

Junior high

An attempt to bring more music lovers into the fold, Guru's new Junior should win many friends, says **Jason Kennedy...**

There are far too many two-way loudspeakers on the market, yet somehow Swedish company Guru Audio has managed to carve itself a niche. It did this primarily with the QM10, now QM10two, a decidedly different two-way with a squat round cornered cabinet and a style all of its own. The QM10two is a charmer, but a relatively expensive one at £1,795, so Guru has decided to broaden its market by building a smaller and more affordable speaker dubbed Junior.

In many respects it's a QM10two without the expensive bits, the main one being the cabinet, which is made in the Far East rather than Scandinavia. The drive units are very similar, in fact the tweeter is the same as a QM10two and the main driver comes from the first iteration of the QM10 with a more basic cone.

Junior is a very stylish speaker, the piano black sample shown is perhaps the most conservative finish, it looks very slick but I prefer the combination of silver grey aluminium around the drivers and a walnut wood veneer on the carcass. That anodised metal skin is also on the back panel where there's a single pair of 4mm plug sockets, which makes for a flush rear end. This helps when siting the speaker in the recommended position on or very near the wall. The slot port means that this speaker is eminently suited to wall mounting, Guru even suggests putting it on a bookshelf. The aim is very clearly to make a speaker that everyone can accommodate.

Unlike most speaker makers, Guru is not into spikes and Blu-Tack, rather it fits foam pucks to the underside of its speakers so that the supporting surface is

not energised by vibrations from the cabinet. The Junior, therefore, requires a stand with a top plate that's nearly as big as its 18x23cm footprint, Guru is producing one for the purpose.

Sound quality

The preferred position for Junior is against the wall and toed in just enough so that you can see the outside flank of each speaker from the listening position. Guru recommends not only a bit of damping on the inside of each speaker, curtains for instance, but also that you put a coffee table in front of the listening seat to rest your feet on. That's my kind of set-up instruction!

And this is my kind of speaker, relaxed, revealing and musically irresistible. Junior is not the most explicit of speakers at its price point, but it's certainly one of the most enjoyable, this is because it is very nicely balanced and extremely coherent. Timing is spot-on and that always draws you into the music whatever variety that might be. I got carried away with Frank Zappa's *Apostrophe* album where the playing is superb and the songwriting rather

more colourful than usual. Both these factors are abundantly clear with this speaker, in fact it seems to excel with fast and dense material, or at least that was my initial thought, but further listening made it apparent that it excels at putting the music ahead of the sound.

This is the same skill that you find in the QM10two, so it shouldn't be a surprise but it's a rare quality, one that only a few brands seem to have mastered, Rega comes to mind. Junior does not, however, sound like a Rega speaker; its wall positioning means that it reaches far lower in the bass than most compact speakers, let alone Rega's slightly lean variety.

I was consistently impressed with the extension and smoothness of the lower registers. There is a tendency with this pursuit of ours to listen to tracks rather than albums, to play the well-known pieces in order to appraise a component. But Junior is having none of that, if an album is worth listening to you won't be happy just playing the standout tracks because you need to hear the next one and the one after that. This musical focus means that this speaker is not as analytical as some, but it's highly revealing of character in the playing and recording, every album sounds different and every musician reveals his or her skill.

Whether you love Miles's trumpet or Jimi's guitar, you will discover precisely what makes them unique with this remarkable speaker. It will appeal to music lovers more than audiophiles for this reason, it does imaging surprisingly well for a wall mount and bass extension is also strong, but it's not really about that. It's about the emotional communication that only music can achieve, it focuses on what counts so well that a good album is hard to put down. So banish your playlists and listen to your classic albums as they were intended to be heard! ●



DETAILS

PRODUCT:
Guru Audio Junior

ORIGIN:
Sweden

TYPE:
Standmount
loudspeaker

WEIGHT:
4kg

DIMENSIONS:
(WxHxD)
180x290x230mm

FEATURES:
• Quoted sensitivity
87dB (@2.83V, 1m)
• Quoted nominal
impedance: 6 ohms
• Enclosure material:
MDF/aluminium
• HF driver: 20.5mm
soft dome
• LF driver: 102mm
coated paper cone
• Finish: black
lacquer, white
lacquer, oiled
walnut

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Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY



LIKE: Well balanced, very coherent and uncannily musical

VALUE FOR MONEY



DISLIKE: Needs a bit more power than average

BUILD QUALITY



WE SAY: Musically engaging thanks to excellent timing, good bandwidth and a clean revealing balance

EASE OF DRIVE



OVERALL

