

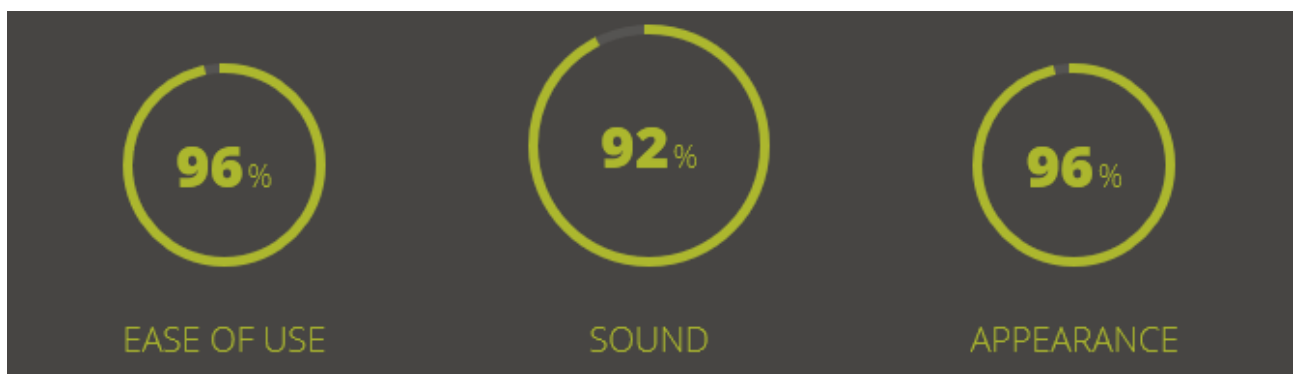
# REVIEW SIMAUDIO MOON 860Av2

by *Audiodrom.net*



The Simaudio Moon 860A v2 is a second-best amplifier in the Simaudio range. The highest pedestal is reserved for the Moon 888 flagship model that makes you short of 70 thousand euro. Compared to this beast the 860A v2 is a budget affair. It replaces three previous models - 860A, 870A, and 880A – which is an interesting portfolio optimization move from Simaudio. As it bests any of the three, I find the 860A denomination a little confusing. Although Simaudio's marketing obviously had not a good day, their engineers had and the 860A v2 can be considered a scaled down version of the Moon 888.

## Function and form



Like the 870A that we reviewed several years ago, the 860A v2 is a full dual-mono design with massive filtration capacity per channel, powered by over-dimensioned toroid transformers and has the proprietary Lynx technology avoiding global feedback. Simaudio claims there are no loudspeakers that the 860A v2 may have a problem to drive. The 860A v2 was redesigned to better handle current peaks, as well the signal paths its bipolar arrangement were reviewed. The Moon 860A v2 is a stereo power amplifier that delivers 2x450 watts into 4 ohms; the first 5W are provided in Class-A. There is a toggle

switch on the amplifier's rear panel that switches the 860A v2 into a bridged monoblock operation. This way the wattage grows into 1x 750W/4 ohms. The hifinews.com has found these specification too conservative and measured >530W of continuous power into 4 ohms, >580W of dynamic power into the same load respectively. Simaudio recommends keeping the 860A v2 powered on continuously and that is why the main power switch is located on the rear panel. I like this because after the cold start the Moon needs several hours to perform at its best and I don't want to wait. Simple stand-by shut down is all you need here.

## Bass management



I lived with a combination of Simaudio Moon 740P preamplifier and Simaudio Moon 870A power amplifier for some time. I was happy that, maybe except cables, the system I reviewed the 860A v2 in was identical and thus facilitated easy comparisons. It was hot outside, as well as it was hot in the room – not because of the Moons that remain pretty lukewarm on touch, but because of the music that they energetically cooked. From the start the Simaudio Moon 860A v2 was audibly better than the 870A. It exhibited better control and higher transparency, while preserving the legendary Moon's dynamics and tonal colors. Although this amplifier is quite cheap to today's high-end standards, I would recommend to pair it with reference grade components only if its potential should be exploited in full.



## Clarity & delicacy



The bottom-end of the Simaudio Moon 860A v2 is first-rate. It is one of the few amplifiers than not only can dig deep but it does so with depth of bass textures. The textural insight into music is preserved through midbass to mids, and so no wonder that the voice of Hana Hegerova in the iconic Čerešne song (Všechno nejlepší album) is a kind of Leonard Cohen's female counterpart for the depth of vocal performance. There is a great supportive double-bass too and the track is a mesmerizing ride through the 860A v2. The singer smiles at the end of one verse and it is so easy to see it through the Moon.

## Tonal accuracy



The tambourine is a musical instrument in the percussion family consisting of a ring wooden frame, to which small metal zills are attached. The tambourine is held in the hand or mounted on a stand and can be played by hand or stick like any other percussive instrument, it can be shaken, or hit against the leg or hip. Dee Dee Bridgewater does not worship any conventions and in Slow Boat to China on Live at Yoshi's uses the tambourine as a hammer – instead of playing it the tambourine is used to play the wooden floor. The explosive transients of wood hitting the wood were excellent through the 860A v2 and exploded with the power of a gun shot in the room. At the same time the Moon was able to track the tambourine moving from the height of the hand down to the floor and back. The accuracy and the transparency of the soundstage was exquisite. With my eyes closed I am there. The 860A v2 is a very good time capsule indeed. Although the rhythm section and voice play main roles in Slow Boat to China my ears perked up hearing the piano line. The piano was unambiguously percussive, wonderfully colourful, full-fleshed and dynamic, like I am used to hear it live. I have never been to Oakland's Yoshi's but from I heard I reconstructed the venue in my mind – the rather intimate acoustic, not unlike in Reduta jazz club in Prague. Worn-out fabrics and wood, short reverb, musicians close to each other... I liked what I heard. Also Dvořák's Humoresque, played by Anne-Sophie Mutter and Ayama Akeba in a violin-piano duet, was reveling in instrumental colours and fine dynamics. It was only due to the media noise that I realized I was listening to a playback, not a live event.

## Spatial resolution



Violin Concerto in A-minor, Op.53 (Berliner Philharmoniker, Manfred Honeck) is the opposite of the subtle Humoresque: the scale and macrodynamics of the symphony orchestra were on full display with the Simaudio Moon 860A v2. The fortes of the orchestra were like pressure waves – they started in the instrumental group and went through the whole orchestra like a ripple until they reached my ears with full impact. Some amplifiers tend to homogenize these events but the Moon 860A v2's separation was outstanding. I was curious what I would hear in notorious Pink Floyd's Shine On You Crazy Diamond; you know, the part when that guitar starts to wail its melody over the cushion of ominous keys. It was a "to die for" moment with the Legacy Audio Aeris driven by the 860A v2. I was sucked into the Floyd's universe with the music floating around me. To conclude, the Simaudio Moon 860A v2 is an amplifier against which other amps can be benchmarked. The Canadians are very consistent in improving their products without being affected by short-lived trends too much. Thus, the Simaudio remains one of the most trusted audio brands for me. Although I always recommend auditioning a component before buying it, Moon amps can be blind-bought with ease.

