these fascinating Sicilian loudspeakers.



Audel is a small loudspeaker manufacturer in the vicinity of Palermo. This young company relies on processes that combine the traditions of Italian woodworking with the latest cutting technology using a *CNC* machine. Thanks to the precision of the cuts obtained with *CNC* machines and the almost maniacal care taken during the manual assembly, **Audel** is able to offer its customers boxes of an uncommon quality. The designs of **Audel**'s acoustic and electronic products are the result of engineer's **Davide Ballo** work and that of the founder, **Walter Carzan**. Despite the young age of the company, their loudspeaker designs have already received worldwide critical acclaim from their peers.

Audel's catalogue includes seven models, all of which are easy to *live with* and integrate into their surroundings. The realistic sale prices reflect the quality of the products offered. Three product lines are offered: *Classic*, *Prestige* and *Art*. The version of the *Sonika mk2* that I received belongs to the *Art* series. It is an edition whose front panel is hand-painted by the **Mendini**

Studio under the direction of master designer **Alessandro Mendini**. They are absolutely gorgeous and very *lady friendly*. With the beautiful colour of the front, as well as the back plate, the *Art* version of the **Audel Sonika mk2** received instant approval from my spouse. The loudspeakers produced by the small **Audel** team offer a breath of fresh air in the loudspeaker market. Now let's see what it's all about technically speaking.

Technical Description

The first thing that catches your eye are the boxes. Like all **Audel** loudspeakers, they are assembled from hollowed-out pieces of plywood using a *CNC* rotary saw. These are then stacked and glued together to form the box. This type of assembly requires a lot of time and guarantees an extraordinary rigidity. In addition, it allows the creation of irregular shapes inside the enclosure, which **Audel** calls *ribs*. These have the effect of reducing the inert waves inside the cabinet and help to minimize coloration. These *ribs* also act as multiple small arches that increase rigidity.

You better build on a solid foundation!

Paradigm

Founder
SERIES



spécialiste haute fidélité

LE MAGASIN
AUDIOLIGHT

depuis 1965

355 Marie-de-l'Incarnation St.
Quebec G1N 3G9 418-687-9252
magasinaudiolight.com

AUDEL SONIKA MK2 ART EDITION LOUDSPEAKERS AND LIGHT STAND

The *Sonika mk2* cabinet has a vent that has been integrated into the shape of the box. This way, there is no risk of emitting sounds that could interfere with the sound reproduction. The *Sonika mk2*'s finish was achieved by applying beeswax which was then polished to a beautiful patina. It's beautiful, and it smells good. In addition, beeswax is of natural origin and therefore good for the environment!

The *Sonika mk2* is a two-way loudspeaker using a four-inch woofer and a twenty-nine-millimetre tweeter. These loudspeakers come from the renowned manufacturer **SB Acoustics**. These transducers have been adopted by several other high-end loudspeaker manufacturers. Their presence in the **Audel** *Sonika mk2* loudspeakers suggests that they will be very good listeners. The *tweeter*, in particular, is a marvel of technology.



Despite its price, which is quite reasonable, it is at the *top of* what is being done as a high frequency transducer. Its ring-shaped dome prevents any form of resonance at very high frequencies and guarantees a fine reproduction of harmonics. This **SB Acoustics** *tweeter* is equipped with a neodymium magnet and pure silver connecting wires.

The small, four-inch, natural-fibre *woofer* has a substantial magnet, cast aluminum bowl and rubber suspension. The use of such high quality transducers allowed the designer to simplify the crossover of the loudspeaker as much as possible. It is based on a simple first-order circuit, reducing the number of components in the path of the music.

Installation and Start-up

The **Audel** *Sonika mk2* were delivered to me with their own stands. After a few tests, I can confirm that they are essential to bring the *Sonika mk2* to its highest level. These stands are made of the same laminated wood that is used for the loudspeaker cabinets. They are really light and offer some flexibility.

For some reason beyond my comprehension, the *Sonika mk2s* suddenly come to life when installed on their stands. An ingenious fastening and uncoupling system makes installation easy. On the other hand, a simple explanation sheet on how to assemble the stands would have saved me some head scratching. The *Light Stand* is equipped with polymer half-spheres instead of the traditional decoupling spikes. These are simply glued under the support and do not allow any adjustment. Unfortunately, not everyone has perfectly level floors. In my opinion, **Audel** should offer a solution that allows for adjustment.

The positioning of the *Sonika mk2*, after a few tests, was easily done at home. They ended up about two feet from the back wall, separated by about six feet and facing slightly inward. The *four-ohm* impedance and 87 dB output at 1 W didn't really cause any particular challenge for my integrated amplifier.

Listening Impressions

A vision of your musical universe with finesse

Audel's *Sonika mk2* loudspeakers shine, from the first listening, by the absence of grain. Here we are dealing with small loudspeakers capable of finesse and subtlety that far surpass the majority of loudspeakers of this price. With the **Brahms** piano concertos, performed by **Nelson Freire**, the *Sonika mk2* rendition paints a beautiful three-dimensional musical picture. The absence of resonance of the **SB Acoustics** *tweeter* leaves all the room for the subtleties of the music. Here is finally a small loudspeaker, able to reproduce the dynamics of the high notes of the piano, without the *tweeter* giving the impression that it will tear at any moment. The impacts of the instrument's hammers are rather striking by their dynamism and the infinite length of the resonances. And what about the stereophonic effect! Simply superb! When a loudspeaker has this level of finesse, reverb details appear, the extension of notes is prolonged and the scene becomes larger. The music can then spread out in all its grandeur and occupy all the space it deserves.



A Tonality Worthy of the Greatest

Judging by the tonal balance offered by the **Audel Sonika mk2**, it becomes clear that their designer understood a thing or two about music reproduction. Indeed, this pair of minimonitors achieves a perfect balance of low, medium and high frequencies. This is an important feature, which greatly expands the musical choices that these loudspeakers will allow you to enjoy. If the rest of your audio system is of good quality, the *Sonika mk2* will not be afraid to *rock* or *jazz* and will love the great classical music orchestras.

There is absolutely no need to feed them with top quality *audiophile* recordings. These loudspeakers are perfectly capable of reproducing the best of a 1970s recording and focusing on the essence of the musical message, for example, when listening to **Isaac Hayes' Best of Shaft** album. This vinyl transports us, thanks to *Sonika mk2*, in another time, without question. The *groove* of the music flows easily from room to room thanks to the superb tonality of these loudspeakers and their perfect balance between the different registers. If there is one interesting comparison I would make, it would be that the tone of the **Audel Sonika mk2** loudspeakers reminds me a lot of the high-end **Grado** headphone models.

Resolve to Spare

On the occasion of a party, where I invited a friend to come and listen to the splendid **Thorens TD124DD** turntable, the *Sonika mk2* were plugged into my audio system to start with. I mentioned to my guest that we were going to start with the **Audels** and later on we were going to use my usual loudspeakers, in order to get a good feel for the qualities of the turntable. Finally, the *Sonika mk2* remained plugged in all evening and allowed us to appreciate the incredible amount of information that a turntable of this level can inject into an audio system. **Audel's Sonika mk2** have few limits in terms of resolution. Give them quality up front, they will give you back a hundredfold. Their only limit will remain the absolute volume. The small four-inch *woofers* certainly don't lack bass, and the loudspeakers still maintain a nice warm tone. However, they will not be able to provide sound in a large room at high volume. The *Sonika mk2* are therefore loudspeakers that target a clientele that listens at a *reasonable* volume and is looking for absolute refinement. She will then get a holographic musical presentation, impeccable tonality and will discover a lot of unsuspected details in her recordings.

Conclusion

Audel's Sonika mk2 loudspeakers certainly deserve their place in the sun. Newcomers to the Quebec audio landscape, these loudspeakers really bring something different to the current offer. They are splendid objects made with the care and craftsmanship of a musical instrument. Refined and versatile, they will easily capture the hearts of music lovers looking for the finer things in life. Plus, they smell so good!



GENERAL INFORMATION

Loudspeakers

Price: \$3,200 for the walnut or ebony finish; \$3,400 for the burl walnut finish and \$3,800 for the Art by Mendini finish

Warranty: 2 years parts and labour for transducers/separator filters; 4 years on the cabinet

Loudspeaker stands

Price: \$1,100

Grids

Price: \$240/pair

Distributor: Tri-Cell Enterprises Inc, T.: 905.265.7870, www.audel.it; www.tricellentprises.com

Mediagraphy

Brahms, The Piano Concertos, Nelson Freire, Tidal file, Decca

Isaac Hayes, Best of Shaft, MGM, 0052 504