

# Steinman Audio Labs

## THR2 Surround Loudspeaker Package



Give any car reviewer a choice and they'll write about a Ferrari rather than a Holden. It's much the same with us reviewers of home entertainment equipment. When looking over the boxes of loudspeakers stacked in our storerooms, we tend to give priority to the \$5000 systems, rather than the \$500 ones.

So you can imagine how astonished we were when we did finally pull out the Steinman Audio Labs THR2 surround loudspeaker package and found out it was really very good.

### Equipment

This system costs a mere \$499, yet it provides a couple of floorstanding stereo loudspeakers, a centre channel and two small surrounds.

The THR2 Tower Speakers stand 1010mm tall, and are 200mm wide and 523mm deep. Each weighs 12.6 kilograms. These are two way loudspeakers, with a 25mm soft dome tweeter, fronted by a small vertical wave guide, at the top. Below that are two 165mm polypropylene cone bass/midrange drivers.

The cabinets are bass reflex loaded with two ports at the rear, and have proper binding posts for speaker connections. Steinman Audio Labs specifies their frequency response at 35 to 22,000 hertz +/-3dB. It says that their impedance is eight  $\Omega$ , their sensitivity is 87dB (2.83 volts signal, measured at one metre), and their rated power is 90 watts.

The THR2 Centre Speaker is 150mm tall, 510mm wide and 170mm deep, and weighs 4.3 kilograms. It has a pair of 100mm bass/midrange drivers, and centred between them is a 25mm soft dome tweeter. Connections are via spring clip on both this and the surround speakers. This one also has a wave guide, which is horizontal rather than vertical as we would have expected (and as is used on the other speakers in the system).

The cabinet of this speaker is sealed. The company says that its frequency response is 75 to 20,000 hertz +/-3dB (the dome material on the tweeter looks to be different to that on the Towers), its impedance is eight  $\Omega$ , its sensitivity is 86dB and its power handling is 60 watts.

The THR2 Surround Speakers are very compact, at just 250mm tall, 155mm wide and 170mm deep. They weigh 2.2 kilograms each and use similar drivers to the THR2 Centre, except that there is only one of the larger drivers.

They, also, are sealed and the respective specifications are 75 to 20,000 hertz +/-3dB, eight  $\Omega$ , 85dB and 60 watts.

### Performance

We were not expecting a great deal in the way of performance from these loudspeakers. Okay, they seemed well constructed as we removed them from their cartons, and the finish was nice (a mid-toned wood veneer with a black vinyl inset on the baffle. But at under \$500 for five loudspeakers we remained skeptical.

Then we plugged them all in and calibrated our home theatre receiver appropriately and listened. And were amazed! Are these the best loudspeakers we've ever heard? Not by a long shot. But they easily matched other systems we've heard costing at least twice as much.

The floorstanding fronts were especially impressive. As implied by the specifications, their sensitivity was a little on the low side, so we found ourselves advancing our home theatre receiver's volume control a little more than we are used to. Once we'd done that, we found they produced clean and tonally balanced music which was a pleasure to listen to.

What most marked them was their absence of frequency response anomalies which often make otherwise decent loudspeakers sound poor. So the midrange was at the correct level with respect to the other frequencies, and there was no nasty enhancement of the upper bass of the kind often found with inexpensive loudspeakers. The bass performance was competent down, we estimate, to around 40 hertz, with good punch. There was a little dynamic range compression, which enticed us to turn up the volume control even more. But quite high output levels were available and only at the extremes did the sound harshen as we tested the limits of the drivers.

The centre and surround channels needed to be turned up quite high in our configuration menu to match the front speakers and their bass was pretty much absent. Ideally you would couple this system with a good quality subwoofer, costing around \$700.

The surround delivery was very good and both surround and stereo imaging was very precise, although without a great deal of depth.

### Conclusion

We must congratulate Steinman Audio Labs for this set of speakers. While all of us would love to own \$5000 surround speaker systems, this is a long way in the future for many. In the meantime, those who want to get into decent surround sound can now do so, affordably, with the THR2 surround speaker package. **BB**

Steinman Audio Labs THR2 Surround Loudspeaker Package	
Price	\$499
Warranty	3 years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absolutely brilliant value for money</li> <li>Good tonal balance</li> <li>Good build and finish quality</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They don't sound like \$5000 but then they don't cost near that much!</li> </ul>
Contact	Aussie Hi Fi Traders 1300 308 711 www.aussiehifitraders.com.au