

Dunlavy Audio Labs' product launches have often come as a surprise - this time too. The Cantata was unveiled in the spring of 2000, just over a year after its base model, the Aletha, entered the market. The Finns played a role in Cantata's announcement: the premiere took place simultaneously with the manufacturer's best retailer in the USA and Hämeenlinna in Finland !.



Cantata is therefore a simplified version of Aletha. The rectangular housing is simpler to manufacture than Aletha's hexagonal pillar. The speaker housing stands with its legs about 5 cm high. Like the Aletha, the 10-inch bass element is attached to the bottom of the case. On the front panel, on both sides of the 2.5 cm Vifa tweeter, the same vertical axis has two 16 cm midrange elements also made by Vifa.



John Dunlavy himself & Cantata

The speaker is superbly finished and sturdy. The aesthetic appearance could be considered conservative according to the current standard, the round lower and upper edges of the front panel cover divide opinions.

Sound

I placed the speakers in a normal equilateral listening triangle where each side was about 3.5 feet. The distance to the wall behind the speakers was about 1.5 meters. The speakers are not particularly sensitive to the proximity of the side walls. In order to get a depth dimension, it is a good idea to keep the speakers clearly away from the wall behind them, for which less than 1.5 meters would have been enough. As reference speakers, I used our standard references (larger and smaller models from the same manufacturer) and PenAudio's new Chancellor.

The balance of the chords is neutral, neither bright nor dark. The revealing first impression was that the Cantata felt a little warmer than the comparison speakers. The lower register stretched convincingly down to a speaker of this size. In music use, there is hardly any added value to a separate subwoofer.

Resolution: When the electronics are in order, they hardly hear anything, even the smallest details are revealed. Demanding generous and forgiving sounds, don't bother, these speakers aren't for you unless you want to hear everything that's caught on to the recording.

Transparency: Transparency or lack thereof is easier to detect than explained in the listening assessment. Transparency is usually easy to detect, no need to guess. If there is any doubt surrounding the matter, then there is probably room for hope in the capacity. Because engineers are unable to measure this feature, listening estimates are also necessary. With good sound recordings, the speaker is able to convey the space created around the players in a way that many manufacturers should be familiar with. The live atmosphere is perfectly conveyed.

Naturalness: The tonal colors and nuances of vocalists and instruments are repeated naturally. The sounds of the horns, violins, piano, and singers sound very natural and everything sounds effortless. It's worth paying for the transmission of naturalness for the future, when you want to get the full potential out of high-definition DVD-Audio and SACD recordings.

Upper register: The dampers glow beautifully and ring for a long time. The tweeter is just as great as any other DAL speaker. After commissioning, the upper end may feel a little dry, as the run-in progresses, the element matures to convey the upper register in an incredibly multicolored way. The speaker does not tend to sip an ace, except when playing a game or recording.

Central region: The critical central region is full and at the same time narrowly accurate. The piano's famous hammer bumps imitated naturally. The roar of brass evokes cold shivers in the listener. The drum beats are precise and controlled, the sounds of the film remain natural. The voice of male and female vocalists is natural. There are a lot of sounds!

Lower register: At its lower end, the bass extends remarkably down in size, tightly controlled and toned. The upper bass could be a little more present than what I'm used to in my own system, bringing a slight angularity to the bass side instruments.

Status information: Like Aletha, the soundscape is very wide and deep, but still in focus. The instruments can be accurately positioned in both width and depth when so recorded.

The dynamics can be found in Cantata in an exemplary manner. The sensitivity of the speaker is 91 dB / W / 1m, the sensitivity often seems to correlate with good transmission of dynamics. The recurrence of transients is phenomenal.

Scale: Excellent translucency, the transmission of spatial information and the ability to transmit dynamics help Cantata move the orchestra into the living room without exaggerating the intimate atmosphere of a solo performance.



Summary

You can expect excellent sound from a pair of speakers that cost FIM 50,000. The first encounter with Cantata was misleadingly reminiscent of the original model Alethan, which with its neutral balances created a spacious but at the same time carefully focused soundscape full of small sound details.

Cantata is excellent in the qualities I consider important. It's a purely neutral, accurate, and colorless full-range speaker, and I can't name specific weaknesses in its sound. Cantata represents sound ideals that the authors of this publication value.

I have no hesitation in giving my strong recommendation for this speaker to anyone who wants to hear the recording as canned, with as little addition or omission as possible. Friends of lazy, generous, and forgiving sound will hardly enjoy these "trumpets of truth" - unless the truth gradually begins to interest them.

Other listening reviews:

Person A

Neutral, surprisingly airy and open playback. Accurate, dynamic and fast. Revealing for recordings and devices. Not rubbery even if the bass goes down. No wonder DAL is used in many top studios known for their good recordings.

Person B

The cantata goes lower than the DAL SC-IV and is fuller and succulent in the middle. It's hard to find a negative in the speaker that sounds so natural. As a reference speaker, I have listened to Revel Ultima Studio, B&W Nautilus 802.

Price: 49900, -

Import: Hifi Guru OY

Reference equipment

CD Player / DAC / upsampler: Sphinx Project 32

Preamplifier Sphinx Project 8

Amplifier Gamut M250 Monoblocks

Speakers Dunlavy SC-I A / V, SC-VI, PenAudio Chancellor

Intermediate cables Siltech G3 silver / gold XLR

Speaker Cables Transparent Reference

Listening room approx. 40 m2, partly acoustic

Music:

Chandos CHAN 9156/7; Elgar, E; Caractacus; Scene 6; The March Triumphal; / Richard Hickox

DMP CD-484; Read Chuck: Balance

DMP; Flim & BB's: Vintage Flim

Dreyfus / Koch FDM 36590-2: Petrucciani, Michel: Both Worlds

ECM: Metheny Pat: ECM Works

Telarc CD-83411; Jacques Loussier plays Bach

RR 67; Vivaldi, Antonio: Concertos for diverse Instruments; McGegan, Nicholas, Boston Baroque

Warner 9 26562-2; Bela Fleck & Flecktones: Flight of the Cosmic Hippo

Warner: Duke George: After Hours

MCD-9269-2; Ørsted-Pedersen, Niels-Henning: Friends Forever

Impulses; IMP 11642; Krall, Diana: All of You

Ym

Technical information

FREQUENCY RESPONSE:	35-20,000 Hz, +/- 1 dB. Minus 4 dB at approximately 20 Hz. (Measured on- axis at a distance of 10-12 feet within a large anechoic chamber.)
SENSITIVITY:	Approximately 90dB SPL (ref: 1 meter, on-axis) for an input level of 2.83 Volts RMS.
IMPEDANCE:	Nominal 4 ohms (3 ohms minimum and 7 ohms maximum)
PULSE-COHERENCE:	An impulse response equal to or better than most top-of-the-line CD players and Digital Processors.
RADIATION PATTERNS:	Precisely symmetrical in both horizontal and vertical planes (above about 80 Hz.).
DIFFRACTION DISTORTION:	Virtually eliminated by the use of efficient sound-absorbing material on all relevant surfaces. (US Patent #4,167,985)
DRIVERS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One 10", hi-performance, carbon-fiber, "down-firing" woofer - Two 6-1/2" bass/mids - One 1" dome tweeter.
RECOMMENDED AMPLIFIER POWER:	Minimum of 40 watts/channel into 8 ohms (for maximum enjoyment of the loudspeakers dynamic range)
RECOMMENDED LISTENING DISTANCE AND ROOM SIZE:	8 to 12 feet, on axis, in a room not smaller than about 12 feet by 18 feet.
SIZE:	52" high by 12" square with a 16" square base
WEIGHT:	Approximately 85 pounds (each), incl. base
GRILL:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Frame: Acoustically transparent, precision machined steel frame. -Cloth: Acoustically transparent black weave
MATERIAL:	Veneered MDF, varying in thickness from 3/4" to 1.5". The internal volume is optimally filled with high-quality open-cell foam to achieve appropriate absorption and damping of internal acoustical energy.
FINISHES:	Standard: light or black Oak. Also available in Dalwood Rose, Cherry, etc. at a slight additional cost.