

TALL AND BEAUTIFUL

Børresen continues to go its own way with its new X3, and has created a speaker that at least looks unusually beautiful for the price. Then, of course, the question is whether it sounds as impressive as it looks.

Text: [Håvard Holmedal](#)

There are some who argue that there isn't much more to be gained from today's speaker technology when it comes to sound quality. At Stereo+, we believe that's not true. There is hardly a single upgrade of existing series or completely new design, which is not clearly better than the previous, similar model. Leaving aside the price increase for new models, there is no doubt that the quality is constantly rising to new heights.

Børresen has apparently noted that price is a more important factor than just a few years ago, and has obviously had a plan to launch a speaker with high-end qualities, but without the associated price tag. The way they've done it, and the result they've achieved, are now in the living room playing beautiful music. In a very special way, I would say.

Børresen nevertheless calls the X3 "entry level". For most people, that doesn't make much sense, but if you look at what else they offer, you understand it a little better. But we have to respect that entry level for most people means a pair of floorstanding speakers, a small amplifier and a usable sound source. Nowadays, it's either a turntable or a network player. Now that CD players have been cleared away to the attic.

Out of the box

The speakers are heavy, and come in a pair of very generous boxes. They're still easy to unpack and take out, but it's even better if you have someone to help you, because a 55kg speaker needs some heft.

As soon as you unpack a pair of Børresen X3s, you can see that this is something quite special. The design is modern, exciting materials have been used, and with the elegant feet the speaker stands on, it's easy to believe that this speaker costs far more than the price tag it comes with. They simply look like a very expensive high-end speaker, and I think deep down that's also been the intention.

The speaker is around 130cm tall, stands on very powerful feet and certainly takes its place in the living room, but the cabinet veers quite sharply inwards to-



wards the back so that they are barely visible from the listening position, and the X3 doesn't seem even anywhere near as big as the specs are trying to tell us.

I've had large speakers in the living room in the past and have a general idea of where different constructions should be placed. Børresen X3 requires some space around it, but has no great need to stand far out on the floor and steal all the space in the living room. However, the speaker, which is already 60cm deep to start with, must have at least 30-40 centimetres behind it to play the way it can. I angled it a little bit towards the listening position, and then a little bit more and then it was as if the soundscape came into place with a bang. The balance worked well, the bass was great and the holography was excellent. Then it's mostly done. The rest is just fine-tuning that usually takes a few weeks, before you might end up right where you started. Who knows?

Advanced technology

Børresen has made a few speakers before, and it is not surprising to find technology from the M, Z and O series. They've obviously learned something along the way, and perhaps even gained a unique understanding of what it takes to build a most-for-the-money speaker.

Even so, it's surprising to find Børresen's ribbon tweeter, carbon membranes and copper caps in the magnet system.

Perhaps it is just as surprising to find such small speaker elements in a speaker that claims to move relatively effortlessly down to 35Hz. The bass, by the way, is even more impressive than the specs suggest. This sounds very, heavy and solid in the bass, but also wonderfully fast and precise. Børresen has really made the two five-inches sing.

The basses are made of a newly developed carbon fibre material, or carbon if you will, and consist of two ultra-light layers of what Børresen calls spread tow carbon fibre with the same geometry as other elements from the same manufacturer. Between the layers of carbon fibre there is a spacer material, which in this case is a layer of 4mm Nomex Honeycomb. All in all, this makes for an enormously light and rigid membrane with close to zero resonance.

The tweeter, the already talked about ribbon tweeter, is barely possible to weigh on normal scales. The membrane is only 1/100 mm thick and has a moving mass of an impressive 1/100th of a gram. Even if it's put in your hand (I've tried), even a faint breath of wind will press it harder against your hand. It's nearly identical to the one in the much more expensive Z and O series speakers. In the tweeter's "motor" there are no fewer than three enormously powerful N52 neodymium magnets. The tweeter gives a usable response all the way up to about 50kHz

The midrange is built in the same way as the bass, and also looks confusingly similar with the same type of membrane technology. The split frequencies in the 2.5-way design are rated at 125 and 2500Hz, and although the speaker is rated at 40hm, it seems to be easy to drive for the amplifier. Børresen also recommends amplifiers from only 50 watts and upwards, but with the qualities the speakers very quickly proved to





have, you should look for a really good amplifier. Fortunately, there are also many in the price range well below 100K.

Exceptionally precise sound

There are many speakers that play with a certain warmth and vibrancy, and there are some speakers that have a precision that impresses, but that can perhaps become a little strenuous over time. Then there are a smaller number of speakers that are super precise and detailed, but at the same time play in a relaxing and natural way. Børresen X3 is one of these speakers. There seems to be no limit to how much detail it can bring out, and how rhythmically precise and engaging it is. At the same time, I find it calm, natural and even quite relaxing – when the music you play demands it. Even so, you can kick off a bout of festive music, with rhythmic and demanding music, without it missing a note. The touch of any instrument you like comes with a speed you can hardly imagine, but the speaker also has something that, in my eyes, is unique. Imagine that

you have a vertical timeline that is one hundred percent straight from bottom to top, that is to say there is no tendency for the bass to lag slightly behind, or that the treble or midrange is rushed. It makes the music very engaging, just as it makes it natural and right. You can call it live, but don't think it has anything to do with playing loud. Not only are the speakers surprisingly rich even at low volumes, they also retain a light and resilient way of playing even if you're just gently playing in the background.

The music

Playing music during a test is not primarily about playing difficult or challenging music, but if possible finding out if there are certain types of music that the speaker fixes better than anything else. With the Børresen X3, I sat for half a day playing music from all the playlists we have, but ended up concluding that with this speaker we have found a real all-rounder.

With a speaker that has so much resilience, it might be tempting to play rhythmic music, which

of course we did, but the speaker is surprisingly little limited by music genre or instrumentation. The X3 comes into its own surprisingly well on everything from small string ensembles to huge Wagner operas, from a single solo trumpet to the full swing of an entire big band or from gentle guitar strumming to huge guitar cascades from Rammstein. It's also fabulous with voices, and not only beautiful female voices, but also deep and rich male voices with solid amounts of chest resonance.

Morsan er et Hav, written and sung by Stefan Sundström, opens with gentle piano and guitar, and you more than sense that this is going to be great. And it is. When the ruffled, worn, yet complex voice enters the soundscape, Sundström visits you right in your living room. It's pained, naked, and completely immersive. The focus is excellent without being overly explicit, and there is a total darkness between the voice and the individual instruments in this very generous soundscape. The sound escapes from the speakers almost completely without resistance and it is made very clear that although the music is slow



and lingering, the touches and transients should not be. The touches on the piano are quick and precise and the sound completely believable.

I also tried Bliss and their Song for Olabi, because it's always interesting to check out how things are at the deeper end of the bass. But here I was distracted quite strongly by the very impressive rendition of percussion. It is rendered



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lightning-fast and with excellent timing, but doesn't seem rushed or over-eager in any way. The bass is deep and proper, but the speaker is not primarily built to go all the way down to the basement, or to move the furniture around the living room, because there's more than enough over 35-40Hz to enjoy. Even though there is never a lack of bass and the speaker never gets too slim and lacks fullness, no matter what kind of music you're playing. You may not be able to save old Rolling Stones records, but hardly anyone can do that.

I also play 2L's recording of Magnificat and track IV. A misericordia. The voice in the opening is languid and cool, and the strings have a beautiful and very detailed string timbre. When the choir enters the picture, the sound on many speakers can blend together a bit, but here it is impressively open, with very many voices in the choir. The large church organ adds a little more to the saturated soundscape, which is so open and transparent that you have the entire church nave stretched out until it ends somewhere far back in the soundscape. The reverberation in the large church nave is impressive, as is the size of the soundscape these speakers set up.

Conclusion

It's not often I've tested speakers where I get a feeling afterwards of having heard something that's a bit new. Maybe not in the big world of high-end speakers, but at least in this price range. Børresen are not exactly beginners, and what the X3 is able to deliver in terms of sound quality is easy to find in their more expensive speakers. Its impressively fast and light playing style is perfectly balanced with the speaker's timbre signature. Even when it's at its most hectic in the rough soundscape, it's never pointed or hard, but surprisingly quite relaxed and characterised by a sober tonal balance that never gets over onto the "wrong" side of neutral.

There is quite a lot to choose from at around NOK 100,000 and there are many speakers with widely different characteristics. Even so, the Børresen X3 stands out as a speaker you absolutely must listen to before buying speakers in this price range.

WE LIKE:

- High precision
- Great dynamics
- Beautifully balanced
- Looks really great
- Fast and tight bass

WE DON'T LIKE:

- Remember that you need a great amplifier
- It is possible to get more bass in this price range

STEREO+ SAY: The Børresen X3 is a fast, dynamic and well-sounding speaker in real high-end packaging.

SCORE





★★★★★

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Børresen X3

Børresen X3	
PRICE:	Kr. 99.000.-
IMPORTER:	Mala Audio
LINK:	www.malaudio.no