

Review by Fotis Fotiadis

Viennois

The speaker, as a concept, troubled Brodmann long before electricity and electro acoustics appeared.

The motion of electrons might have been conquered only in the last 125 years, at least in Greece, where electricity arrived in 1889, but the speaker, as a system, has been researched for centuries. Long before electricity, in the ancient times we had the echoing vases in the ancient theatres, while later on the speaker was studied in the first musical instruments, with its greatest application being in pianos. Even today the acoustic study for the creation of a speaker continues, and this is a process that will never cease. The new tools for measurement provide significant help in this direction, as do the constant improvements in the technology of the materials. Hence the speaker is not something new, and surely during these centuries various techniques and technologies have appeared and then disappeared, becoming “lost knowledge”. With the appearance of electricity and then audio, speakers entered our homes and are now a necessary part of our daily life, especially when they belong to audiophiles and people who love nature and the senses, an element of which is sound.

Today we know of acoustic suspension speakers, bass reflex, line transfer and even panels. There are however, some different approaches to speakers, such as point source speakers, radiating 360 degree speakers, nanotechnology, and even patents such as the Brodmann ones that we are testing here. As a piano builder since the 17th century, the Austrian based Brodmann did not wait for electricity to appear before it started creating speakers. Brodmann had been working on the issue for a long time thanks to its pianos, and had studied acoustics extensively. So, when electro-acoustics appeared, it started to circulate speakers as independent units. Inspired by the musical instruments that it was building, Brodmann made public its first electro dynamic speakers just a few years ago. The mind behind this creation is Hans Deutsch, who has approached the issue of “musical reproduction” by a “wooden box” from a different angle, based on the way the horn functions as a musical instrument.

Originally Hans Deutsch had provided his patent to another Austrian piano maker, Bosendorfer whose speakers we had reviewed at that time. When Bosendorfer withdrew from the speaker market, Brodmann with the blessing of Hans took over.

The design of the speakers is so straightforward, that it impresses. Practically without crossover, without exotic materials, without “insane” speakers, without internal attenuation, and without hi-fi marketing bombast, the speakers are a surprise in the audio market. They contain typical speakers, “hiding” their magic in the design

of their cabin. The speakers impress by their twitter which is the only visible units on the cabin.

Brodmann in its catalogue has very expensive models, such as those of the VC series, as well as those of lower cost such as the Festival series. The pair we had in the studio of the magazine the last weeks was the model F2, which is in the category of 6000 Euros. It is a floor stander of three speakers with a height slightly more than a meter. On the face of the speaker is a twitter while on the sides there is a panel on each side whose function is to reverberate from the low frequencies while the support of the speaker is a wooden board, leveled with spikes of brass.

As a maker of pianos, Brodmann is conversant with finish and, it is after all one of their strong cards. They apply the same techniques of "presentation" to their speakers. The F2 is "brilliant", exactly like a piano's finish, and creates a positive acceptance wherever it appears. The pair comes in separate boxes, well packed, and their placement is extremely easy.

ECHOING SPEAKERS

If we put aside their supreme finish, there is no exotic part for us to mention. They are so simple that it is frightening. Inside there is total void. Even though the cabin is from thick MDF, there are no subdivisions, no "clever" bindings or absorbing materials. The only thing that one finds is a simple crossover with two elements (coil and resistor), quality wiring by Synergistic, and that is all. Behind the left and right side panels there are mid/woofers of 6 inches from pressed paper. In other words there are two speakers placed one on the right side and another on the left side. These speakers "see" a special panel with five line openings and a cloth of about 1 meter height and 18cm width.

Each side of the F2 functions as a "sub speaker", this is one of the elements of Hans Deutsch's patent. The other is a long and narrow slit on the base of each unit. The function is not as a bass reflex, but as a low frequency filter, hence the simplicity of the crossover. The major work of the F2 is done by the opening of this slit. The company mentions that it functions as a door. When we play music in a room with a large door open we hear all the frequencies outside. As we close the door the high frequencies do not pass through. Having the door open very slightly, only the low frequencies will pass through, so the slit on the F2 allows only the frequencies below 130Hz to pass through, functioning as a filter with a 4.5dB slope. It is absolutely true, that this idea works and it is impressive.

There is a reason finally why the inside of the cabin is so empty. The air is compressed from the movements of the mid/woofers and functions as an additional speaker from 130Hz and below (36Hz). The basic secret of the Brodmanns, in other words, is the opening slit at the base and the side panels. Additionally, there are high quality speaker binding posts.

In our tests the F2's proved easy to drive and very pleasant to listen to. We connected the speakers with the YBA Passion system and additionally with the integrated-revelation ModWright KW200. Even though the F2 is not the top Brodmann speaker it proved that the unique design approach of Hans Deutsch is effective. The sound we heard was natural and without colorations. With many different pieces it was revelatory and impressive. The low frequencies indicated that there was a subwoofer. Even though the largest speakers in the F2 were 6 inches. The stereo imaging had pin accuracy and the musicality was.....as from a musical instrument.

The speaker plays with natural elements, and our ears like this. There are no "technicalities", enlargements, excesses, or analysis that go beyond reality. It is a speaker that we must listen in order to enrich our experiences, since it is not like the usual ones. We liked the way it details, the immediacy of the interpretation, and the naturalness of its presence. Those who are searching for extremes, dynamics and modern modalities will not find them here. There are surreal speakers out there, which are difficult to find, and far too few, and one of those is the F2. Give it a try.

Comment (at the end)

A speaker for those who love truth, reality, and nature. A speaker that is based on a musical instrument and a design that is like no other in the market. Return to nature....

! - Based on a musical instrument

- Echoing horn

- Custom speakers

"With incredible finish and natural sound, the Festival F2 shows us that there is another road in the design of a speaker..."