

Dear Troels,

first of all, I would like to thank you for sharing your wonderful loudspeaker designs with the DIY-community.

#### Introduction:

The SBA-MTM has been my second loudspeaker project since the Excel Odin MTM dating from 1999. The later one still sounds rather good but has got old such that in spring 2021 during start of the Corona pandemic, I decided to give some new speakers a try. Being a frequent reader of german DIY-loudspeaker magazines since 20 years ago I got somehow disappointed about most acoustically inefficient speaker designs proposed today which are based on rather complex electric crossover including frequency smoothing circuits etc. My old Excel Odin MTM originally could get rid of those complex circuits. However, I always felt somehow critical about the heavy resonances of the Excel magnesium drivers which –if not perfectly damped- may interfere with the music signal. For above reasons, I was looking for a new speaker with sufficient electric efficiency incorporating drivers with paper cone membrane rather than metal membranes. Having read the very detailed review of your SBA-MTM-speakers with rather simple crossover, and paper cone midrange SBA drivers, my search for the appropriate speaker design appeared to be finished.

#### Modifications on original SBA-MTM cabinet design:

I entirely took over your recommendations on inner cabinet volume, internal wooden stiffness support, etc. but chose a slightly different outer front with rounded left-right edge-design and a taller “lower cabinet socket (for crossovers)” of smaller base area which may support a more slim visual appearance. In addition, I designed the speakers cabinets back to be removable for two reasons: At first, to have a better access to preparing the inner damping and secondly to have the possibility for replacement of the bass reflex by a passive membrane in future. If doing so, I would only need to replace the back-cover instead of modifying the entire cabinet.

#### SBA-MTM-cabinet assembly and surface finish:

The speakers cabinets have been milled and glued by a small but very professional carpenter nearby Munich, Germany, called Thomainer Schreinerei, who could manage to deliver perfectly made cabinets out of birch having very small tolerances thanks to CNC-milling process at reasonable prices. The remaining steps of driver-assembly, soldering, wood finishing of the cabinets, I performed myself. I decided not to go for a classical paint but for a firm as similarly used for conservation of massive wooden dining tables. The oil I used is based on sinseed and generates a smooth and nice-look without being toxic during usage. Application of the oil, and sand-grinding, I have repeated several times until surfaces were sufficiently smooth.

#### SBA-MTM-speakers sound

These speakers have very fine sound texture at sufficient efficiency for my small power amp which only delivers 40Watt per channel at 4 Ohm. The burn-in process for the drivers took approximately 30-50 hours played with music (what else ;-)). I use the speakers as both close-field monitors and far-field classical speakers depending on my seat-position. The speakers treble is exceptionally smooth and clear. Not only transparency of the treble is at top notch, but also the upper mids and lower mids which are smooth and razor sharp at the same time. The SBA-MTM sound significantly more natural than my 21 years old Excel Odin speakers, maybe because of lower cross-over (1.7kHz for the SBA-MTM (rather than 2.5 kHz for the Excel Odin) combined with membranes without almost any resonances within the acoustically used frequency range?) The SBA-MTM bass is not that dry as the one of my Excel Odin but similarly fast. The SBA-MTM bass goes deeper and is covered with more flesh giving more acoustical insight into acoustic bass and drum music, as performed i.e. by Manu-Katche and many other different Trio-jazz-ECM and ACT musicians. The SBA-MTM speakers exactly tell, which analog source you got on play, whether you have to adjust the tonearm-weight/ height, to clean your vinyl or cartridge stylus and whether you play an original old (mostly better sounding) vinyl or remastered (often compressed) one. The speakers go well with jazz (ECM, ACT & Bluenote), classical music (symphonic & chamber music) but also with heavy (Tool, Metallica, Kyuss), and electronic music (Massive Attack, Portishead, Sevdaliza, James Blake). Whatever music I have played so far with the MTM-SBA, the speakers have led me as the listener to the heart of the music.

#### Sound gear upstream the SBA-MTM:

The (phono) sound-gear the SBA-MTMs play with are: a) Scheu-Analog table with Wilson Benesch-tonearm, Dynavector MC 20X Mk2 & Passlabs Xono, b) Rega-RP10 with Charisma MC-2 cartridge & DIY-Thelaudio phono-preamp. Analogue signals are pre-amplified by a Pass XP20 pre-amp and amplified by a Pass Aleph 0S. Although being already 26 years old, my Pass Aleph 0S amplifier sounds tremendously good in combination with the SBA-MTM and makes the SBA-MTM “sing” very emotionally! Except for optional replacement of the bass-reflex with a passive membrane, I hope to have the SBA-MTM settled within my sound gear the next 25 years to come. No more updates needed for this speaker regarding crossover, and drivers which appear to be of highest (sound) quality!





