
Subject: Studio 2's - First Impressions (very long)
Posted by [goldengate](#) on Thu, 30 May 2002 22:57:52 GMT
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Just got my Studio 2's in today and I wanted to give some initial impressions. 1) These are *NOT* typical Bookshelf speakers. The first sign that these are fairly large is that the UPS driver (a big burly guy about 6'3" and about 230 lbs) asked me if I could help him carry the package from his truck! These things are larger than the main speakers I have in my separate HT system. I cannot imagine a bookcase large enough where these would fit. I currently have them on stands but to be honest while it works, the speakers hang off several inches from each side. I do not think they would work well for me on the floor due to my listening position. I may need to build a pair of separate stands for them or somehow reinforce them on the current stands. I think they can be referred to as bookshelves only in the context of the other behemoth Pi's. I was initially worried (even though I knew the measurements from the site) that these would be too small and contemplated a larger model. I am glad I went with the "smaller" 2's. For those of you who live in expensive housing markets (like me in Northern California), no need to slave away for years for a down payment for a tiny, overpriced "shack" -just build a pair of 10 Pi's and move in. 2) For those who are thinking of ordering a finished pair, the set was very expertly packed with foam, extra cardboard bracing and plastic wrap in a box that was tight enough where they could not move around in transit. I have had damage from Oops (I mean UPS) with two other speaker sets I have ordered from other Companies. This set came through fine - even though the outer box was scuffed up just a bit. Bravo to the packing company Wayne uses. Shipping may be a few \$ extra but have confidence it will arrive in one piece. 3) I think the speakers look cool. I have seen the web pictures but they look even cooler in person. I love the prominent Pi Logo and even like the look of the port opening in front. Build quality looks good and it passed the old "tap knuckle on top of cabinet" test. Binding posts are fine. 4) Dealing with Wayne is a pleasure. When I initially placed my order on the phone we talked for about 40 minutes about the varying models and options. He did not try to sway me one way or another regarding models or buying finished vs kit. He also did not rush me at all and even encouraged me to think about the pending purchase for a day or two. Finally, he gave me a guarantee of 8 weeks and it was delivered in 5. 5) Before the impressions of the sound - here is my system. I am currently using the Studio 2's matched with an AES-3 DJH tube Preamp and Wavelength Gemini Amp running 2.5W Sylvania 45's. Source is Njoeb Tjoeb 4000 tube CD Player. IC's and Speaker Wire are Goertz and Power cords are from Virtual Dynamics. I also use a PS300 Power Conditioner on the Preamp and Source. Music of choice is primarily Classical - mostly orchestral. 6) Now to the sound. I was surprised how "smooth" the speakers are. I was expecting some horn squawk but there really is none. They are listed at 97db and my first thought was to question that because they do not jolt me like some other high efficiency speakers do. I have some LothX BS speakers that are rated at 94db that seem more "lively" at first glance. At second glance I noticed that the volume of the 2 Pi's were fine - when called for. In other words, I am questioning whether the LothX speakers may indeed not be flat across the frequency spectrum and may have an artificial spike that may contribute to its sonic character. Also, the Pi's handle dynamics well - pianissimo is soft and quiet and fortissimo is loud and aggressive. The Lothx may sound more lively because the dynamic range appears more compressed and I do not hear the contrasts that the Pi's have. Bass is very good for what is marketed as a "bookshelf speaker" (I know I'm hammering this one to death :). I have a subwoofer (Vandersteen 2WQ) but have not felt the need to hook it up yet. The speakers image well - but do not expect to pinpoint every single instrument location in the orchestra. The speakers do have nice presence but not in the same league as my Newform Research R645 Ribbon

Hybrids (which cost \$2300). However, they are as good or better than my other "box" speakers. Off axis listening is good - better than my old Magneplans but not as good as the Newforms. The overall tonal separation and tonal sound quality is very good. While you cannot pinpoint each instrument on the virtual stage, you can sure identify the sound of each! No homogenization of tone. As I mentioned before, Bass is very acceptable and exceeded my expectations. My only slight quibble may be that there seems to be some slight congestion in my system at the loudest orchestra tuttis. However, this may have as more to do with the 2.5W Gemini's potentially clipping as to any shortcoming in the speaker. I will try the speaker out with a more powerful 300B Amp and see if things improve. Summary: I am very pleased. The 2 Pi's make excellent *music* and are a great value to boot. For those of you who do not have the space for the larger Pi models, I think you will be pleasantly surprised with what the Studio 2 can do. I have spent a good portion of the afternoon (I am off work on vacation today) with my baton in hand, conducting my invisible orchestra - with a goofy grin.