



Audel Magika Mk2

Friday, March 13, 2020

Chris Kelly

As John Simm of Audio Pinnacle explains it he went to the Munich High End audio show in May 2019 with the intention of finding products to complement his existing portfolio. He saw Audel sharing a stand with another company and was struck by the pleasing aesthetics of their loudspeakers. Only when he approached did he find out that they were Italian, like his main brand Gold Note, although from Sicily rather than Tuscany.

As I have said before, 2019 was definitely my year for exploring the vibrant Italian hifi scene, and sure enough, I was able to add the Audel Magika Mk2 stand mount loudspeakers to the list of impressive Italians to grace our living room. Assembling the matching stands for the loudspeakers was reasonably straightforward (after telephone coaching from Mr Simm) and the loudspeakers were attached to them. I say attached, because there is a very well thought out but simple way to fix the rear of the speaker to the top plate of the stand, while at the front a pair of spikes sit in metal cups in cut-outs on either side. The result is an elegant and stable arrangement.

Talking of elegance, the fit and finish of these loudspeakers is absolutely exceptional. Beautiful is not a word that I often use in regards to hi-fi kit, but it is totally appropriate in this context. The carpentry is exquisite; the beeswax finish on the birch ply is gorgeous. Over the review period we had several visitors to Kelly Towers, both civilians and industry folk. Not one of them could refrain from caressing the woodwork of the Audels. The front baffle is dark tiger ebony and contrasts well with the pale birch of the rest of the cabinet and the stands. Internally, the cabinet is ribbed, which adds structural integrity and helps to diffuse unwanted standing waves. The corners are curved, again helping with the whole visual presentation of these loudspeakers.

The soft dome tweeter and 5.5 inch woven polypropylene woofer are acoustically isolated from each other by a an isolator on the tweeter mounting, the cabinet is loaded by a rectangular bass port located below the woofer. On the rear panel are a single pair of good quality binding posts, which will accept banana, spade or bare wire connectors. The quoted frequency response of the Magika Mk2s is 45 – 25,000Hz, with a sensitivity of 87dB and a nominal impedance of 8 ohms, meaning that they should work well with any amplifier save very low-powered valve designs. Certainly they paired very well with my Yamaha A-S3000

integrated and with a Naim Nait XS2 which overlapped with them for review. In fact much of my listening was done using the Naim, and the combination worked fantastically well together.



Sound quality

Once set up in the listening room and joined to the amplifier by Tellurium Q Ultra Black II cable it was soon very apparent that this loudspeaker designer really knows their stuff. These speakers are very even-handed with all kinds of music and will resolve as much detail as the upstream components can create. Rock music had real verve, with plenty of fast bass available when required and a really tuneful timbre. The midrange is strong, with just hint of emphasis on the upper end, but not enough to distract. The soft dome tweeter is very sweet and the higher frequencies are delightfully presented. My only slight concern was that the stands are a bit taller than I would like them, so that the tweeter is well above ear height when I am sitting in my Stressless listening chair. My usual stand mount loudspeakers sit lower and their designer always stipulates that they were designed to be heard with the tweeter at ear level. I have not had a chance to speak with the Audel designer to see how he measured them in his laboratory. In all fairness, the sound at my listening position was always very pleasing, so this is an observation rather than a criticism.

Meanwhile, back at the listening chair, I tried a really eclectic mix of music through the Magika Mk2s. If you live largely on a diet hard rock or heavy metal there may be better choices



out there for you. Where they absolutely excel is in reproducing acoustic instruments and the human voice but they also did a great job with electric blues, classic rock, jazz, choral and classical music. I played all four records in the Eva Cassidy *Nightbird* album on vinyl and was absolutely captivated. Rodrigo and Gabriella's rendition of Pink Floyd's *Echoes* on the 2019 album *Mettavolution* gave me goosebumps.

The Magika Mk2s sound sophisticated, if that isn't too pompous a word. These are loudspeakers with which to form a long relationship – others may have more wow factor in a short dealer demonstration, but for hours of fatigue-free listening and deep musical immersion there are few loudspeakers I would choose over the Audels. One other thing to mention is that if you prefer floorstanding designs to standmounts, the Audel Malika Mk2 uses the same drivers as these but in a full length cabinet with the bass port right at the bottom. As a result they go down to 37Hz at the bottom end. I hope to bring you a review of those in due course.

Despite their unarguable excellence however, the biggest obstacle that these Italian newcomers have to face is the willingness of most British hi-fi retailers to commit to another loudspeaker brand. We are already spoiled for choice with so many fine home-grown options and most dealers are very understandably reluctant to invest their capital in a relatively unknown brand. However, the enterprising retailer who adds these to his or her portfolio, and is willing to put in the extra effort to persuade a customer away from the better known offerings, will be doing that customer a real service. These are beautiful loudspeakers which make a compelling case for themselves once they start to play. I wish them every success - they deserve it.

