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SONUS FABER CREMONA AUDITOR M

All change under the hood of the Cremona Auditor

PRICE £2,690 CONTACT Absolute Sounds ■ 020 8971 3909 ■ www.sonusfaber.com

If you casually glance at the Sonus Faber Cremona Auditor M and its predecessor, you will not see a great deal of difference. On closer inspection, the angles behind the grille are sharper, the bass driver is different and the base of the dedicated speaker stand (E575) is now V-shaped. The back of the speaker is very different, too. But the two share a lot in common.

Like the Cremona Auditor, the Auditor M is a two-way standmount loudspeaker, with a rear-firing port. The cabinet is a tapered lute shape in section and features a sandwich construction of top grade layers of maple, designed to keep resonance and standing waves at bay.

The rear port and terminator block is finished in piano-gloss black, the front is in black leatherette and what is in between is either finished in natural maple or light graphite-coloured lacquered wood. The result is a speaker that combines opulence with elegance; think an elegant Brioni suit, not Dolce e Gabbana gilded bling.

The 25mm modified Scanspeak ring radiator tweeter is retained from the last version of the speaker, but the 150mm black wood fibre cone bass driver is new. It is treated – presumably with carbon fibre – to control break-up and sports ‘Symmetric Drive’; three copper rings in the motor to keep the inductance of the voice coil even throughout its travels.

Sonus Faber has used a first-order network producing a mild 6dB per octave roll-off from the crossover point of 2.5kHz. The company claims a frequency response of 50Hz–30kHz. The speaker has a natural backward tilt, which should provide a degree of time-alignment in and of itself, but the crossover network is also both time and phase aligned.

The speakers are designed for free space use, ideally on the specialist stands supplied for the test. These add an elegant curve to the shape and provide the right degree of back tilt for most domestic settings, and the speakers bolt firmly to the stands. Loosely tensioned black stretchy strings – that act as sort of speaker grille – complete the attractive appearance.

A change is taking place to the Sonus sound. The comfortable warm bloom of older designs is being slowly replaced with



“They throw out a huge soundstage, producing an openness and accuracy to keep any musicologist happy”

combine accuracy and fine detailing with a fine sense of musical entertainment; so fine, in fact, it helps you expand your canon of musical works – classical-only fans will start reaching for the jazz CDs to hear what they can do, for example. Okay, no speaker will turn you from the number one Schoenberg enthusiast into a fan of chicken pickin’ country, but this will get you closer than many.

The latest Cremona Auditor is less amp- and room-fussy than before. This is not a speaker that needs micrometer-precision installation or only comes to life with Krell-shaped watts, although the more attention to detail you pay when in putting the kit together, the better the returns sonically.

Are there any negatives? Not really, other than the obvious physical limitation of small speakers when it comes to bass extension and there is a warming and blurring of upper bass notes. This is mild by comparison to most ported speakers, but is noticeable thanks to that all-revealing midband.

Accurate, honest and musical, the little high-end speaker that could is better than ever and will give any similar design a run for its money. If it sounded as good as it looked, the Cremona Auditor M would take the high-end world by storm. Fortunately, it does. ■

Alan Sircom

See the April 2008 edition of *Hi-Fi Choice* for the original review of this product