



Musical Fidelity M2si £800



NEW DIRECTION

The acquisition of the Musical Fidelity brand by Pro-Ject was one of the more unexpected industry events of 2018. For the moment, the equipment on sale by Pro-Ject is largely a continuation of the old range, but now being overseen by the Austrian-based company. The M2si is not a wholly new product, but is instead a revised M3i that Pro-Ject has been able to influence and bring its production know-how to the manufacturing process to enable it to hit the £800 price point. UK distributor Henley Audio has stressed the importance of maintaining the values that have traditionally been associated with the Musical Fidelity name and has indicated that completely new designs will start to filter through from the end of this year and on into 2020.

Eschewing digital, this integrated instead chooses to concentrate its efforts on its analogue performance

DETAILS

- PRODUCT**
Musical Fidelity M2si
- ORIGIN**
Austria/Taiwan
- TYPE**
Integrated amplifier
- WEIGHT**
9.2kg
- DIMENSIONS (WxHxD)**
440 x 100 x 400mm
- FEATURES**
 - Quoted power output: 2x 76W (8ohm)
 - Inputs: 5x RCA (1x switchable home theatre); 1x tape loop
- DISTRIBUTOR**
Henley Audio Ltd.
- TELEPHONE**
01235 511166
- WEBSITE**
musicalfidelity.com

Given that the M2si is the first new product to arrive on the market since Musical Fidelity was purchased by Pro-Ject last year and the newest amp in the test, it is ironic that its spec is the most 'old-school' of the group. It sports five line inputs – one of which can be switched for use with home cinema systems – and there's a tape loop and a preamp output. That's your lot. No digital inputs, phono stage or headphone socket here. As one of the most expensive amps in the test, it initially seems rather limited.

Musical Fidelity's reasoning for the M2si's sparse functionality is that its power handling capabilities seek to better its price rivals. The claimed 2x 76W power output isn't the highest here, but it is backed up by a current delivery rated at 25A (the Audiolab claims up to 9A) and an equally impressive damping factor figure meaning that, on paper at least, it has by far the greatest scope for handling challenging speaker loads.

It is also extremely well made. The casework is hefty and carefully assembled and feels very solid. The volume control has a lovely action and there is the ability to directly select every input as well as a

reasonably well laid-out remote control that can also be used for operating the matching CD player.

Sound quality

The M2si hits the test level effortlessly with ample power in reserve on the pleasantly linear volume control. The good news is that the performance is so much more than just a blunt object. While there is a constant feeling of power to the way that it makes music, it never comes at the expense of finesse.

No Diggity is delivered with an effortless level of drive and timing, latching onto the beat and engaging on an emotional as well as a cerebral level. Oli Brown's vocals are rich and detailed and complement the guitar work perfectly. This is also apparent with *Obsessions*. The M2si cuts through the slightly veiled quality that affects the production and reproduces Marina Diamandis' superb vocal turn with a clarity that eludes some of the other amps here.

The performance with the Florestan Trio is even better and realistically the best in the test. The reserves of power that the Musical Fidelity offers allow it to give the piano a sense of scale and sheer presence that is very

compelling. The partnering cello in particular also has a weight and richness that brings it to prominence in the mix. The final piece of the puzzle is that the M2si is perfectly happy to enjoy itself. It handles *Sympathy* with its customary realism and space (adding excellent bass to its list of attributes as it does so), but above all it does this with a genuine sense of fun and emotion, making for a very easy integrated to listen to for long periods ●



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

- SOUND QUALITY**
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Superb sonic performance; build; old-school looks
- VALUE FOR MONEY**
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Limited specification in the context of the group
- BUILD QUALITY**
★★★★★ **WE SAY:** Analogue-only integrated with a superb sound, but some rivals do more
- FEATURES**
★★★★☆

OVERALL

