

# Review Vienna Acoustics Beethoven Baby Grand Reference

by Jaap Veenstra | February 5, 2021

## Pros

Very complete reproduction  
Dynamic  
Beautifully made

## Cons

Doesn't always match  
Midrange a bit reticent



## Intro

***It's quite a mouthful: Vienna Acoustics Beethoven Baby Grand Reference. But then again: we are talking about a serious speaker here. Now Austria – yes, Vienna Acoustics comes from Vienna, of course – is also a very serious country. And Vienna is a city with a lot of musical history. So not entirely surprisingly, the names fit with that. Does this Beethoven Baby Grand Reference play as seriously as the name suggests?***

Vienna Acoustics has a number of series in its product range: Strauss Series, Concert Grand Series, Imperial Series and the Klimt Series. The first two series bear a name in the line of music.

The speakers also have a musical name. The Imperial Series and Klimt series deviate from that. After all, Klimt is a painter. Within the Imperial Series we do have pianist Liszt.

## Beethoven

Beethoven needs no introduction, we think. This speaker does. There are two versions of the Beethoven: the Baby Grand Reference and the Grand Reference. The Grand without 'baby' has a slightly larger woofer and an extra woofer. And therefore the cabinet is also slightly larger. Now the Baby Grand with two 6-inch woofers already goes down to 33 Hz. The 'normal' Grand picks up an extra 5 Hz and goes all the way down to 28 Hz. These are serious figures if you ask us. Because they are not really big with 260 x 1095 x 330mm. Just over a meter high. And they remain slim.

## Finishing

We have a set in beautiful Rosewood. Cherry, Piano black and Piano white are also possible. Our Rosewood definitely looks very good. And the finish overall is also sublime. No crooked seams, discoloration or other misses. The base (foot) is an ingenious system. You – or your dealer – screw two brackets under the speaker (it needs six screws in total). In them you can screw the thick spikes (there are cups to protect the floor). The height is very easy to adjust, so the speaker is always stable. Smart system and it looks great too.

## Drivers

The new Vienna Acoustics features Vienna's patented drivers: the Flat X4P Spidercone. The center cone is recessed: so there is no bulging in the middle of the unit. The tweeter is a soft dome that has received a special coating. The Spidercone has been developed by Vienna Acoustics and is also manufactured near Vienna. This new unit should give an impressive frequency response. Despite its relatively small dimensions (6 and 7 inches).



To conclude: the Beethoven Baby Grand Reference is a three-way bass reflex speaker. The range is 33 Hz – 23,000 Hz. Sensitivity is 89dB, which is quite high. The crossover is a 6dB and 12dB Bessel filter.



## The test setup



We had Vienna Acoustics play on both our own reference system, and on a complete NAIM system.

Reference set	NAIM system (review to follow)
Pass Labs XP-12	NAIM 552 pre-amp
Bryston 4B SST3	NAIM 555 streamer
Metrum Acoustics Pavane	NAIM 300 power-amp
Metrum Acoustics Ambre	All powered separately
Grimm TPM cabling	
Audioquest power-cords	
Kemp Powerstrip 8plus	

## The Sound

Although the Vienna's are quite easy to drive, the match on the NAIM set is frankly not ideal. We hear just too much dynamics, punch and energy. Is that possible? Yes it is... it comes across as a bit intrusive. The Pass with Bryston is a bit calmer. And that is necessary, because the treble can also be a bit fresh. Not sharp – certainly not – but fresh. Just like our Focals can be a bit fresh sounding on some systems. So be careful not to match an overenthusiastic system with

these speakers. That could become a little too much of a good thing. Although that's also a matter of taste. Well... that's been said.

## Space

What is enormously striking on both systems is the space that this set of floorstanders puts down. It plays *very* large. Without any problem this duo manages to fill the room with music, which is just wonderful. We are really carried away by the artist. Our recent discovery –

Gazpacho – Fireworker – is a great album. Both musically and in terms of recording. Space Cowboy is a masterpiece. Sapien too. Long songs... but to us it feels like a few minutes. And only a system that doesn't get boring can achieve that.



## Dynamics

What also adds to the experience is the unprecedented dynamics these speakers can handle. Boy! It just keeps going. Both on micro and macro level. So now we have to pay a little attention in doing so, as previously reported. On the Pass with Bryston it goes almost perfectly and we hear a solid foundation with nice bass kicks. Not overdone. Just rich and round. Our friend Jacques puts those punches in nicely. And the Vienna doesn't let go of control. Neat.

On the NAIM, it goes a little too far... there's too much bass kick. A bit of the effect of a sleeper car; a Volkswagen Golf with a Lamborghini engine. Cool... but not always. Although we can't really compare the Vienna Acoustics to a VW Golf of course.

## Complete

It is sometimes difficult to find the right words for a certain sound. Especially if English is not your native language. But let's try.



The Vienna's come across as very complete. From bass to treble is all present. And that is what the specifications – and later our measurements – show. In Massive Attack's Angel we notice the very low bass. With a lot of detail too. That Spidercone is no nonsense. In the top-end we also hear enough air and sparkle. Slightly less 'air' than our Focals, but that is not surprising, given the tweeter design and technology. It really is totally different.

What is a bit weird, however, is the piece towards the treble. That area from 1000 to say 5000 Hz. Voices come through very calm. But they seem to lack some brilliance compared to our orange two-way monitor. This has of course also to do with the 'getting used to' a system, but we have some training behind us by now. And we also seem to notice some tuning. We will show this in some measurements later on.



It is not disturbing by the way. Our ears are much more sensitive to peaks than to dips. And overall it is about +/- 1 to 1.5 db when we measure at the listening position and then mean it. In short: it will probably bring some enthusiasts that piece of quiet they crave.

## Conclusion

The Austrians are quite capable. That much is clear now. The finish of the Beethoven Baby Grand Reference is sublime. The woodwork, the base, the self-designed and in Austria manufactured units; top quality.

The matching with this floorstander is not self-evident. On the Bryston and Pass it goes well, on the NAIM system not really. Especially the bass and the dynamics are too much of a good thing on the British creation. The overall sound and presentation is dynamic, energetic with a fairly relaxed midrange. This will appeal to many people who play all kinds of genres. We could not find a piece that could not be completely reproduced by these Austrians.

## Rounding

The Vienna Acoustics Beethoven Baby Grand Reference is a speaker that will appeal to many people. On the one hand, it is a very genial all-rounder, but with a bite. Its dynamics and enthusiastic low end do make it a good combination. But that's fine. There are plenty of amps that will work. Let's get down to how these high-quality floorstanders measure up. And who they are intended for.

## Measurements

The Vienna Acoustics Beethoven Baby Grand Reference is a speaker that measures up nicely, without question, but does not show a straight response. It has been tuned; deliberately we estimate, given its attention to detail. We see a slight drop in the midrange. Both in a direct measurement and in a measurement at the sitting position.

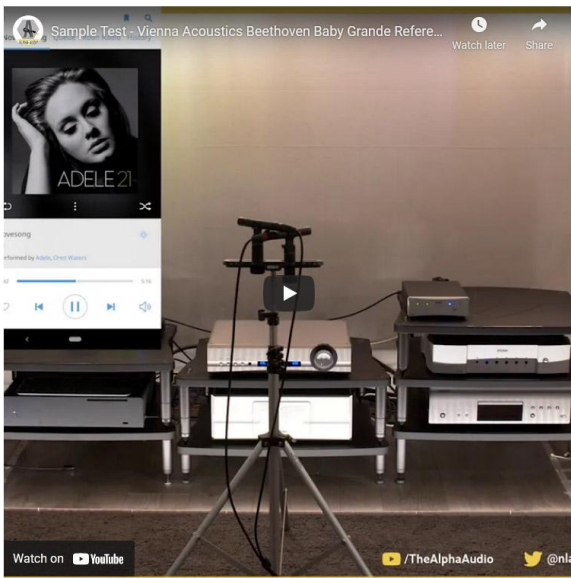
Off axis or straight does not matter much with this speaker, which is great. The highs naturally drop a little bit, but certainly do not collapse off axis. Distortion is low. The bulk of the speaker sits at 0.3% distortion. The measurements in the low are not reliable enough, but it drops quickly. Let's estimate that around 60Hz it drops below 1%, which is neat. Vienna Acoustics knows how to hold its own in this class with these measurements.

## For whom

The Vienna Acoustics Beethoven Baby Grand Reference – we're not going to forget that name anytime soon – is a speaker that will be pleasing to many people's ears. It plays around, complete, dynamic, but not intrusive. It is a serious speaker. A speaker that can handle a lot. And is not afraid of some spectacle. If the rest of the set can handle it of course!

## Samples and video

Download lossless samples <https://cloud2.alpha-it.nl/index.php/s/y2pmXB4pxMgKGsy>



<https://alpha-audio.net/review/review-vienna-acoustics-beethoven-baby-grand-reference/4/>

