

# Orpheus Audio

## Aurora 2 Loudspeakers

Differential bass loading (DBL) is the talk of the town in loudspeaker design at the moment — and Orpheus' Aurora 2 has it. Although it sounds highly technical, DBL is quite straightforward. It involves putting two bass/midrange drivers in a single loudspeaker cabinet then dividing the inside of that cabinet into two completely separate spaces, with one bass/midrange driver in each space. The two spaces are then vented, or ported, to the outside air with the two vents tuned differently, so that instead of all the vents' energy being restricted to a narrow range as in a conventional bass reflex cabinet, it's staggered to spread the energy over a wider bandwidth. The concept, as always, is to try to squeeze the most bass possible from the smallest cabinet possible and it's a theme that Orpheus has used before with great success, but with the Aurora 2, we suspect that designer Brad Serhan has perfected the genre.

### Equipment

The Aurora 2 is almost a picture-postcard match with its larger sibling, the Aurora 3, and so not surprisingly, follows almost exactly the same driver layout, using what appear to be exactly the same drivers. It's only when you run a tape measure over the bass/midrange cones that you find those Orpheus uses in the Aurora 2 are just slightly smaller, with an overall diameter of 156mm. The driver chassis are moulded from ABS plastic and the roll surrounds are durable rubber and so won't rot away in Australia's climatic conditions like foam surrounds.

The cones share the 'bright yellow' look because they, too, are woven from strands of Kevlar. Around the back of the driver, hidden from sight, is a new motor system that sees high-temperature voice-coils vented through holes in both the voice-coil former and in the driver frame itself, underneath the pleated suspension. This clever twist enables the suspension pleats to pump hot air away from the voice-coil very quickly, for higher power-handling, greater efficiency and increased dynamics.

In addition to the differential bass loading Orpheus also uses the increasingly popular

scheme of configuring the two coned drivers so that both handle all the bass frequencies, but the lower of the two is rolled off early, so the upper driver delivers the midrange solus — an approach generally known as a '2.5-way' system.

The two bass reflex ports exit through the rear of the cabinet, rather than through the front baffle, to ensure that midrange frequencies leaking through the port opening will be absorbed or scattered behind the speaker, a touch that seems to have escaped a fair few speaker designers.

The upper bass/midrange driver crosses to a sturdy 25mm fabric-domed tweeter with a conventional magnet and a dual-chamber rear-loading system.

The Aurora 2's cabinets are quite petite, at 890mm high, 190mm wide and 280mm deep, so they'll suit even the smallest lounge room.

### Listening Sessions

Listening to the Aurora 2s was a little like déjà vu because they sounded so familiar. It wasn't that long ago that we were mightily impressed by the larger Aurora 3s and the fact is that these Aurora 2s sound eerily similar right across the board. So similar, indeed, that were it not for the slightly more impressive deep bass presentation of the larger (and more expensive) Aurora 3s, we'd be hard-pressed to differentiate between the two. This was very reassuring, because it means that Orpheus is not building its speakers to sound different to each other, to make it seem as though you should spend more money to get better sound. The fact that both speakers sound so similar is exactly what should happen when you compare speakers of the same brand.

What you'll hear from the Aurora 2s is a beautifully balanced midrange with very free-sounding dynamics. This hands over to a treble that can't be faulted, with a crystalline tone that remains true and unforced even when pushed hard. You'll also hear outstandingly good bass, our previous comment notwithstanding. It's tight and extended, with a feeling of 'depth' and power rarely found at this price-point.



### Conclusion

When you consider there's a price differential of \$500 between Orpheus' large Aurora 3s and these Aurora 2s it should be immediately apparent to even the most jaded speaker buyer that the Aurora 2s represent amazingly good value for money. **BB**

#### Orpheus Aurora 2 Loudspeakers

Price	\$1500
Warranty	Five years
+	Excellent value
	Attractive cabinet Great sound
-	A wider range of cabinet finishes would be nice
	Contact

For additional information, turn to page 146 and circle 1341 on our Reader Information Service Card.