

# MOON by Simaudio Voice 22 standmount loudspeaker

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**M**OON by Simaudio, possibly the least Canadian sounding brand in the business, has been making audio electronics extremely successfully for over 40 years, so creating a loudspeaker might seem like a strange move.

Apparently, however, it was prompted by the Ace all in one amp/streamer/DAC that first appeared in 2016. Ace made the people at Simaudio realise that they were almost able to deliver a complete system solution. It kind of makes sense

really, if you are offering a simple one-box solution for the relative newcomers to this crazy game, why not take away the complications of finding a loudspeaker?

Never underestimate the importance of the amp/speaker interaction, it's the key to system building and one that few serious audio companies provide an easy solution for. Simaudio is definitely serious as you can tell when you take a closer look at the MOON Voice 22, which looks to all the world like a straightforward – if stylish – two-way speaker with a nice finish. Looks here are deceptive however because that box has had some interesting work done to





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» its insides. Simaudio has come up with an idea to reduce vibration in the woodwork that involves cutting grooves into the panels and filling them with damping material. Thus you have an irregular pattern of vibration barriers that break up modes in the panels and stop them adding to and blurring the output from the drive units. Flat wooden panels look good and are relatively easy to fabricate but killing their tendency to resonate at audio frequencies is tricky so it's interesting to see a new approach to the problem.

### Minimal disparity

The drive units in the Voice 22, which is a medium size bookshelf design, start with a 155mm (6 inch) mid bass unit with an aluminium basket and a mineral filled polypropylene cone in a soft rubber surround chosen for its low damping qualities. The company has added a copper sleeve to the pole piece to reduce inductance and keep voice coil weight down by using copper plated aluminium wire. Simaudio is keen to point out the disparity in dispersion between a woofer and a tweeter and have incorporated a waveguide around the tweeter in an attempt to ameliorate it. The idea is to make the dispersion of these relatively large and small drivers closer to one another so that you get a more even

tonal balance in the room. The tweeter itself has a larger than average 28mm central dome with a surround that brings the total diameter up to 40mm. This makes it quite a bit bigger than most and explains how the engineers have been able to go for a very low 1.5kHz crossover point. I haven't seen any two-ways where this point is lower than 2kHz so this is a radical move.

The crossover created to handle the transition between woofer and tweeter is also unusual inasmuch as it has two PCB layers to create the 12dB/octave, second order slopes between the drivers. The result is a speaker with sensitivity of 89dB and a six Ohm impedance in a box that stands 14 inches high. Finish is either gloss white or black and Simaudio have upped its overall appeal with an attractive trim around the drivers that enhances the figure '8' styling. Another unusual feature is the sci-fi sounding Hover base; this is plinth that creates a shadow gap under the speaker and makes it look as though its floating above a bookshelf or stand. Simaudio makes a dedicated stand which fits into the underside of the base to give a clean look to the combination. This stand was not included in our sample, so a pair of 60cm high Custom Design stands were used for the purpose.

### MOON Ace

The Voice 22 is being bundled with Simaudio's all-in-one streamer, DAC and amplifier, the MOON Ace, with the combo neatly bundled as the Ace System. The Ace is an excellent product as we discovered in issue 138, it is built around a 50W integrated amplifier with headphone output, line and digital inputs and a MOON MiND 2 streaming engine. It even has an MM phono input for a turntable.

Control is via a handset or the MiND app, the latter providing access to Tidal Connect, Spotify Connect or Airplay 2, alternatively you can access Tidal, Deezer and Qobuz services direct from the app. It's Roon ready and has MQA decoding built in which is a rarity even in standalone streamers.

### Sound

Using the MOON Ace's MiND 2 streamer and celebrating the life of Christine McVie which sadly ended whilst this review was in progress, I played an early Fleetwood Mac album called *Penguin* which in truth is not the greatest sounding recording. I tried an earlier, pre McVie 'Mac album called *Kiln House* and that sounded a lot better albeit lacking the sophistication of *Penguin*. It proved necessary »



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» to turn to a vinyl copy of the first Buckingham/Nicks 'Mac album (*Fleetwood Mac*) and the track 'World Turning' to get the full effect, here the contrast between voices is made clear despite how well pitched they are together. The MOON Voice 22 has the timing advantages common to two-way loudspeakers but combines that with a surprising degree of transparency for what looks like a conventional standmount, it clearly is a lot more than that.

I dropped Kraftwerk's live version of 'Radioactivity' to see how much low end grip the MOON Ace/Voice 22 pair could deliver and was genuinely surprised at how solid and muscular the sound was. This is only a 50W amplifier and the speakers are hardly substantial yet the bass has real weight, they do give up a little of the scale and energy of bigger systems but that's to be expected. There is also very little sense of compression due to level; these speakers will play at high level without complaint, all the while maintaining a high level of clarity; the polished nature of classy recordings is obvious and encourages that desire for level and the sense of realism that it brings.

### Rich, warm swordfish

The balance with digital inputs is slightly rich and warm with a weight to the bass that suggests the cabinets are very solid indeed. I got a better idea of the capabilities of these speakers with the line inputs on the MOON Ace, and they are extensive. With tons of character coming through everything that was played, both good and bad; my copy of Bonnie Raitt's *Home Plate* seems to be knackered and I don't play it very often. But *Swordfishtrombones* (Tom Waits) which gets a lot of rotation was blindingly good, the dynamics on offer proving wider than expected thanks to the ability of the MOON combo to deliver more of what's in the recording than is generally found.

With my usual iFi Pro iDSD DAC into Townshend Allegri Reference pre- and Moore Amps Angel 6 power amplifiers there is a more lively sound to digital which mainly reflects the digital to analogue converter. The extra power produces deeper bass from Deadmau5's 'Seeya' where the kick drum sound is both detailed and unusually well controlled, this track can often overwhelm a speaker because of the quantity of bass but here it remained tuneful rather than bludgeoning. The compression in the recording is also clear but you can't blame a speaker for being too revealing.

For a bit of variety I also tried the MOON Voices with a new Rega Elex Mk4 amp that made a distinct contrast with the Ace and delivered a typically well timed and engaging

sound that shows these speakers to be very revealing of partnering equipment. Despite having more power on tap (72W) the sound was not as dynamic nor as polished, but it's important to remember that the Rega is nearly a third of the price of the MOON amp.

### Style and substance

Back with the Ace I was inspired to play some Massive Attack which prompted ripples of bass from 'Man Next Door', which as well as pummelling my solar plexus delivered a goodly amount of detail. The vocal in particular remaining clear with the effects applied to it equally easy to appreciate. With the *Color as Time* digital album reviewed in the back of this issue I enjoyed brass that while bright and strong avoided glare, you get the energy of the instruments without the stress that they can induce in many loudspeakers.

At first glance the MOON Voice 22 looks a bit expensive despite its lovely finish, put it with the Ace, however, and it becomes apparent that the sound quality more than matches the asking price. This is a very revealing and capable loudspeaker that more than justifies its unique position in the MOON by Simaudio range, if you want style and substance have a listen. +

### Technical specifications

**Type** Two-way, two-driver stand-mount monitor with rear-ported bass reflex enclosure

**Driver complement** One 29mm ring radiator tweeter, one 155mm mineral-filled polypropylene cone mid-bass driver

**Frequency response** 55Hz–24kHz (±3dB)

**Crossover frequency** 1.5kHz (2nd order)

**Impedance** 6 Ohms

**Sensitivity** 89dB/2.83V/1m

**Dimensions (H×W×D)** 350 × 200 × 290mm

**Weight** 10.5kg/each

**Finishes** Piano Black, High-Gloss White

**Price** £2,950

**Moon Ace** £3,850

**Moon Ace system** £6,800

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**Manufacturer** Simaudio Moon

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