

audition

equipment review

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Aurum Cantus V3M Standmount Loudspeakers

The Aurum Cantus V3M standmount monitor loudspeakers are available through Melbourne-based distributor Final Link Audio Pty Ltd. Regular

Audio & Video Lifestyle readers will no doubt recall that another model from the Aurum Cantus range, the Melody M-103 floorstanders, initially achieved our Best Buy Awards status for excellence, going on to be named our 'Editor's Choice' Product Of The Year. It was with some excited anticipation then when this pair of Aurum Cantus V3M standmounters arrived for review, with Shane Lewis, the MD at Final Link

Audio apologising for the fact that they were not yet run-in and required 50 to 100 hours for them to really reach their optimum performance.

Editor Nic Tatham and I eagerly unpacked them from what we both agreed was the best loudspeaker packaging we had seen; three super strong cardboard cartons inside each other, with the loudspeaker finally suspended in free air in a velvet lined black sock between two high density foam blocks.

What's inside the black sock must be really special and indeed, opening it up revealed one of the most beautiful pieces of cabinet craftsmanship on a loudspeaker you are ever likely to see. No wonder Aurum Cantus took extraordinary lengths with its packaging, so the loudspeaker arrived in your listening room in the same condition as it left the factory.

These are certainly a drop dead gorgeous pair of loudspeakers at any money, let alone at the unbelievable \$2,500 asking price. But it doesn't stop there, the driver complement, the terminals, everything - all first class.

I quickly set-up the V3Ms up on a pair of 900mm tall speaker stands I had on hand and plugged them into my system. Meanwhile Nic sorted through some CDs and he came back with Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds album *Abattoir Blues*. I looked at him thinking that this album would be the last CD in my collection that I would choose to listen to from a loudspeaker fresh out

**A standmount
with gorgeous
looks and a
sound that
suits jazz and
classical**

By Robert Smith

Vital Statistics

Dimensions:

410 x 225 x 370mm

Weight:

38kg (pair)

Price:

\$2,499 (pair)

Distributor:

Final Link Audio Pty Ltd

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Melton, VIC 3337

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the carton, it's too up front, brutal and relentless, especially the first track *Get Ready For Love*.

Now you might think I am going to tell you that the Aurum Cantus V3Ms handled this album brilliantly, well they didn't and the result was very predictable. I know this album well, but skipping down a few tracks what I gleaned from this first listen was that this loudspeaker had a lot of potential and this first test was completely unfair. I had used the wrong speaker stand height with the wrong choice of music for this sophisticated little baby, and of course, as warned by the distributor, this loudspeaker needs quite a few hours under its belt to come on song. Don't draw any conclusions just yet and importantly, don't go away.

While the V3Ms are running-in, let's take an objective overview of the product and a highlight a few of the impressive technical details apart from the basics listed in the Technotalk panel below.

As mentioned the cabinet is simply gorgeous; a fine piece of furniture in its own right with a gentle taper from bottom to top, gentle slope to the front baffle and curved sides which show off the magnificent veneer, all lacquered in a very deep, high gloss piano finish.

Technotalk

Product Type:

Standmount loudspeaker

Driver Complement:

1 x 165mm Kevlar woofer

1 x 110mm aluminium tweeter

Cabinet Configuration:

2-way, bass reflex

Frequency Response:

45Hz-40kHz

Amplifier Compatibility:

50-200 watts

Nominal Impedance:

8 ohms (minimum 6.4 ohms)

Crossover Frequency:

2,200Hz

Crossover Attenuation Slope:

Woofer: -12dB, Tweeter: -18dB

Sensitivity:

88dB

Finishes:

High Gloss Cheerywood, High Gloss Rosewood

Technotalk specifications and recommended retail prices are supplied by the manufacturer

There are no fewer than 14 hand-polished layers of piano lacquer applied to each cabinet.

The driver complement consists a single 165mm diameter, ultra stiff, composite carbon fibre and Kevlar coned midbass driver. The Italian designed treble driver is another impressive unit, a large 110mm ribbon driver fitted with a pleated pure aluminium ribbon and a powerful Neodymium magnet structure.

A large 6dB/18dB crossover assembly sits on the internal cabinet floor, featuring Mundorf Supreme and special Aurum Cantus MKP capacitors, large diameter, air cored, OFC copper wound inductors, industrial quality high power resistors and with heavy OFC Teflon insulated internal wiring interconnecting the drivers.

On the back of the cabinet are featured some of the largest speaker terminals you are likely to see on any loudspeaker system, at any price. They are 3-way, solid pure copper, gold plated and configured for biamping, biwiring, or with the large gold plated bridging links fitted for just simple single cable operation.

The V3Ms are available in a choice of two timber veneers, Cherry and Rosewood, plus optional matching speaker stands are available at \$499 a pair. These are of course the correct height for the V3Ms at 600mm high and are made of a very heavy MDF, finished in black piano high gloss finish and they are fitted with adjustable spikes on pads to finish off the package.



After our intensive running period, feeding the bass driver with subsonic tones to exercise its suspension and ultrasonic tones to relax the ribbon on the tweeter, plus pink noise to run in the crossover, the V3Ms quickly started to come on song. Various musical passages were also played during the break-in period and you could tell that the speaker was starting to relax. The bass started going deeper and the treble becoming sweeter with the whole soundstage opening up for a more dramatic presentation and with some correct height stands serious listening could now proceed.

I figured right from the start that this speaker's forté was going to be of classical persuasion and I was right; it fitted like a glove. Every classical album I could throw at it was reproduced

“I figured right from the start that this speaker’s forté was going to be of classical persuasion and I was right; it fitted like a glove. Every classical album I could throw at it was reproduced magnificently, strings had a sweet delicate touch and with precise imaging, the speaker separated the instruments nicely allowing your mind to wander around the soundstage with ease . . .”

magnificently, strings had a sweet delicate touch and with precise imaging, the speaker separated the instruments nicely allowing your mind to wander around the soundstage with ease, identifying details. Piano was another clear winner, grandly reproducing it with accuracy and convincing dynamics, belieing the speakers’ size in the lower octaves. The bass response of the V3M is extended and quite well controlled, very fast with no apparent sonic signature from the large rear mounted port, although I did note a bit of chuffing from turbulence in the port on single tones from the signal generator when I was running-in the speaker. Bass instruments are particularly easy to follow and the speaker was able to impressively reproduce instruments to the lowest octave without losing information in any way.

Midband performance was equally well reproduced, smooth transition between the drivers at the crossover point and fine vocal reproduction of both male and female voice with a very deep and transparent soundstage. This is quite a revealing loudspeaker, pulling subtle details out of the mix with ease and I guess this would be due to the ribbon tweeter, which always seem to do this job particularly well, it has a response to 44kHz, is smooth and delicate, with a wide horizontal dispersion and with the Mundorf crossover components involved, does not miss a thing. I even put Nick Cave back on and I am pleased because it demonstrated to me just how much this speaker improved over time but then again it showed the V3M’s limitations and Nick Cave is a bit raw for this more sophisticated little speaker, but still, it had a pretty good go at it.

With the Aurum Cantus V3M loudspeakers you are getting absolutely staggering value for money. Objectively in a physical sense, considering cabinet quality, driver compliment, crossover and hardware quality, I don’t think I have seen anything on the market that would even come close to the value, it is ridiculous, and you just don’t find components and finish of this quality in a \$2,500 loudspeaker.

Subjectively, sound-wise, they do not let the team down either, they are refined, sophisticated, a true musical instrument of the highest calibre. Quality music is reproduced with quality, and for a loudspeaker of this

size they do the job extremely well, especially with jazz and classical works. Vocal, violin and piano, are all convincingly reproduced with body and depth whilst the V3Ms throw a deep and informative soundstage to complete the picture.

Considering their 88dB efficiency, I would suggest an amplifier power of at least 150 watts to get the best out of the V3Ms and the best source components you can afford, because these loudspeakers will deliver the goods and give you a lot of musical satisfaction.

I firmly recommend a listen to the Aurum Cantus V3Ms and compare them to other loudspeakers in this price category. I think you might be very surprised just as I was, on just on how much you can get for so little money. **AVL**

Ancillary Equipment: ME1400 power amplifier, Robert’s Audio passive preamplifier, Cayin CD-T17A CD player, Perpetual Technologies DAC, Magnepan MG1 loudspeakers, Blueline loudspeaker cables.

O p i n i o n

The ‘Opinion’ expressed here is that of the reviewer, summarised in the form of a 5-star rating system, and should be considered as an integral part of the full contents of this Audition Equipment Review. As such, each category should be judged on its own merits and not necessarily used as a comparison with other equipment reviews in this, or other editions of Audio & Video Lifestyle magazine.

- ★ Shocker
- ★★ Average
- ★★★ Good
- ★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★★ Perfection

“These are certainly a drop dead gorgeous’ pair of loudspeakers at any money, let alone at the unbelievable \$2,500 asking price . . .”

Performance

★★★★½

Build Quality

★★★★★

Compatibility

★★★★★

Value For Money

★★★★★