JOHN ATKINSON

Marten Parker Trio Diamond

LOUDSPEAKER

2020 may not have been a year to celebrate, but there were some housebound highlights. For example, after I had finished with the measurements to accompany Michael Fremer's review of the Marten Oscar Duo in the November 2020 issue,[1] I set up these Swedish two-way standmounts in my own listening room. Yes, the measured performance was excellent, but I was not expecting how much I would enjoy the sound of the Oscar Duos. At $6995/pair, this is not an inexpensive speaker, but it rivaled the stereo imaging produced by my reference KEF LS50, played louder than the diminutive KEF without strain, and offered another octave of low frequencies. As MF concluded in his review: "Designer Leif Olofsson has threaded the needle, producing a small speaker that can produce prodigious bass (or at least bass that *sounds* prodigious) with composure at relatively high SPLs, without muddying up the midrange."

The Oscar Duos went back to the distributor last October, but as the new year dawned, Marten's new Parker Trio tower loudspeakers ($19,990/pair) arrived chez moi. I unpacked the Trios, set them up, experimented with positioning, listened a while, then packed them up again. It turned out that the stainless steel outrigger bases didn't have the correct-sized holes tapped into them for the mandatory Marten Isolators. Rather than replace the outriggers, Marten decided instead to send me the "Diamond Edition" version of the Parker Trio. This considerably more expensive version—$36,990/pair—replaces the regular Trio's ceramic-dome tweeter with one that uses a dome formed from pure diamond—presumably vapor-deposited—higher-quality crossover components, improved cable terminals, and Jorma's top-of-the-range Statement internal cabling.

On with the show.

1 See stereophile.com/content/marten-oscar-duo-loudspeaker.

SPECIFICATIONS

Description 2.5-way, floorstanding loudspeaker. Drive-units: 1" (25.4mm) diamond-dome tweeter, two 7.5" (190.5mm) ceramic-cone woofers, two 9" (229mm) aluminum-diaphragm passive radiators. Crossover frequency: 2.2kHz. Frequency response: 26Hz–40kHz ±2dB. Nominal impedance: 6 ohms. Minimum impedance: 3.1 ohms. Sensitivity: 91dB/2.83V/m. Power handling: 300W. Terminals: single-wired WBT. Internal wiring: Jorma Statement. Supplied accessories: outrigger supports, Marten IsoPuck isolators, and a burn-in CD.
Dimensions 46" (1170mm) H × 11" (280mm) W × 14.2" (360mm) D. Weight: 89lb (40kg) each.
Finish Matte walnut, Piano walnut, or Piano black, with mirror-polished chrome inlays.
Serial numbers of units reviewed 20103001A & B. "Designed and manufactured in Sweden."
Price $36,990/pair. Approximate number of dealers: 11. Warranty: Limited, transferrable.
Manufacturer
Marten AB,
Flöjelbergsgatan 18, 43137
Mölndal, Sweden.
Tel: (46) 31-20-72-00
Web: marten.se.
US distributor: VANA Ltd.,
Nesconset, New York.
Tel: (631) 960-5242.
Web: vanaltd.com.

The Parker Trio Diamond

Like all of Marten's speaker lines, the Trio pays homage to a legendary jazz musician, in this case Charlie Parker. This is an elegant-looking tower, standing 45" high on its two chromed stainless steel outrigger bases with the Isolators installed. The enclosure tapers from its back to the front and is constructed from a proprietary, self-damped, laminated material that Marten calls "M-Board." The review samples were hand-finished in a matte walnut veneer.

The Parker Trio is a "2.5-way" design, with the lower of the two 7.5" woofers rolling off earlier than the upper one. The latter crosses over to the 1" diamond-dome tweeter at 2.2kHz using Marten's "Multi-Slope" crossover technology. The tweeter sits behind a mesh grille in a chromed stainless steel sub-baffle. Below it are the two woofers, mounted vertically inline and covered with metal-mesh grilles. Engineered by Marten's Leif Olofsson, these use ceramic cones and substantial half-roll rubber surrounds. The woofers are modestly claimed by Marten to be "superior to any similar drivers currently available, at any price." Reflex loading is provided by two 9" aluminum-diaphragm passive radiators mounted on the rear of the cabinet, these also covered with mesh grilles. Electrical connection is via a single pair of chromed binding posts at the base of the rear panel.

Marten's IsoPuck feet are designed by IsoAcoustics and incorporate a compliant layer that, in combination with the speaker's mass, acts as a low-pass filter to absorb higher-frequency noise in the enclosure and prevent it from being transmitted to the floor. Jim Austin discussed how the IsoAcoustics feet work in October 2020 and was impressed by the improvement they gave with a pair of Revel Ultima Salon2 speakers.[2]

Setup & system

Marten includes a CD with a sweep tone to break in the Parker Trios. The hardbound manual says to play this track

2 See stereophile.com/content/isoacoustics-gaia-loudspeaker-isolation-feet-jim-austin-october-2020.

MEASUREMENTS

I used DRA Labs' MLSSA system and a calibrated DPA 4006 microphone to measure the Marten Parker Trio Diamond Edition's frequency response in the farfield, and an Earthworks QTC-40 mike for the nearfield and in-room responses. I measured the speaker's impedance with Dayton Audio's DATS V2 system.

Usually, I measure loudspeakers in our backyard, weather permitting, or in our living room with the furniture pushed to the sides. This eliminates or moves back in time the reflections of the speaker's output. However, as this loudspeaker was too heavy for me to move outside or upstairs to the living room, I performed the quasi-anechoic measurements in my basement listening room. I managed to maneuver one of the speakers, standing on its IsoPuck bases, onto a small, wheeled dolly and rolled it forward so that it was aimed across the room's diagonal and was as distant as possible from the nearest sidewall. However, the proximity of room boundaries, the floor in particular, meant that I had to window the time-domain data a little more aggressively than I usually do. This reduces the measurements' resolution in the midrange. The geometry of my listening room also meant that I could only measure the horizontal dispersion over a ±45° angle rather than my usual ±90°.

While Marten specifies the Trio Diamond's sensitivity as a high 91dB/2.83V/m, my estimate was significantly lower, at 86dB(B)/2.83V/m. (I noticed I had to set the volume control about 3dB lower than when I listened to the 83dB-sensitive Falcon Gold Badge LS3/5a's Herb Reichert reviewed in the April issue for the same perceived volume, which subjectively corroborates the measurement.) The Trio Diamond's impedance is specified as 6 ohms with a minimum magnitude of 3.1 ohms. According to my measurements, the impedance magnitude (fig.1, solid trace) remains above 4 ohms over most of the audioband, with minimum values of 3.3 ohms between 110Hz and 120Hz and at 2.9kHz. The electrical phase angle (dashed trace) is occasionally high, which means that the EPDR[1] drops to 2 ohms between 64 and 111Hz and between 1.7kHz and 2.8kHz, with a minimum value of 1.5 ohms at 83Hz and 2.2kHz. The Trio Diamond Edition should be used with amplifiers that don't have problems driving 4 ohms.

1 EPDR is the resistive load that gives rise to the same peak dissipation in an amplifier's output devices as the loudspeaker. See "Audio Power Amplifiers for Loudspeaker Loads," *JAES*, Vol.42 No.9, September 1994, and stereophile.com/reference/707heavy/index.html.

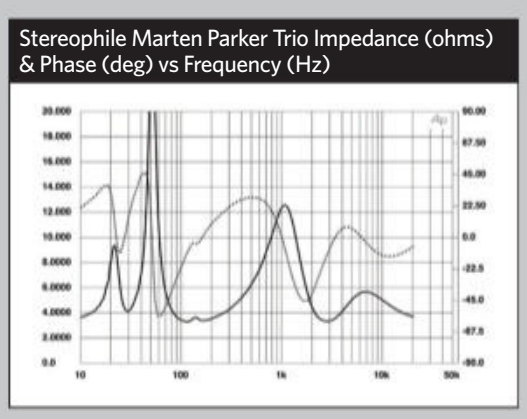

Fig.1 Marten Parker Trio Diamond, electrical impedance (solid) and phase (dashed) (2 ohms/vertical div.).

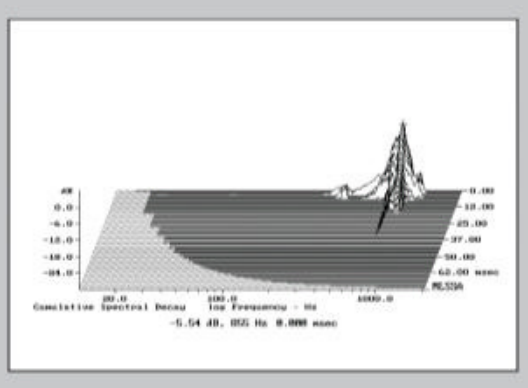

Fig.2 Marten Parker Trio Diamond, cumulative spectral-decay plot calculated from output of accelerometer fastened to center of side panel level with upper woofer (MLS driving voltage to speaker, 7.55V; measurement bandwidth, 2kHz).

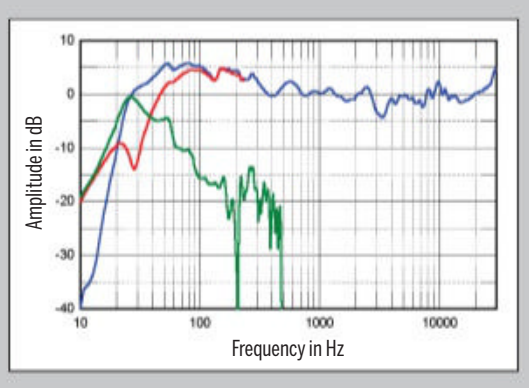

Fig.3 Marten Parker Trio Diamond, anechoic response on tweeter axis at 50", averaged across 30° horizontal window and corrected for microphone response, with the summed nearfield responses of the woofers (red) and passive radiators (blue), and the complex sum of their nearfield responses, respectively plotted below 300Hz, 500Hz, and 300Hz.

on repeat for at least 24 hours before experimenting with placement and warns that the loudspeakers won't sound their best for another 200 hours of playing music! Fortunately, and unlike the first pair of Parker Trios, the Diamond Edition speakers had been fully broken in before I received them. Nevertheless, there was a slightly lean quality to the lower midrange that gradually dissipated over the first week of using the Martens for noncritical listening.

I initially placed the Martens where the Sonus Faber Lumina IIIs I reviewed in the April issue had worked well in my slightly asymmetrical room. Though they are reflex-loaded towers, for their low frequencies to be fully developed, the Sonus Fabers needed to be placed closer to the wall behind them than I could manage in my room. (The two steps up to the vestibule behind the right-hand speaker don't allow me to move speakers any closer.) The Martens, however, offered low-frequency weight and extension in these positions, and I didn't need to experiment very much with placement.

Each speaker's front baffle ended up 77" from the wall behind it and 142" from the listening position. The woofers of the left-hand Trio Diamond were 35" from the LPs that line the nearest sidewall; the right-hand speaker's woofers were 47" from the bookshelves that line *its* sidewall. Even though I had toed in the Trios to the listening position, the sound was a little on the sweet side unless I sat bolt upright. When I sit in my listening chair, my ears are 36" from the floor, which is significantly below the Trio Diamonds' tweeters, which, with the speakers sitting on the outriggers and Isolators, were 42" high. I therefore placed ½"-thick, circular aluminum plates under the rear Isolators, which tilted the speakers forward a little so that I could just see along the sloped top of each enclosure. This brought the Martens' top octave into an optimal balance with the mid-treble region.

The music source was my Roon Nucleus+ powered by an HDPlex linear power supply loaned to me by Jason Victor Serinus (a worthwhile upgrade, I have found). One of two

measurements, continued

Other than a small bump centered on 140Hz, the traces in fig.1 are free from the small discontinuities that would imply resonances of some kind, but when I investigated the enclosure's vibrational behavior with a plastic-tape accelerometer, I did find some resonant modes. The strongest of these was at 855Hz on the sidewalls level with the upper woofer (fig.2). There was also a lower-level mode lower down on the sidewall and on the top and back panels. But because all these modes have both a relatively high frequency and a high Q (Quality Factor), it is unlikely they will color the Trio's sound. The metallic ringing sound I heard when I rapped my knuckles on the enclosure's sidewalls turned out to be due to the metal grilles that cover the woofers and passive radiators, the latter in particular. However, because the radiating area of these grilles is minuscule, this ringing will be innocuous.

The saddle centered on 29Hz in the impedance magnitude trace suggests that this is the tuning frequency of the passive radiators. The minimum-motion notch in the woofers' summed output (fig.3, red trace), which is when the back pressure from the reflex resonance holds the woofer cone still, lies at the same frequency. There is a small suckout in the woofer's output at the frequency of the impedance magnitude bump, which implies some kind of internal antiresonance in this region. The passive radiators' summed output (fig.3, green trace; both behave identically) has one peak centered on the tuning frequency of 29Hz and another an octave higher. The upper-frequency rolloff is initially clean, though some low-level hash can be seen between 200Hz and 500Hz. As the radiators fire to the rear of the loudspeaker, I doubt this behavior will have audible consequences.

Looking at the nearfield outputs of the individual woofers reveals that the lower woofer starts to roll off above 300Hz, its output at 1kHz lying 10dB below that of the upper woofer. The blue trace below 300Hz in fig.3 is the complex sum of the nearfield woofer and passive radiator responses, with the latter's acoustic phase compensating for the fact that they are on the Parker Trio's rear. There is the usual peak in the upper bass due to the nearfield measurement technique, but the Trio definitely offers extended low frequencies. The Marten's farfield response, averaged across a 30° horizontal window centered on the tweeter axis (fig.3, blue trace above 300Hz), is even but with a slight lack of energy at the bottom of the tweeter's passband. This suckout was a little deeper with S/N 20103001B than it was with 'A. The tweeter's on-axis response starts to rise above the audioband, reaching a peak near 35kHz.

Fig.4 shows the Trio Diamond's horizontal dispersion, normalized to the response on the tweeter axis, which thus appears as a straight line. This graph reveals that the small dip in

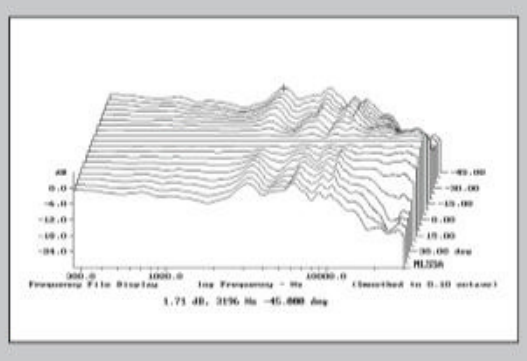

Fig.4 Marten Parker Trio Diamond, lateral response family at 50", normalized to response on tweeter axis, from back to front: differences in response 45°–5° off axis, reference response, differences in response 5°–45° off axis.

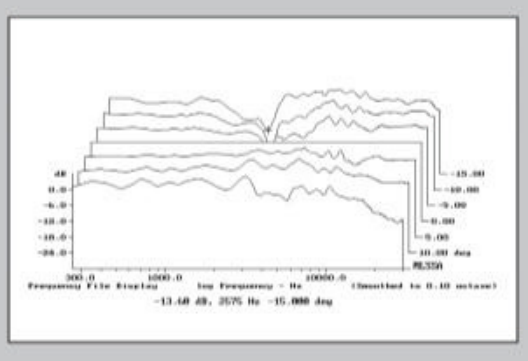

Fig.5 Marten Parker Trio Diamond, vertical response family at 50", normalized to response on tweeter axis, from back to front: differences in response 15°–5° above axis, reference response, differences in response 5°–15° below axis.

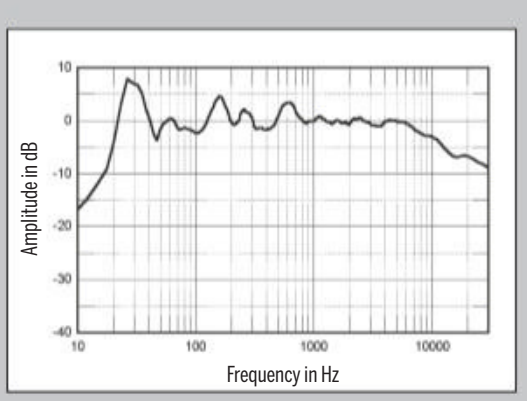

Fig.6 Marten Parker Trio Diamond, spatially averaged, 1/6-octave response in JA's listening room.

DACs—the MBL N31 or the PS Audio DirectStream—was fed audio data over my network. Amplification was the Pass Labs XP-32 preamplifier that I reviewed in the March 2021 issue and a pair of Parasound Halo JC 1+ monoblocks.

Listening

As always, before I used music for my critical auditioning of the Parker Trio Diamonds, I listened to the test tone files I created for my *Editor's Choice* CD (Stereophile STPH016-2). The dual-mono pink noise track sounded smooth, and its image was appropriately narrow and stable, with no "splashing" to the sides at any frequency. The Trio Diamonds reproduced the 1/3-octave warble tones on *Editor's Choice* with good power down to the 25Hz band, with the 32Hz warble boosted by the lowest room mode. The 20Hz warble was *just* audible at my usual listening level. The half-step–spaced tonebursts on *Editor's Choice* spoke cleanly and evenly down to 32Hz, the frequency of the lowest one.

Listening to the enclosure with a stethoscope while these tonebursts played, I could hear some low-level liveliness between 500Hz and 1kHz. I could also hear a faint metallic ringing when I rapped the sidewalls with my knuckles. As I mention in the "Measurements" sidebar, this turned out to be coming from the metal-mesh grilles.

Test tones and knuckle raps are all very well, but it's the music a speaker makes that matters.

Belatedly watching that wonderful movie *Yesterday* had me hankering for some Fab Four. I cued up The Beatles' *Love* (24/96 ALAC, ripped from DVD-A, Apple/Capitol 3 79810 2 5). It's been many years since I listened to this album, and the transparency of the Parker Trio Diamonds drew me deep into George and Giles Martin's remixes. The opener, "Because," features the vocal track sans backing other than assorted ambient sounds at the very rear of the

measurements, continued

the lower treble in the on-axis response fills in to the speaker's sides, though the tweeter's output falls off rapidly off-axis. In the vertical plane (fig.5), a suckout in the crossover region develops more 5° above the tweeter axis, but the top-octave response doesn't drop off below the tweeter axis as much as I was expecting from my auditioning.

Fig.6 shows the Marten Parker Trio Diamond Edition's spatially averaged response in my room. (The spatial averaging[2] tends to average out the peaks and dips below 400Hz that are due to the room's resonant modes.) With its extended low frequencies, the Trio Diamonds maximally excite the lowest frequency mode in my room, but other than some small peaks in the upper bass and midrange, the balance at the listening position is impressively even, especially in the low and mid-treble. The Trios' output in the top two octaves slopes smoothly down; as I have written before, a loudspeaker that offers a flat on-axis response and well-controlled lateral dispersion gives a gently sloped-down treble in the spatially averaged room response due to the increased absorption of the room's furnishings and the narrowing of the tweeter's radiation pattern at high frequencies.

The standard Trios gave a very similar spatially averaged response from 40Hz to 12kHz in my room (not shown) but with a little more energy above 16kHz, and they didn't excite the lowest mode to the same extent as the Diamond Edition. Fig.7 compares the Parker Trio Diamond's spatially averaged response (red trace) with that of the Marten Oscar Duo (blue trace).[3] The two loudspeakers behave similarly in the midrange. The Oscar Duos' top-octave output is a little higher in level than the Parker Trio Diamonds'. The Trio Diamonds have a smoother in-room response throughout the treble.

In the time domain, the Trio Diamond's step response on the tweeter axis (fig.8) reveals that the tweeter is connected in inverted acoustic polarity, the woofers in positive polarity. (I confirmed this by looking at the step responses of the individual drive-units.) The decay of the tweeter's step smoothly blends with the positive-going start of the upper woofer's step, suggesting optimal crossover design. There is a second low-frequency arrival around 0.5ms after the first, which may be due to the lower woofer. The Trio Diamond's cumulative spectral-decay plot (fig.9) is generally clean, though there are some decays of resonant energy visible in the lower treble. The decay is also slightly hashy-looking between 7kHz and 11kHz; I suspect that this is due to early reflections from the grille that covers the tweeter rather than to actual resonances.

The Marten Parker Trio Diamond Edition offers generally excellent measured performance. **—John Atkinson**

2 Using the FuzzMeasure 3.0 program, a Metric Halo MIO2882 FireWire-connected audio interface, and a 96kHz sample rate, I average 20 1/6-octave–smoothed spectra, individually taken for the left and right speakers, in a rectangular grid 36" wide by 18" high and centered on the positions of my ears.

3 See stereophile.com/content/marten-oscar-duo-loudspeaker-measurements.

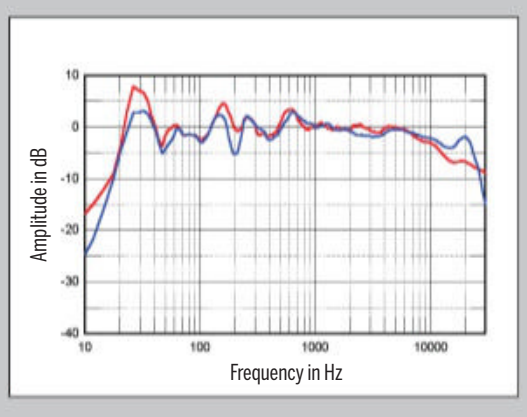

Fig.7 Marten Parker Trio Diamond, spatially averaged, 1/6-octave response in JA's listening room (red) and of the Marten Oscar Duo (blue).

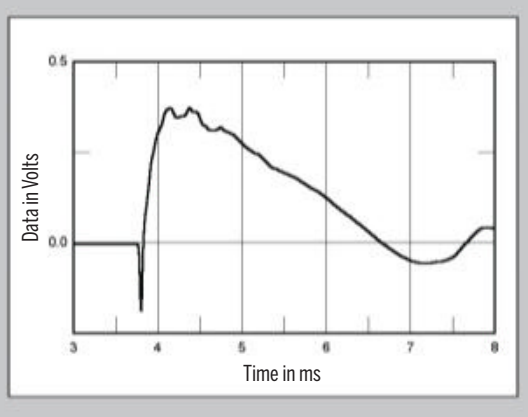

Fig.8 Marten Parker Trio Diamond, step response on tweeter axis at 50" (5ms time window, 30kHz bandwidth).

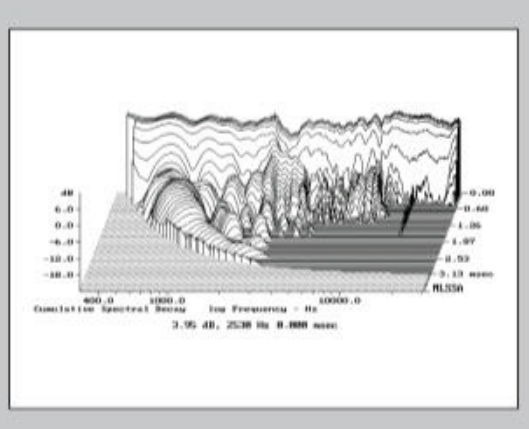

Fig.9 Marten Parker Trio Diamond, cumulative spectral-decay plot on tweeter axis at 50" (0.15ms risetime).

soundstage. As should be the case when a pair of high-end speakers are optimally set up, the Trio Diamonds disappeared, replaced by the images of those glorious voices—no Autotune half a century ago—spread between and behind the speakers within a dome of subtle reverb.

These Martens *loved* voices. On "John Henry," from *WomanChild* (16/44.1k FLAC, Mack Avenue/Tidal), Cécile McLorin Salvant was in the room with me, her image hanging in space between and slightly in front of the speakers. Richard Lehnert's speaking voice as he introduced the channel ID and phase tracks on *Editor's Choice* was reproduced without coloration. I noted in the track with the channels out of phase that Richard's phantom image was stably positioned to my left, well beyond the position of the left-hand speaker. I usually experience this phenomenon with time-coincident speakers; the Parker Trio's stereo imaging capability is superbly accurate.

Male voice tends to be revealing of problems in the lower midrange. To investigate problems in the *upper* midrange, I reach for piano recordings, where the sparseness of the frequencies in this region means that there is very little masking. A favorite piano recording is Mitsuko Uchida's 2010 performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.4 with Simon Rattle conducting the Berlin Philharmonic (24/48k FLAC, Berliner Philharmoniker BPHR 180241). The sound of Uchida's piano was clean and uncolored, and, as she ran her fingers up and down the keyboard just after the start of the cadenza in the first movement, no notes stuck out beyond the others.

However, while the Parker Trios' diamond tweeters never drew attention to themselves with the Beethoven concerto, the top octaves sounding clean and clear, I felt that the low treble sounded a little more forward than I anticipated from the vocal recordings. Playing "My Man's Gone Now" from Miles Davis's 1981 album *We Want Miles* (16/44.1k ALAC, ripped from a Columbia CD), which admittedly has rough-sounding highs, corroborated this feeling. The Pass Labs preamplifier is superbly transparent, but what vestigial signature it has is too similar to that of the Parker Trio Diamond. Connecting the MBL DAC directly to the Parasound amplifiers evened out the low treble. Without the preamp, though, the lower mids became a touch too warm.

Continuing my auditioning with this change in the setup, I focused on the low frequencies. My Fender bass guitar on the *Editor's Choice* tracks sounded well-defined, without any upper-bass boom. And again, the image of the out-of-phase instrument was unambiguously placed well beyond the position of the left-hand speaker.

Speaking of bass guitar: The Martens reproduced the young Marcus Miller's fuzzed instrument on "My Man's Gone Now" very well; Roon's Radio function followed this with Brian Bromberg's "Teen Town" from *Jaco*, his tribute to the late bass guitar genius Jaco Pastorius (16/44.1k FLAC, Mack Avenue/Tidal). Bromberg duets with himself on this track, playing the melody at half-speed on a full-bodied double bass and interjecting double-speed bass guitar lines. Both instruments were presented by the Parker Trios with superb weight *and* clarity. This was also true with the high-level kickdrum and double bass on Cécile McLorin Salvant's "John Henry." Too often, reflex-loaded speakers lack clarity in the midbass, but this was not the case with the Trios.

Unlike the small standmount speakers that work well in my room, which is why I like them, the Marten Parker Trio Diamonds got the physical scale of larger-scale music right, including orchestral recordings. As I was writing this review, Editor Jim Austin sent me a preview of Rob Schryer's review of Focal's Aria K2 936 loudspeaker (see p.38). Rob mentions using the excerpt from my 1984 recording of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* that appears on *Stereophile*'s no-longer-available *Test CD 2* (STPH004-2).

I had been invited by the later Peter J. Walker of Quad to record this performance by his local orchestra accompanying no fewer than 200 singers in England's Ely Cathedral, in a performance celebrating the 50th anniversary of the composer's death. I was eagerly anticipating making the recording in the cathedral's superbly supportive acoustic and had scoped out what I felt would be the optimal position for Calrec's then-new Soundfield single-point microphone. Using the controller for the microphone's four capsules, I was able to synthesize a crossed, coincident pair of figure-8 microphones to make the stereo recording. However, when I arrived to set up my gear, the cathedral staff insisted that I had to place the microphone 12' above conductor Christopher Brown's head.

As you can imagine, this position gave a very wide-angle view of the performers.[3] This is exactly what I heard with the Marten Parker Trio Diamonds. The three vocal soloists, who were to the left and right of the conductor beneath the microphone, were set at the front of the soundstage, their positions stable and unambiguous. The orchestra appeared farther back, with every instrument or group of instruments again well-defined in space. The huge choir was spread left to right at the far rear of the soundstage. The accuracy of the imaging offered by these Martens was impressive.

I haven't mentioned dynamics. I kept being tempted to play music loud, though this meant that the huge bass drum hit 12 minutes before the end of Part Two of *Gerontius* scared the heck out of my cats, who were dozing on top of the speakers. The organ's low-frequency pedal notes in this work, played by the cathedral's music director, Arthur Wills, shook my room's walls.

The extended low end was not always a boon. The slow movement of my favorite recording of Elgar's *Serenade for Strings*, with Sir Adrian Boult conducting the London Philharmonic (16/44.1k ALAC, ripped from CD, EMI Classics 64013), was recorded in London's Kingsway Hall and is therefore plagued with noise from the nearby subway. The Parker Trios let me hear clearly how much rumble accompanies the music!

Conclusion

Neutrally balanced with extended lows, an uncolored midrange, clean, transparent highs, and stable, accurate stereo imaging, Marten's Parker Trio Diamond Edition is one of the best-sounding full-range loudspeakers I have auditioned in my room. Yes, at $36,990/pair it is expensive, but the Parker Trio Diamond rivals significantly pricier floorstanders from Göbel, Magico, and Tidal that I have reviewed in the past few years as well as the similarly priced models from Rockport and Vimberg.[4] It is fair to note that the regular Trio gets close to the performance of the Diamond Edition in the midrange and bass, and if you have a room that is the same size as mine or smaller, Marten's Oscar Duo will give you a taste of what the pricier Martens offer. But that diamond tweeter is something special indeed. ■

ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT

Analog source Linn Sondek LP12 turntable with Lingo power supply, Linn Ekos tonearm, Linn Arkiv B cartridge, Channel D Seta L phono preamplifier.
Digital sources Roon Nucleus+ file server with HDPlex 200 linear power supply; Ayre Acoustics C-5xe^{MP} universal player; PS Audio PerfectWave DirectStream D/A processor and MBL N31 CD player/DAC, Ayre Acoustics QA-9 A/D converter.
Preamplifier Pass Labs XP-32.
Power amplifiers Parasound Halo JC 1+ monoblocks.
Cables Digital: AudioQuest Vodka (Ethernet), AudioQuest Coffee (USB), DH Labs (1m, AES/EBU), Esperanto (S/PDIF). Interconnect: AudioQuest Wild Blue (balanced). Speaker: AudioQuest K2. AC: AudioQuest Dragon Source & High Current, manufacturers' own.
Accessories Target TT-5 equipment racks; Ayre Acoustics Myrtle Blocks; ASC Tube Traps, RPG Abffusor panels; AudioQuest Niagara 5000 Low-Z Power/Noise-Dissipation System (amplifiers) and AudioQuest Niagara 1000 Low-Z Power/Noise-Dissipation System (source components). AudioQuest Fog Lifters cable supports. AC power comes from two dedicated 20A circuits, each just 6' from breaker box.
Room 20' (left side), 25' (right side) × 16' × 8'. —**John Atkinson**

3 See the photos at stereophile.com/content/istereophileis-test-cd-2-track-13.

4 The Rockport Avior costs $40,500/pair. The Vimberg Mino costs $31,000–$38,500/pair depending on finish.