

Magnepan MG 3.6

Getting Thin For The Summer

Review By Steven R. Rochlin

Loudspeakers come in all shapes and sizes. From small stand mounted minimonitor to the huge room hogging 500 lbs. monolithic "Dream Reference Statement". Virtually every high-quality speaker has many areas it excels in and areas it leaves a bit to be desired. For it is only *you* who knows which part(s) of the music you can live with and without. Nothing is perfect my friend. Bassheads need not venture into Minimonitor Land while small jazz ensemble lovers probably can do without the 32 drivers per channel "Dream Reference Statement." Then there are people such as myself who want it all. From small duets during the quiet moment in life to big rave club action for those Saturday night techno parties. Can one pair of speakers suit all my needs... or yours? In the end is it true what they say, "size matters?"



It is well known the optimum driver would be of extremely little weight, extremely rigid and have the ability to respond to electrical signals at blindingly fast rates without over or undershoot. According to the company's website "Magneplanars use ultra low mass components. For example, the Magneplanar ribbon element is so thin, that on edge, it is invisible to the naked eye. It is so light that when a piece of it is dropped from a height of 6 feet it takes an average of 5 seconds for it to reach the floor." Their old University website goes on with a bit more detail in saying "Using a .0005" Mylar diaphragm and a .001" ribbon this dipole, cabinet less design leaves the sound absolutely uncolored by box resonances." Box resonances have been an audiophile buzzword for many years now. There are a few 'schools of thought' concerning cabinets. One is to have the most solid, heavy, inert and cross-braced cabinet. Another, employed by legendary Snell and Audio Note designs, is to take advantage of a cabinet's resonances as part of the design. Still another would be to have no cabinet at all, as experienced with Magnepan loudspeakers.

Other design concerns regard impedance. In my opinion lesser designs have an impedance that dips below 3 ohms in the bass and goes above 12 ohms in the uppermost ranges. While this type of design provides an average of 8 Ohms impedance, bass notes are very demanding on an amplifier and may cause problems with lesser amplification that does not also provide good current. Another school of thought is to have a high, 16 ohm impedance as seen in the old Rogers LS3/5a that is easy for an amplifier to drive. The other being a smooth, virtually flat 8 or 4 ohm impedance curve. While a good amplifier is necessary to drive the 3.6 speakers that present a flat 4 ohm resistance, I flirted around with a small 25 watt at 8 ohm solid-state amplifier to good affect and also a multi-hundred watt solid-state amplifier with great current drive.

Physical Aspects

This seemingly large speaker is 71" high and 24" wide, though only upon fully studying the speaker did visitors into my humble abode learn the 3.6 is a skinny 1 5/8" deep! Like all Magnepan speakers, a special ribbon tweeter is used for the upper frequencies while planar technology provides the lowermost audio spectrum. This model uses a 55" long (5/32" wide) ribbon tweeter, a 199 square inch planar midrange and 500 square inch

