

marten

Django Loudspeakers

as reviewed by Robert H. Levi

A Scoop!

First Review in the USA of the Marten Django Loudspeaker

Here's some hot news that I want to share with my PFO readers!

With customary sophistication combined with room-shaking slam, an attribute not expected by this reviewer from the conservative Marten of Sweden, the hot new Django Loudspeaker will most likely become the most exciting speaker offering at CES 2012, and an easy "desert island" speaker selection. I have the excellent Marten Birds as my reference and, for less than half the cost, be prepared for similar performance and even bigger dynamics.

OK, here's the scoop! For \$15k, you lose the diamond tweeter, but get a fabulous one inch ceramic unit that goes to 30kHz. The six-inch ceramic mid is super smooth, and as detailed as I have ever experienced. Then comes the beef: three (!) 8-inch aluminum woofers firing forward with dual ports on the bottom to support the lowest frequencies. You get down to a real 26Hz from this speaker, plus an output selector on the back to adjust the bass to your taste or room size. I used a single E.A.R. 890 at 80-watts per channel and shook the house! All ceramic drivers are sourced from top notch Accuton of Germany. The aluminum woofers are made exclusively for Marten by SEAS.



The sensitivity is 89dB, with a friendly 6 ohm load. The cabinet is a normal, efficient bass reflex design with 2nd order crossover. Unlike other Marten speakers, the Django has one pair of WBT wiring posts on the back near the floor for easy use. The internal wire is Jorma Design, as is usual with all Marten speakers. They weigh in at a hefty 104 pounds, and come with anodized aluminum stands with custom Marten cones. The review pair was black high gloss lacquer, like my Yamaha Piano. Fit and finish, as well as styling, is first class and truly elegant. They are about 50 inches high, with all forward firing drivers, and the cabinets are made of 100% real wood.

I tried all three settings for bass output, and settled on the + setting as it slightly warmed and fleshed out the mids and highs, increased definition throughout, and made the system sound like I added a REL sub-woofer, which I had not!

The reference system included the E.A.R. 912 Preamp, an 890 E.A.R. amp, E.A.R. Acute 3 Tube CD player, and the Townshend Rock 7 Turntable with Helius Omega Tonearm and the Dynavector XV1S cart. All interconnects and speaker cables were Jorma Design; including Prime, Origo, and Number 1. All power cables were plugged directly into the wall, which has upgraded wiring and Oyiade sockets.

Overall Listening Impressions

High-band definition is very, very close to the diamond tweeter. This ceramic beauty has a delicate, airy quality with a quite neutral perspective. I was delighted by its smooth, elegant demeanor. Mid-band performance was near state of the art. What a treat! The overall definition is world class and the textural nuances and timbres are delicious. Low-band definition is extraordinary. Drum skins and bass fiddles are easily heard and highly defined. Plus, the extension on tap is awesome. The bass subjectively goes way down below 30Hz to that range you can only feel and not hear. Plus there is not a bit of lumpiness at any frequency, high or low.

Depth perspective is as good as it gets. No kidding. The drivers blend so seamlessly, and I MEAN seamlessly, that background depth and definition is enhanced and deeper than deep. Soundstaging effortlessly extends beyond speaker boundaries. Imaging is spot on perfect and as natural as apple pie.

The Django is extremely neutral top to bottom, sounding exactly like the E.A.R. Tube Acute, the Dynavector, or the software we played. What I was not

prepared for my friends, was the fantastic definition and sense of reality the Django communicates at this rather low price point, nor the dynamic range of a Klipsch! I never thought I could live with a speaker under \$30k until now.

Django Would Have Loved These!

I started with the classic Telarc 1980 recording of Saint-Saens Organ Symphony with Michael Murray on the organ. The extraordinary depth and wide sound staging was attention grabbing. The organ full out was shocking. I have rarely experienced this kind of bass slam, and never at 80-watts per channel. Silky violins, powerful drum thwacks, and organ notes in the subterranean levels... are all very exciting and realistic. What great fun, and amazing to think that this terrific performance was recorded in 1980!

Of course no listening is done these days without Yarlung Artists Dialoghi, with the best cello sound on the planet. I heard the delicacy of the wood box and rosin on the strings. The ambiance within the hall was bold and accurate. I loved the sound and the performance. What really got to me was the super low groaning of the cello as the artist played Bach and plumbed the lowest notes a cello may reach. Magnificent!

You like mellifluous, you will love Like a Lover from Venus Records. Ken Peplowski's clarinet is like liquid mercury flowing without borders. Nicki Parrott plays the bass and sings sweetly while the bass fills in the lowest notes. Very realistic in-the-room sound!

Just released is Jimmy Cobb, Remembering Miles, on the 88s label. We are talking absolute realism, imaging, and impact of a quartet in the room with you. The Djangos are invisible, and the music everything.

Now for the big stuff: Copland's Fanfare for the Common Man from Reference Recordings. This is Keith



Johnson's masterpiece of recording art, and a powerful statement indeed. On the Djangos, you heard it and felt it. The hall is gigantic and the sound stage huge. Never heard it sound better, or bigger, or more alive.

Taste Rules!

Earlier I commented on the nature of Marten speakers. on their realism and neutrality. All Marten speakers, and I've heard every model to date, show the taste level of their designer. Marten knows the sound of music, acoustic music. They have the kind of supreme taste levels that price points do not distort or affect. I have listened to the Dukes, a very wonderful two way monitor, and they are just as realistic, musical, and winning as the Birds, which are 4 times the price. The Djangos, too, are equally realistic and musically correct. I believe that Marten made a conscious effort in this case, to build a full-range speaker using the finest drivers for the price, applying in-house build experience and, ultimately, succeeded way beyond anyone's expectations.

That's the Django's

Conclusion

Marten of Sweden has just released the newest addition to their speaker line, called the Django, which will premier in the USA at CES 2012. I was fortunate to hear the first pair in the country, which was broken in just for me by Marten before shipping. I was flabbergasted by its unusual ability to create a realistic and a 'live' sense of slam and power from a modest tube amp. Sporting expensive drivers in an elegant all wood cabinet, the experience Marten has acquired at creating and building fantastic loudspeakers came to rest in this cost-effective offering - in spades! I have rarely heard better sound staging, depth, definition, or imaging in speakers, even those costing double and triple the Djangos. Accuton ceramic drivers on the highs and mids, plus three 8-inch aluminum woofers at 104 pounds each... the Marten Django is the essence of ultra-high value and performance to match.

In fact, the Djangos beg the question: why spend more? Go hear them for yourself, and prepare to be amazed.

Robert H. Levi

Retail: \$15,000 (USD)

Marten

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