

FTW · Hardware · Reviews

AudioEngine A2+ Speakers Review: The Entry-Level Speakers You'd Want

by *Stefan Etienne* March 9, 2014 at 10:03 pm





Audioengine is a manufacturer of high-end PC audio hardware. That's right: speakers specifically designed to be used with your computer, but of course with the support of typical 3.5mm audio jack. They're expertly designed as minimalist speakers, yet have rich, office-filling sound, with plenty of bass and audio ranges to spare. Measuring 6 inches tall, 4 inches wide and 5.25 inches deep, the Audioengine A2+ model is a kit of two speakers, in either black or white, with built-in subwoofers, volume dial, and a plenty of aesthetic appeal.

But, they're expensive; thus are they worth the price?

Price as Reviewed: \$249 at AudioEngine USA

Aesthetics & Specs





One of the best decisions by Audioengine when designing the A2+ speakers probably has to be the build-in USB DAC — this means that you can directly connect the A2+ to your computer, and get richer sound, much more so than you'd typically come by with the usual 3.5mm headset jack that say, your smartphone or tablet use. It also ensures that the speakers are plug-and-play, so no drivers or software are needed to get your sound going.

“Step one: play music. Step two: there aren't any other steps.”

At 60W peak power total (15W RMS / 30W peak per channel), the Audioengine A2+ speakers can effectively fill an office space with sound, and probably an entire floor — but not to the extent that its large A5 variant probably can. These speakers are very directional, meaning that depending on where and how you place them, the sound either is richer or poorer. That isn't to say that they aren't surround sound-esque; they very are, but don't expect to throw a block party with them; a house party is just about enough.

Aesthetics-wise, the drivers are exposed, which not only makes for something fun to poke at (literally feeling your music, hah), but an almost natural design. Furthermore, the material the 2.75" woofers are made out of is pure Kevlar — that's right, and it's real — coupled with 3/4" silk dome tweeters, you get just the hardware needed to listen to music, play games, or watch videos. Interestingly, the left speaker houses the amplifier, so it is much heavier than the one on the right; otherwise it's no big deal.

However, there are two issues I do have with the A2+: it's rather bulky power supply, which isn't large, but does take some concealing, and the rear-mounted volume knob — it gets cumbersome to have to reach over every time you want to make precise audio level adjustments that your computer cannot make so easily. But, you should cut Audioengine some slack: there's no way that a knob can realistically fit on the front of the speakers, which is exactly how they probably kept them so small.

Using It



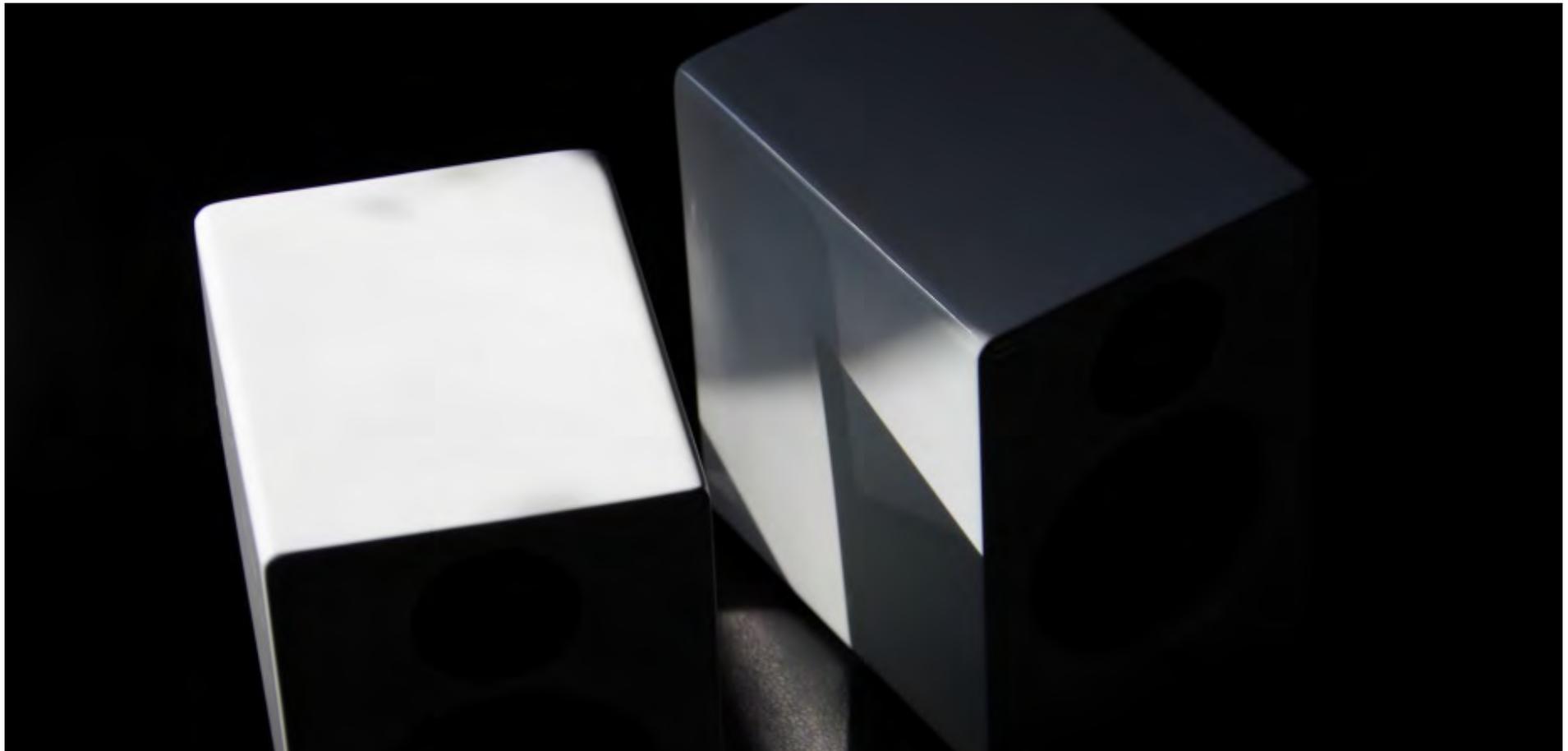
The most astonishing thing about the Audioengine 2+ is the bass. There is a *lot* of bass, in a very small frame. Once you get over that bit of astonishment, you can begin to enjoy whatever you like that has a sound, and is a digital device that can utilize USB, 3.5mm, or RCA ports.

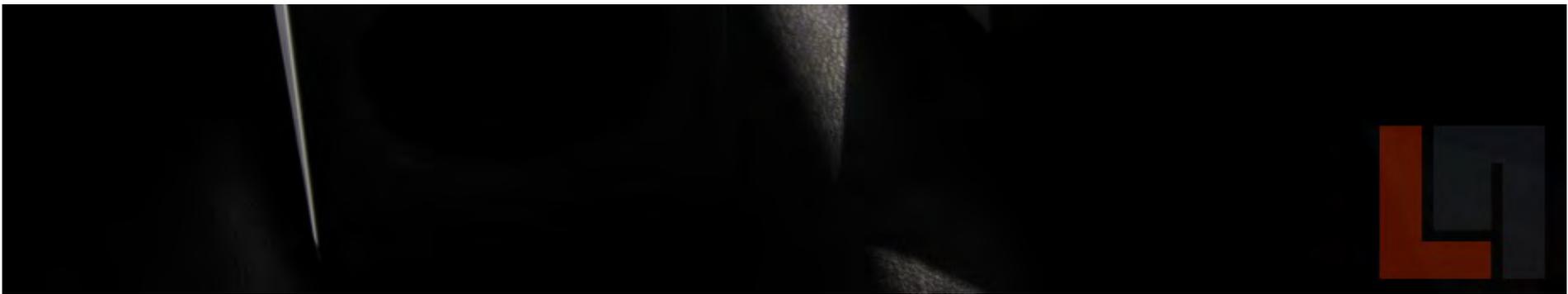
If an inexperienced user were to turn the knob to the A2+'s highest setting, and just use 1% of the total output available by your computer, well, you'd be in a quick jump in your emotions, because it *will* be loud (too loud). It isn't something to fret over, because the knob is there for fine adjustments, so much so in fact that you can reduce whatever coming out of the speakers to an eerie yet soft sound, no matter what is playing.

“You like flamenco? I didn't, until I heard it on the A2+.”

Conclusion

Score: 10/10





If you've ever wanted small, entry-level speakers that pack a massive punch, then Audioengine has you covered with the A2+. The same prescription applies to those looking for aesthetically brilliant speaker, speakers that can easily match Apple products, or function nicely in a modern home with well-lit living areas or office space, or a den of deep thought and solitude (that's why they also come in black).

“I never give perfect scores. Don't get used to it.”

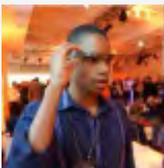
You get the idea. They might be a bit expensive at first, but considering how much they please the sense of hearing, I don't think there is any excuse for not buying the A2+.

Pros:

- Clean, minimalist, yet thoughtful design.
- A clear and loud sound range.
- Enough bass to make your head drop.
- Kevlar.

Cons:

- Speaker knob on the back of the unit is — unique.
- Power brick is is, well, a brick.
- \$250 denotes that a long-term investment is being made; be smart.



— **Stefan Etienne**

Founded tech site LaptopMemo. 17-years-old, loves tea, tennis, reading, tech, gaming, + more.