



Scansonic MB 2.5 B:

Graceful Sonorous Power

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Reprint

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Soon probably no more an insider tip: how Scansonic transplants the genes of the big Raidhos into the cheaper segment with the MB2.5 B and creates a loudspeaker with experience quality.

Sometimes we get caught excited by a component. A power amp, a player or, yes, also a new wiring lets us experience the familiar music certainly not in a completely different way, but still like new, making it sparkle in hitherto unheard facets. This can literally turn out as a jaw-dropping incident. Lucky those who witness some-

straight, is also guided by the price when it turns out lower. All the more amazing when it's finally exceeded.

This is what happened to me with a loudspeaker I had been looking forward to with sympathetic feelings, but in a rather relaxed mood. Yes, why not a Scansonic for a change? Together with Raidho it belongs to the same Danish group

Graceful Sonorous Power

thing like this, and still luckier you'll be if this stays that way forever! Of course, components imparting such experiences often bear a hefty price tag. It's not that one could depend on it. The high transfer fee is not necessarily a guarantor for adequate striking rates, and not in all cases money will score the most goals.

And then there are pieces of equipment which at first give a less spectacular impression. Here the emphasis lies on »at first«. Because sometimes it can happen that, after long hours of music listening, often longer than planned, we rub our ears while taking stock of ourselves: ›Oh, I've been listening to something special all the time, something I hadn't expected to come off that way.‹ Our expectation, let's be

(Dantax), and I still remember that classy brand in the best way from a demonstration at the Munich High End tradeshow. So I wonder whether the technology transfer from the noble brand into the more budget segment could make itself felt? After all, it's the same folks who develop, piece together with much handiwork and fine-tune the loudspeakers at the company's headquarters in Pandrup.

And the Scansonic MB2.5 B is a true beauty, really. Its slim cabinet is tapering towards the back into an elegant parabola. Consistently rounded, it effectively counters standing waves and unwanted resonances. Yet the first acoustic impressions sound rather subdued. But this mustn't take me wonder: the speakers come unplayed right out of the box,

and what we hear first, gets stuck in the boundaries of the enclosures, leaving tonal colours to be desired in the lows and mids and in the top range sounds anything but freed or even vibrant. Well, this always happens with brand new components, and all the more so with sound transducers. Last, but not least a lot needs to come loose in the mechanical system. I can make good use of the break-in time to get familiar with the concept of the MB2.5 B.

The elegant Danish lady is a 2.5-way loudspeaker. For the low/mid range it is loaded with two 5.25 carbon drivers in cast aluminium baskets. They have been trimmed for low mass and are supposed to go down as deep as 36 hertz (whether they can really do it will, of course, largely depend on the room). The lower driver bids goodbye at 500 hertz, whereas the upper one works as a genuine low-mid driver that goes from way down low up to 2,600 hertz where the ribbon tweeter takes over. Here in particular the origin shall pay off as the tweeter transfers the technology of the legendary Raidho ribbons into the more economically priced classes in a somewhat slimmed down version. This driver genre is indeed a fascinating object in itself! Since the current-carrying foil represents both voice coil and diaphragm in concomitance, far less mass needs to be moved as is the case with conventional dome tweeters. This is supposed to promote a lightness and speed of the highs that is typical of magneto- or electrostatic speakers. It weighs less than one gram, the Scansonic ribbon, and consists of an aluminium/myramid compound. Protected against potential rigours from its surroundings, it sits in a sealed compartment. Mounted slightly recessed, a rounded waveguide releases the ribbon's signals from the already narrow soundboard. This should provide the best conditions so that the tonal events will become detached from the enclosure. This in turn is made of carbon-reinforced MDF, internally braced and calmed by means of glass wool. Those who don't want to do without front covers, will need to buy them separately.

Exercising care

The first job was to fasten the aluminium stand riggers with screws. This is quickly done. Their nicely rounded and thus floor-friendly conical feet are just as easy to adjust as the sixteen kilograms per speaker can be moved around readily. Another factor which contributes to the rather easy placement is the bass reflex port. It sits on the bottom side and therefore breathes out towards the floor. Nevertheless it also pays off to exercise care here. In my room a good 65 centimetres (approx. 26 in.) of wall clearance to the back provide, in my opinion, the most harmonious balance between a sonorous volume and tight definition. I angle in the speakers only very slightly, the tweeters axes are crossing behind my head. Scansonic is one of the advocates of single-wiring and fits the very solid terminal with WBT's classic pole clamps to accommodate lugs and bananas. Scansonic recommends amplifiers with more than 50 watts – for my taste, it may also be more powerful.



The elegant Scansonic MB2.5 B is a 2.5-way speaker. The low/mid frequency range is handled by two 5.25 carbon drivers in cast aluminium baskets, a ribbon tweeter takes over in the high range.

LOUDSPEAKERS

As has already been mentioned, the beautiful Danish ladies need a good break-in time. Sure, already after twenty or thirty hours I realise that the sound image is settling down; it now develops more intense timbres and soon also detaches coherently from the cabinets. But only after fifty hours the speakers are beginning to insinuate their full potential, and even then something's still going on here. Then the low-mid drivers will know how to use all their charm to e.g. make the woodwinds sound with lush colours and lots of »bloom«, as

the Anglo-Americans call it. And then also the ribbon tweeter can demonstrate all its class. As is commonly known, it's not easy to strike the right notes in the treble range: where has that line been crossed beyond which the desirable presentation of details shifts into its suggestion, beyond which fine resolution turns into high-frequency nervousness? The Scansonic knows how to shine, but it won't get on your nerves by overemphasises that rather pretend a wealth of details without actually reaching it. My listening sessions are getting long, I notice no signs of fatigue: an unmistakable sign that the speaker does a lot of things right.

I listen to Boris Giltburg's recording of Beethoven's Hammerklavier Sonata as highres download (Naxos) and experi-

ence a moment of glory. Of course, this is first of all due to the congenial interpretation where the young Israeli accomplishes a coherent dramaturgy that's rarely found with this unwieldy musical work. The extended slow movement is sailing on a breathe, and the final fugue doesn't confront us with the tensions of less successful interpretations. But this may also be attributed to the homogeneously playing loudspeakers. Basically neglectable details like e.g. muffled pedal sounds are depicted, but don't stand out unbecomingly. They convey the atmosphere of the recording venue and add to the liveliness of the reproduction. The highs are shining, but not glistening; they put naturally decaying highlights on the ore colours of Giltburg's Fazioli grand piano, but also on its wooden warmth. Every tone has timbre and volume. Although by tendency more on the soft than on the sharply focused side, contour and shape still never get blurry. Attack and decay processes, reverberation and room ambience, all this can be distinguished in a realistic manner. The sound image does not even become tight when Giltburg is stacking layers of voluminous chord blocks with a physically perceivable momentum.

A magical performance

In general, I'm always amazed what a strong, powerful grip these delicate structures can exert. When I hear Jack De-Johnette play the drums, it gives me a physical experience: despite all the tonal roundness the attack always comes to the point as dry as a bone; also in terms of rhythm and timing the Scansonic doesn't give in anywhere. Double bass pizzicati are plucked with punch and decay with natural resonance. Wonderful how big orchestras are also effortlessly reproduced by the slim columns in my listening room with an area of a good forty square metres (430 sq. ft.), how they develop a proper punch in the tutti and how groups and single instruments fan out showing coherent proportions. It's as if I were live on scene at the legendary Gothenburg Concert Hall when I hear the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra perform the Second by Sibelius under the baton of Santtu-Matias Rouvali. How forceful the low brass sounds, and how three-dimensionally tubas and trombones stand out! Deep drone notes from double basses and bassoons are literally mesmerising.

So the MB2.5 B knows how to stage a great game. But it's also an aesthere. Its talent to depict all relevant nuances and shades benefits the string sextets by Johannes Brahms in the – and this refers to both interpretation and audio engineering – sublime new production with the Belcea Quartett (Alpha). Two violins, violas and celli want to be distinguished from and among each other. At the same time I follow with rapt attention what's happening on every music stand with regard to phrasing, articulation and fine-dynamical finesse.

Repeatedly, there were moments during the extended listening sessions with the Scansonic where I was wondering if we need any more loudspeaker at all. Do larger and more expensive speakers really bring more pleasure than those



The nicely rounded and thus floor-friendly conical feet of the Scansonic are just as easy to adjust as the sixteen kilograms per speaker can be moved around readily.



involving Danes? Yes, in case of doubt they do. When mustering pertinent legends of the upper price ranges from Raidho, from Dynaudio, from Magico and other matadors against them, one would hardly not hear that they can still do a little more. For considerably more money, that's understood. Even more important: as long as the Scansonics are playing, envy is rather not gnawing in me. I am in the music, absorbed by it – the question of whether things could still get better does not even arise.



Scansonic is one of the advocates of single-wiring and fits the very solid terminal with WBT's classic pole clamps to accommodate lugs and bananas.

Test result

The Scansonic MB2.5 B shines with all the virtues of a well-made 2.5-way loudspeaker. It plays coherently like a compact one, but reaches further down than most representatives of this kind. In spite of all its richness, its excellent presentation of details doesn't aim for ultimate clarity, but for coherence and playing fun. The Scansonic is a loudspeaker with a quality of experience, honest and with an intense, pleasant sonority; moreover, it's easy to deal with in terms of placement and an elegant appearance to boot. You can feel that its makers have put a lot of love, musicality, knowledge and devotion into it. Elsewhere, so it seems, the prices are rising exponentially, and not always this is accompanied by an equal leap in quality. Scansonic, however, offers us darn much loudspeaker here for relatively small money, and this may rightly be called sensational. Highly recommended, superb!

Uwe Steiner ifn

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Highlight

Sound quality

outstanding

Laboratory

good - very good

Features

very good

Workmanship

very good

Overall score

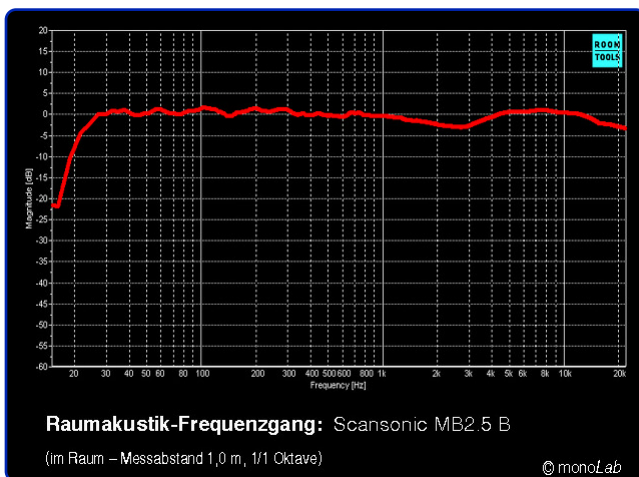
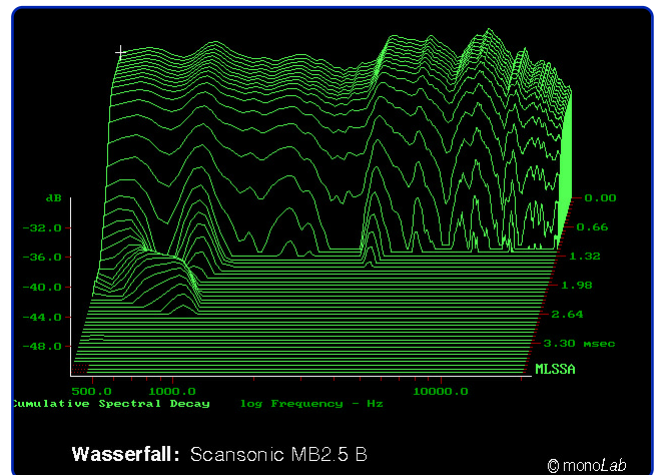
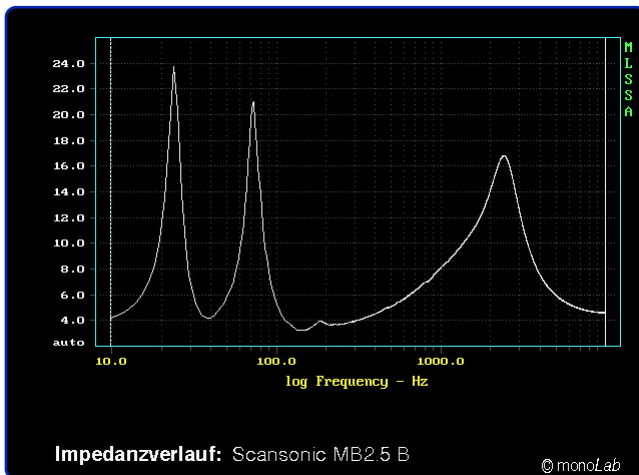
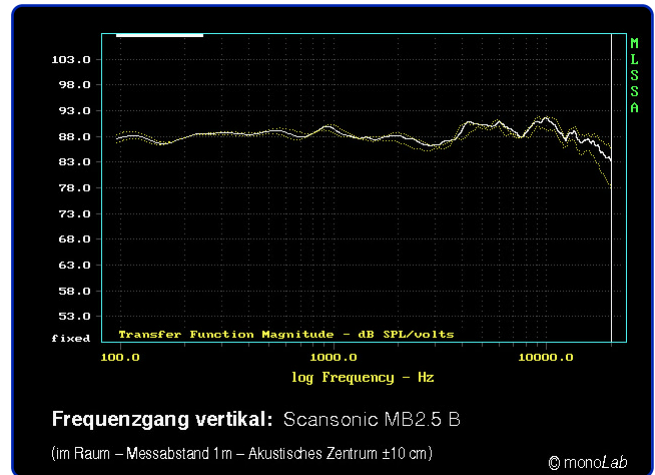
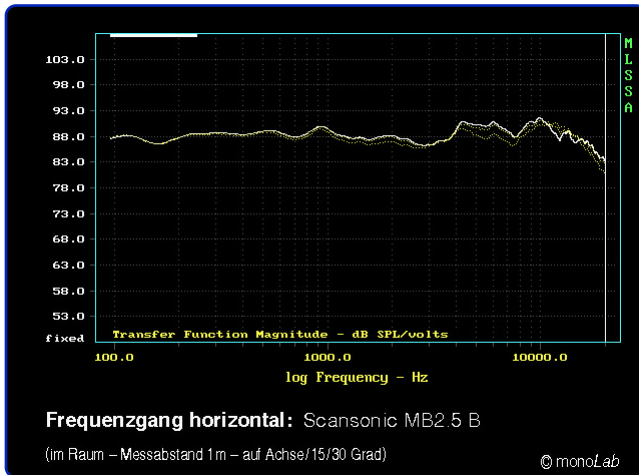
very good

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Scansonic MB 2.5 B

Test result: very good

LOUDSPEAKERS



Lab report

Loudspeaker Scansonic MB 2.5 B

Minimum impedance: 3.2 ohms @ 145 Hz
 Nominal impedance (± 20%): 4 ohms
 Sensitivity : 88.5 dB (2,83 V / 1m; 500-5.000 Hz)

Features

Manufacturer + distribution: Scansonic, Dantax Radio A/S, Pandrup / Denmark

Model: Scansonic MB2.5 B, Floorstander

Principle: 2.5-way system, passive, bass reflex

Drivers:

- Tweeter 1 x ribbon
- Midrange 1 x 13.3 cm (5.25 in.) carbon fibre cone
- Woofer 1 x 13.3 cm (5.25 in.) carbon fibre cone

Crossover frequencies: 500 Hz / 2.6 kHz

Single-wiring connection panel with WBT terminals

Scope of delivery: spike outriggers, spike sets, front covers, user manual, warranty request

Design versions: Lacquer finish black matt; Lacquer finish white matt; Walnut

Dimensions (H x W x D): 99.8 x 18 x 29 cm (39.3 x 7.1 x 11.4 in.)

Weight: 16 kg (35.3 lbs) per item

Price per pair: 3.350 euros (Walnut: 4.300 euros)

Warranty: 2 years

Contact: Dantax Radio A/S • Bransagervej 15 9490 Pandrup • Internet: www.scansonicdk.dk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Scansonic