



STEREO SPEAKERS

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MORDAUNT-SHORT
AVANT914i



FOR

Vivid, enthusiastic sound; properly made and finished

AGAINST

Some caution needed when system-matching

VERDICT

Not without idiosyncrasies, but the 914is get a great deal right at an arresting price

Proof that big 'n' budget can work

BIGGER IS BETTER – certainly where, say, wages are concerned. But then again, small is beautiful – look at Kylie. Loudspeakers fall into either category, depending on practical and subjective requirements. These Mordaunt-Short Avant 914is, for instance – on one hand, they seem nothing more than M-S's highly regarded 902is in a larger cabinet, sporting a larger price-tag. Looked at another way, they save you the cost of stands and the big cabinets promises, greater scale and low-frequency presence than their cousins.

Don't judge them straight away

Happily, the 914is look and feel well worth the money, even before they're joined to your system. Nicely proportioned and usefully compact, they're finished to a high standard from quality materials. From the speaker binding posts to the aluminium faceplate, these are a strong budget-end proposition.

Straight from the box, the 914is sound hard and unforgiving. And at least 72 hours' running-in is needed before you can stop worrying you've made a terrible mistake.

Get that out of the way and the 914is are revealed as an alert and attacking listen. A spin of Bebel Gilberto's *Bananeira* reveals the M-S's sweetly communicative mid-range, her voice expressive and detailed. Focus is impressive, and the 914i's generate quite a spacious and well-regimented soundstage.

Low frequencies solidly punch their weight, though the M-Ss lack a touch of bottom-end discipline. Treble sounds, often a M-S talking

“The treble is crisp and exciting – even though it walks a tightrope”

point, are crisp and exciting – they walk a tightrope, though. In the right circumstances, the top end sings; carelessly partnered, the 914is can again sound hard.

Pick the perfect partners

Switching between musical styles and genres is no problem. Stripped-down, intimate material arrives first-person emotive, and full-scale orchestral recordings are well organised. Throughout, the M-Ss are dynamic and subtle, detailed and engaging. Only the densest recordings can fox the 914is powers of resolution.

Just remember to pay as much attention to their partners as to the speakers themselves – the 914is will then be sparkling companions.



ALSO CONSIDER ?

ACOUSTIC ENERGY
AEGIS NEO THREE



June 2007

Impressively cohesive and smooth floorstanding speakers, but they don't quite summon the Mordaunt Short's levels of excitement or passion

Q ACOUSTIC 1030



Awards 2006

These are great entry-level floorstanders, and their refinement represents some achievement at the price. But, again they're not as involving as the 914is