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Eficion Ficion F200 Loudspeaker System

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Specification:

Design: 2-way vented-box.

Frequency Response: 38Hz-40kHz.

Sensitivity: 88dB/2.83V/1m.

Impedance: 8 ohms (minimum 6.4 ohms).

Tweeter: Purified aluminum ribbon tweeter with innovative honeycomb structure.*

Woofer: 6.5", non-woven carbon fiber sandwich cone, massive 2" voice coil has an innovative copper shorting ring and a damping coil. **

Crossover: 2kHz.

Dimensions (HWD): 17" X 10" X 13.6" .

Price: \$3400 pr.

www.eficiom.com

The Eficion Ficion F200 two way monitor is a high end, high quality speaker system I heard for the first time at the VSAC 2008 show in Vancouver Washington. The speakers were driven by high quality Balance Audio Technology electronics and impressed me with their smooth sound and beautiful build quality. The Eficion room was always so full at the Vancouver Hilton I owing to the great sound that I had to ask for a review sample to get a better listen. Fortunately Eficion is located in Samamish Washington just a short 20 mile drive from my home and Peigen Ji-ang the owner and designer of Eficion loudspeakers was able to meet with me and supply a set speakers for evaluation.



The \$3400.00 Eficion Ficion 200 is a large 17" H X 13.6"D X 10"W bi-wire capable, rear ported two way monitor consisting of an Aurum Cantus 6 inch aluminum ribbon tweeter and an Aurum Cantus 6.5 inch non woven carbon fiber coned woofer. Sensitivity is rated 88 db for one watt at one meter, frequency response is 38Hz – 40 Khz and impedance is nominally rated at 8 ohms. The crossover point is 2 Khz and power handling is rated at 150 watts. The speakers come in either Santos Rosewood veneer or Cherry Veneer, the Signature version available for an additional \$450.00 comes with a laminated Bamboo enclosure the same bamboo finish. Internal wiring is all Teflon insulated Ohno continuous casting cable and only top quality parts such as Mundorf super-m capacitors are used the crossover. The fit and finish is incredible in fact, second to none at this price point.

I did all of my listening to the Ficion F200s in my reference system which consists of an Audible Illusion Modulus 3A preamplifier, Conrad Johnson MV-60SE Amplifier, Primare D30.2 CD Player and VPI HW-19 MkIV turntable. I am presently using Discovery Essence interconnects and Discovery Essential speaker cables. For the A, B speaker comparisons I used my reference Paradigm S2 Monitors mounted on their Target lead and sand filled speaker stands. I set up both speakers equidistant to the listening position and toed in slightly 16 inches from the sidewalls and 38 inches from the rear wall. I mounted the F200s on a set of 23 inch high Plateau lead and sand filled speaker stands for the duration of my listening sessions in my 18' X 15' X 7.5' listening room.

Listening

To say the Eficion Ficion F200s are excellent speakers would be an understatement. Comparing them to my Paradigm S2 monitors revealed several weaknesses in my reference speakers that I haven't heard in my room before no-

tably the Ficions had deeper bass response and a smoother midrange. I placed Diana Kralls jazz CD *Love Scenes* into the CD Player and played track 2 “Peel Me a Grape” to gain a reference. This CD is an intimate recording, just Krall on piano Russell Malone on guitar and Christian McBride on bass. With this type of music you can really hear the differences between good and excellent speakers. The Ficion F200s simply sounded richer when compared to the Paradigms, Krall’s voice gained sensuality, texture and presence, Christian McBride’s bass sounded full, musical and extended deeper than I am used to. Compared to the Ficion F200s the Paradigms are slightly more efficient, a bit punchier and brighter on top.

Next, I played track 6 “Ride Across the River” from the Dire Straits CD *Brothers in Arms*. There is a lot going on in this recording; percussive elements, keyboards, guitar, drums and bass. On poor sounding speakers many of the subtleties are lost and the sound becomes diffuse. You miss the insect noises, the drums and delicacies of the melody. The F200s did an admirable job of relaying the information imbedded in the recording, the midrange was more detailed, clear and concise than the Paradigms. Not by a huge margin but noticeably so. The bass response was deeper but a tad more relaxed, however the Ficions still conveyed the immediacy and palpability of Knopfler’s guitar and vocals extremely well.

Moving on was track 3 “Dazed And Confused” from Led Zeppelin CD *Mothership* disc number 1. Robert Plant’s voice was front and center, Jimmy Page’s guitar cut through the soundstage filling the area left to right during his guitar solo. John Bonham’s drums seemed bigger than life extending from one edge of the soundstage to the other. John Paul Jone’s bass was tight and dynamic placed just left of center in the soundstage. The Paradigm S2 monitors in comparison had a more focused soundstage and brighter presentation while the Ficion F200s sounded deeper and more relaxed. I noticed high end congestion present in the Paradigms that I had never really heard before when comparing them to the F200s.

To change up I decided to spin some Vinyl, I put on *Picture of Heath* this particular Pacific Jazz re-issue is a very cool jazz classic recorded in 1957 and features Chet Baker before his substance abuse really got out of control. This well recorded album is a compendium of jazz talent with Curtis Counce on bass, Lawrence Marable on drums and Carl Perkins on Piano laying down a solid foundation for Chet Baker on trumpet, Art Pepper on alto sax and Phil Urso on tenor sax. I personally think this is one of Chet Baker’s finest recorded performances he and Art Pepper especially work well together. The rhythmic chops of Curtis Counce and Lawrence Marable allow the other members of the sextet to play in a way that is not often captured on a recording. The Ficion F200s reproduced every note with absolute clarity. The bass was solid, the cymbals were clean and bright without sounding thin. Chet Baker’s trumpet and Art Pepper’s sax were presented like the rich sounding brass instruments they are. The F200 is a very smooth sounding speaker and did a fine job depicting the jazz performance on this recording.

To confirm my belief that the Ficion F200s had a deeper bass response than the Paradigm S2 monitors, I played tracks 26 through 31 from the first Stereophile Test CD through each pair of speakers. These recorded tracks are 1/3 Octave warble tones that are recorded in 20 second increments from 63Hz down to 20Hz. The Ficion F200s and the Paradigms had very similar output down to 40Hz but below that point the F200s had more output, the warble tone was even audible at 20Hz!

Final Thoughts

While I have always enjoyed my Paradigm S2 monitors for their high efficiency, pinpoint imaging, solid bass and very good detail I knew there would come a day when that technology would catch up. The Ficion F200s have better bass extension, are more detailed and have a very natural sounding midrange. Although the high end seems slightly recessed when compared to the Paradigms I heard exceptional detail and clarity from the F200s with all recorded material. Also absent was the high end hash and congestion that is often present when listening to other speakers. Additionally to these ears they reproduce recordings, especially cymbals and brass instruments in a way that I have seldom heard in speakers costing less than \$5,000.00. If you are looking for a high quality, stand mounted monitor with exceptional bass response and midrange detail the Ficion F200 deserves your consideration. It is a very fine loudspeaker!

Associated Components

Audible Illusions Modulus 3A Preamplifier, Conrad Johnson MV-60SE Amplifier, Dussun DS99 Integrated Amplifier
S.E.T. EL34 Integrated Tube Amp, Primare D30.2 CD Player, Marantz CD5001 CD Player, VPI HW19 MKIV Turntable
Rega RB 600 Tonearm, Benz Ruby 2 MC Phono Cartridge, Paradigm S2 Signiture Monitors, Triangle Stella Monitors
Discovery Essence Interconnects Discovery Essential Speaker Cables
Eichmann Express Six Interconnects, Zebra ZC SP12SD Speaker Cables Zebra ZC SP14DBI Speaker Cables
Acoustic Zen El Nino Power Cord Synergistic Research Master Coupler Power Cord, Grant Fidelity PC 1.5 Power Cord
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