

Angstrom Loudspeakers

Suono 600SD On-Wall Speakers



Have you heard the expression, 'three's a crowd'? Imagine that hot date with someone you've just been dying to get to know and then finding out they're bringing their little sibling. Talk about turning a hot date into a cold shower. Similarly, it's that third front speaker in a home theatre surround sound setup, yeah that centre channel, which can sometimes turn your hot home theatre setup into - a crowd. Think about putting your lovely new 75 inch TV above your fireplace mantle; just where does that centre channel go? Mount it below the TV and that places your TV too high. Put that centre speaker above the TV and only the birds will hear it. Sure, you could skip the centre speaker but since most movie tracks are recorded in discrete 5.1 (or more) channels and up to 80 percent of the sound is delivered through the centre channel; you might want to rethink that. And, even if you can squeeze in that centre speaker, your décor conscious self would love a simpler solution. Heck, anything that can reduce the speaker footprint while preserving sonics is, well... magic.

DESIGN & FEATURES

So what would you say about getting two

speakers (left and right) to deliver all three channels of sound - discretely? Magic? Well, Angstrom Loudspeakers, with their Suono 600SD loudspeaker, aims to deliver just such a Houdini act. The Suono 600SD integrates a split centre channel within just two enclosures – a left and a right. Using a matched set of drivers, dedicated to the centre channel sound, in each of the left and right speaker enclosures, it creates a stereophonic centre channel. The result is three channels of discrete audio from just two compact enclosures that can stylishly flank your television. This design aims to provide all the benefits, including a natural spatial effect, well-articulated voices, and a panoramic sound stage, from two speakers – not three. Hey, I think that hot date might be back on.

The Suono 600SD speaker is a compact and svelte design, just 3-inches deep, 7-inches wide and 34-inches high, complementing TVs from 55 inches and up. Each Suono 600SD houses an incredible 6 drivers – including: three 1-inch soft dome tweeters and three 4.5-inch mid-woofers. The speaker has a 6 Ohm impedance, 89 dB sensitivity and 120 watt power handling, making it benign for most home theatre receivers. The 600SD

has a wide useable frequency range of 55Hz to 20KHz (+/- 3dB) and weighs in at 17lbs per speaker. Three finishes are available: black, silver or white, with the matching fabric covers being black, grey or white. Since the Suono 600SD is a sealed design (no bass ports) they do well when mounted on or placed near walls.

The Suono 600SD speaker has a solid build, with clean and contemporary lines. Its high quality gloss finish, snug form-fitting fabric and concealed hardware, makes it as non-intrusive as can be. Removable end-caps, both top and bottom, hide the spring-loaded hook-up terminals. The six drivers, mentioned earlier, are all hidden behind the acoustically transparent fabric and arranged top-to-bottom, as follows: mid-woofer + tweeter within an internal compartment; then, mid-woofer + tweeter + mid-woofer and a last but not least, the side-firing Sound Diffuser tweeter (where the SD in the name comes from), within a second internal compartment. And, let's not forget the 5-year parts and labour warranty.

When it comes to hooking up the Suono 600SD there are a couple of options available, depending on the application. As much as the primary application for the 600SD is the

three front channels in a surround sound setup; the Suono 600SD can also be used in a two-channel stereo music system. Instructions are provided in the box, with clear and simple diagrams for each setup. The stereo hook-up is unique, requiring an extra single-lead jumper between the top and bottom (+ve to -ve) terminals and while easily accomplished, it would have been great to have this hook-up internally wired and switch activated.

PERFORMANCE

A 30-hour break-in is recommended in the Angstrom manual, so I gave the speakers 72+ hours before evaluating them. Using the optional matching Proprietary Plinths, rather than the included wall-mounts, I sat the speakers on my MR24 Target Audio steel stands, just a couple inches away from the rear wall. Stereo evaluations were by way of my Rega Elex-R integrated amp using Tidal HiFi streaming via my MOON by Simaudio 280D DAC / player, while 5.1 surround was evaluated with my Onkyo TX-SR805 AVR. For most of my listening, I paired the Suono 600SD with my Energy ESW-M6 subwoofer.

I began by evaluating the Suono 600D in a stereo two-channel music setup. One album I cued up on Tidal HiFi was Norah Jones, *Come Away With Me*. When done right, Norah Jones sounds sultry and no less than deliciously sensual. I have to admit, I do have a little 'thang' for the way she sings. Giving listen to the Suono 600D a-la-carte, I was happy to hear the clarity, crispness and taught nature of the presentation. Piano keys had up-front impact and the stand-up bass plucks possessed a good measure of immediacy. However, I have to admit, I was not feeling the emotion. There was a lack of body, unsubstantial warmth and the piano notes were tonally incomplete. So I hooked up and dialed in my ESW-M6 subwoofer and like a Pheonix re-born, the Suono 600SD transformed into an entirely different animal. With the subwoofer supporting the lower registers (coming in below 110 Hz) the 600SD was now able to deliver the music with realistic sized images, naturalness of tone and yes, emotion. The soundstage itself gained scale with Norah's voice portrayed with a sense of dimension and roundness. Listening to "Feelin' the Same Way" Norah's voice possessed warmth and body, while the bass line now had realistic weight. I took note of the breadth of the stereo image; well extended, reaching by a considerable amount beyond the outer edges of the

speakers, no doubt attributable to those SD tweeters. Cymbals played on "Come Away With Me" were notably crisp and brassy, with a lifelike shimmer, while the brushes on the drums were substantially detailed. The guitar strings too contained an appreciable amount of texture and delicacy. The reverb around Norah's voice and the intelligibility of her phrasing was capably handled. In short, with the backing of an appropriately setup subwoofer, the Suono 600D could deliver music in a very enjoyable and nuanced manner. If you prefer a matching subwoofer, Angstrom does offer the ALFT10-S150 for \$699 CAD. As well, for dedicated music 2-channel systems, Angstrom offers the Suono 2-way, 2.5-way and 3-way models, priced from \$339 to \$599 CAD / each.

In a home theatre setting, one of the movies that gave me a broad understanding of the performance capabilities of the Angstrom Suono 600SD was the sci-fi movie *Oblivion*. Watching this DTS-HD Blu-ray, I was very impressed with the ability of the 600SD to deliver speech with a very high level of intelligibility. Not only was I able to easily hear every word at reference volumes (85 dB) but this clarity of speech remained even at the lowest volume levels (30dB range). When it comes to hearing every syllable of speech in a movie, I have to say that the 600SD is a star. Though I did notice that sibilants were slightly highlighted but this may be just me nitpicking. Listening to metallic sounds, I was thrilled with their vividness - they sounded crisp, quick and sharp. Special effects sounds too were noticeably crisp and clean. Especially engaging were the flight scenes with the searing engine sounds of the drones and the Bubbleship. The firing of a gun during one of the scenes was amazingly dynamic, literally jolting me in my seat. Drums within the accompanying music of a chase scene proved the Suono 600SD's capability in delivering tight and well-timed sound. Sitting to the left and right of my TV, the Suono speakers cast a generously wide soundfield, extending well beyond the speakers; no doubt in part due to those side firing SD tweeters. Optimal performance was within 20-degrees left/right off centre. Going beyond this point, sounds began to coalesce around the nearest speaker, a little more so than with a traditional three speaker home theatre setup. Moving outside that 40-degree area also had the effect of leaning the tonal balance to the treble, as you began to hear more of the side-firing tweeter in the

mix. In short, the 600SD works best if you don't need to sit too far off to the sides.

Another movie that demonstrated the Angstrom Suono 600SD's capabilities was *Skyfall*. This 007 movie with Daniel Craig features an incredibly dynamic and fast-paced opening act that incorporates a car chase, motorcycle chase, and train-top foot chase, concluding with a sniper shot and Bond going over a waterfall. I was very impressed with the excitement that the 600SD was able bring to this opening act. The sound of the crowd in the streets was fully immersive; the complex mix of noises impressively well delineated. Breaking glass, crumpling metal and crashes were impressively clear and quick sounding. During the transients there did seem to be some accentuation of the upper middle / lower treble frequencies, as the loudest of sharp sounds did come across somewhat harsh. The Suono 600SD favours dynamics and agility to smoothness. I noted that the music and sound effects were well separated, with the speakers being proficient at sorting out a smorgasbord of sonic details to deliver an intelligible soundtrack realistically. Unlike centre channels placed below or above television screens, the Suono 600SD was able to project voices from the centre of the screen at mid-height, much like being at the movie theatres where their centre channel is behind the screen. I did watch the spectacular train crash in *Skyfall*, which the Suono 600SD was able to create with very remarkable power, dynamics, making me replay it at least a couple times for the sheer thrill.

The Angstrom Suono 600SD speaker is an almost miraculous solution for those seeking a higher quality home theatre surround sound experience, without the need for a third front speaker. When properly mated to a subwoofer, they can deliver music and movies in a thrilling manner. Compact, well built, and stylish the Angstrom Suono 600SD might just be the speaker solution you've been waiting to find. □

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Price: \$1,299 CAD / pair