

Monitor

BIG BASS FROM BABY DANES

Danish outfit Eltax has earned a reputation for high-quality speakers at an affordable price. And its new Monitor IIIs boast a standard of fit and finish that many more expensive speakers would do well to emulate.

The newcomers are compact, 30 cm tall standmounters with conventional 25mm soft-dome tweeters and 13 cm mid/bass drivers. They also feature a builtin upgrade route courtesy of biwirable rear terminals, while there's an oddity in their design that you'd never spot: they're ported in the base of each cabinet, rather than to the rear.

This means you have to take greater care in selecting stands to make the most of the speakers' performance potential.

Elsewhere, the combination of 89dB/W/m sensitivity and 40ohms impedance may be reasonable, but it doesn't make them the most amplifier-friendly boxes money can buy so care should be taken with partnering.

Luckily, these cultured little speakers are worth the effort, coping happily with almost anything you care to throw at them, and remaining clean under even exceptional volume levels.

Using our mighty Krell pre/power amp, the Monitor IIIs positively ripple through the power of Nine Inch Nails' rock monster The Mark Has Been Made. Basslines are fat but not bloated, while the track's crashing snare-drum break has bags of grunt, each impact coming over cleanly and crisply.

Soundstaging is good, too.

The Eltaxes escape the confines of their small cabinets rather well, generating an acceptably orchestral sense of scale and power with the might of the Ode To Joy chorus from Beethoven's 9th Symphony in D Minor. Sure, midrange presence isn't perhaps as electrifying as with KEF's Cresta 2s, but there's little to truly complain about, especially as the Eltaxes manage to combine their musicality, eloquence and detail with a rather smoother, more ear-friendly balance than is typical at this price.

The IIIs are ideal if you have a budget system that could do with a touch of refinement - in their can-do approach to music making, there's something of the flavour of the Tannoy Revolution R1s. Swapping the Krell pre/power for a more realworld £500 Creek 4330SE amp is no less rewarding. The IIIs still sound impressively composed, and open the music with a poise that belies their modest price tag.

With stylish looks, a wellrounded sound and a very modest price tag, the Eltaxes are among the leading contenders in the budget arena. Audition now.



For:
Grace, detail and musicality that belies the price-tag; attractive styling and finish



Eltax Monitor III ★ ★ ★ ★ ★