

ROLE AUDIO ENTERPRISE



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OK, I guess I'm a slow learner. Every so often, I would happen onto the Role Audio web site and I would always find myself intrigued by the long, graceful lines of the Enterprise. My problem, like so many web surfers, was that I didn't go beyond my enthusiasm to actually learn more about the system. I guess that this was especially unforgivable since I have never heard a speaker from Role's Erol Ricketts that wasn't musical. Somehow, I guess I just wasn't paying attention.

The Role Audio Enterprise has now caught my attention and has made up for my initial neglect of the model in a very big way. The Enterprise is everything you could want in a floor standing speaker, and somehow less as well. It is truly full range both in terms of dynamics and LF extension but it's also less visually and physically intrusive than other speakers that offer similar performance. The Enterprise's svelte elegance allows for greater *Significant Other Acceptance Factor* than any other floor standing speaker I have ever used. Believe me when I say that pictures do not begin to tell the story of the Enterprise's aesthetic charms. Also, the Enterprise is available with custom cradle-style Sound Anchor stands as an option to the standard sculpted plywood pods. They make the Enterprise look less organic, but more typically high end if that's what you need. Both looks have their own appeal.

And, then there's the music. The ingenious Role Dual Transmission Line™ allows the Enterprise's twin woofers to do amazing things in the bottom end, musical things that continue to impress me each time I listen to the Enterprises. The bass is solid, fast and very extended. At the same time, the Enterprise's have a marvelously integrated sound that lets each recording speak its own special language unhindered. Each time I sit down in front of the Enterprises I find myself breathing a sigh of quiet satisfaction: "This is just *right*." says that oh so hard to please audiophile that lives within us all.

Coherence in a speaker is its ability to recreate music with no sense of the music's many voices being divided into our contrived notions of treble, midrange and bass. The voicing of the Enterprise is fantastic. The Enterprises sound variously small, large and in between depending on what you play through them. On solo violin they will trick you into believing that you're seated before the most incisive mini-monitors that you've heard. Then, you'll play something with bottom end, or greater dynamics swings, and you'll swear that you're hearing a full range (and full size) speaker that must weigh more than you do. The top end matches the extension of the bottom and may sparkle just a bit more in the lower treble range than it should but this effect is so material dependent that it's truly a non-issue in light of the Enterprise's amazing top to bottom musicality.

In 14 years of reviewing, it has been a rare time when I have been satisfied with the speakers that I owned or was reviewing. Most speakers are just too easy to hear and thereby too easy to criticize. It's easy to catch yourself looking forward to the promise of the next speaker, only to have the next speaker disappoint just as much as the one before, only in different ways. The Role Enterprises have freed me from this tiresome search. They offer the kind of transparency that allows the reviewer part of my brain to do its job. At the same time, they are letting the purity and soul of the music be what truly matters.

The Role Enterprises have caught me more by surprise than any other product I have ever reviewed. The more I listen to them, the more I realize just how much they have to offer. If you thinking about a floor standing speaker, and you are considering all of the usual suspects of the high end, I cannot recommend strongly enough that you do yourself the favor of adding the Role Enterprise to your list of must hear speakers. You will not find a better speaker anywhere near its price (and yes, I *have* heard them all). Highly recommended.