

FRIED MODEL B/II

MANUFACTURER: Fried Products Co., 7617 City Line Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19151

PRICE: \$550 Assembled, \$300 Kit (Does not include wood)

SOURCE: Manufacturer loan

The Fried Model B/2 was obviously created to directly compete in the LS3/5A market; size and pricing being very similar. Comparison with the LS3/5A and JR-149 is inevitable, and will serve as our basis here.

The B/2 should not be confused with its short-lived predecessor, the Model B. The B was a rather dull, unconvincing speaker of questionable value when judged on a sound/dollar basis. The B/2, although outwardly the same, is quite a different story. The B/2 differs from the B, the LS3/5A and JR-149 in that it does not use KEF drivers; consequently providing a very real alternative for the buyer.

The bass of the B/2 is tight and accurate, but does not (subjectively go as low as the LS3/5A. This factor makes the B/2 favor the higher frequencies in the mind of the listener during direct A-B comparisons. The mid bass hump which is engineered in the LS3/5A to provide an illusion of deep bass is not present in the B/2. The Fried Company has chosen to leave the bass frequency response fairly flat because these speakers were designed as two-thirds of a larger system known as the Model H/2. The B/2 becomes the H/2 by adding a Model T subwoofer: a two channel affair containing matched eight foot transmission lines.

The midrange of the B/2 is very smooth and highly detailed. Impact and transient capability is better than the LS3/5A and much better than the

JR-149. On the other hand, the LS3/5A and JR are more accurate in tone quality, but only at lower levels. At high volume levels the B/2 clearly outclasses its competition. The B/2 will perform well in large rooms, the others won't.

In the treble, the B/2 is very fast, and seemingly more extended than the LS3/5A. It is also sensitive to associated system components in this area, and will pass through the glare of an improperly mounted cartridge or the grain of a poor preamp section without mercy. The LS3/5A and JR are not sensitive in this way.

The B/2 combines the wide stage imaging of the JR with the pinpoint placement of the LS3/5A in a very pleasant compromise. The vast depth of the JR is not captured, but in general, the listening panel preferred the B/2 on most material.

As we go to press we are in possession of a Model T subwoofer. Our thoughts on the B/2-T combination will appear next issue. We have also just received a B/2 update bulletin from the Fried Company. It concerns rounding off the cabinet edges near the tweeter (the drivers are flush mounted) for improved spatial characteristics and more accurate sound, also to be reported on next issue.

A note on the attitude of the Fried Company toward its customers. To our knowledge Fried is the only loudspeaker manufacturer who actively notifies its dealers and customers of improvements, and supplies parts and full instructions for the upgrading of older models. We like the idea of our loudspeakers not being obsoleted by technology advances — very *Sensible*.