

Marten Heritage Getz Loudspeaker (TAS 208)

By [Neil Gader](#) | Dec 06th, 2010

Equipment report



The Marten Getz loudspeaker is a three-way dynamic-driver floorstander. Its debut marks the completion of the four-model Heritage Series from the company that hails from the land of ABBA, Volvo, and Ingrid Bergman. Marten, known for bestowing the names of famous jazz icons on its products, positions the Getz between the larger Bird and smaller Miles 3. At 45.7" tall, the Getz time-aligns its drivers with a gentle, backward leaning rake and is finished in a mirror-like piano black. Contrasting sharply against the gleaming baffle is the array of crisp, white, inverted-dome drivers—a combination that gives the Marten a white-tie look, as if it's preparing to take the stage at Carnegie. The transducers are sourced from Germany's Accuton and they will likely be familiar to Kharma and Lumen White devotees. They employ ceramic membranes formed from aluminum oxides. (Note that they bear absolutely no relation to fine china, porcelain, or anything else one might find on the dining room table!) These diaphragms are as thin as a human hair, featherlight and unencumbered by dust caps or phase plugs. They are known for extremely high rigidity and are as fragile as eggshells. Unlike typical cone diaphragms, they will not deform when subjected to an errant finger touch; they will shatter. Hence the wire-mesh covers protecting them, which obviate the need for a grille cloth. The midrange drivers add resonance damping via laser-drilled holes in the ceramic cone. Introduced for the Getz is a new 9" aluminum passive radiator which Marten considers a sonically satisfying middle ground between the tuned, open port of a bass reflex enclosure and the fully sealed enclosure of an acoustic suspension design.

The crossover is second-order (12dB/octave slopes at 400Hz and 2.9kHz), built from premium components that include Teflon-ring-core coils (for bigger values than 3.0mH), polypropylene capacitors from Mcap and MIT, and non-inductive resistors from Mundorf. Sensitivity is 87dB with a nominal impedance of 6 ohms but dropping no lower than 4 ohms. Internal wiring is Jorma Design throughout. Twin pairs of high-quality WBT binding posts are standard.

Cabinet construction was flawless to the hand and the eye. Built of specially selected, 23mm thick, veneered MDF, the enclosure has heavily braced non-parallel sides that make it all but immune to a knuckle-rap resonance test. The supplied pointed footers are mounted on heavy brackets that extend beyond the side panels of the speaker, giving the Getz a wider more stable stance.

I began my listening evaluations using high-powered solid-state amplification. It was impressive in all the predictable ways—superb low bass slam and control, rock-solid dynamics. But the treble also sounded a bit constrained. However, Marten's U.S. distributor Dan Meinwald suggested I hear the Getz driven with tube amplification and made the superb EAR 834 integrated amp available. Meinwald obviously knows a thing or

two about his products. Not overly powerful at 50Wpc, the EAR nonetheless drove the Martens well in my smallish room. Clearly the Marten Getz favors tubes or at least Tim de Paravicini tubes. The speaker loosened up and played more freely when driven by the EAR 864, and there was more bloom and air than with the solid-state amps I had on hand.

Now I Getz It

Sonically the Getz actually startled me at times. But not in the way its looming piano-black countenance might imply. Yes, it had loads of output, but there are plenty of other loudspeakers of this specification that can out-slam it in bass extension or macro dynamics, if that's your goal. The Getz, in my view, has a different set of priorities. And early on it became clear that paramount on that list is a midrange purity, pace, speed, and transparency. The Getz plainly relishes the smaller gestures that reside deep in a recording. The tip off for me came early on when I cued up the title track to Linda Ronstadt's *Simple Dreams* [Asylum]. Those familiar with the tune know it's a quiet, contemplative song—so intimate that I tend to turn the volume down and sink into the moment. Even so, newly minted low-level details kept vying for my attention. I could hear the soft rising whoosh of the analog board faders coming up in front of incoming tracks. I could also make out the rightward flare of the reverb off the Ronstadt vocal. Switching to *Rutter's Requiem* I could single out and follow the timbres and distinctive vibratos of each singer in the chorus. The Getz permitted me to hear just a little deeper into the mix during Lyle Lovett and Ricki Lee Jones' vocal duet of "North Dakota." Examples like these underscored the fabulous inner life of a recording—moments bubbling up with the micro-dynamic and transient spontaneity of the live musical encounter. It's the kind of resolution manifested in a large-format photographic image, where you can come closer and closer to the image without encountering any resolution-inhibiting grain.



The Getz's savvy inner game also reveals timbral distinctions, so that each snap of a snare drum or rim shot becomes utterly distinct from the previous strike. Musical cues, especially pure acoustic ones like the timbre of the talking drums during Jennifer Warnes' "Way Down Deep," reveal a complex combination of spring and skin that is utterly convincing. And amidst all this low-level resolution, the Getz never forgets the importance of rendering a nicely scaled soundstage. Instruments are well focused and stable in their positions. Orchestral layering was very good. The Getz reproduces the ephemera of a venue's reverberant acoustic like few speakers I've encountered. One of the LPs that brought this home to me was Ricki Lee Jones' *Pop Pop*, in the stunning two-disc ORG reissue. This is an album that seems purposefully designed to be played back aboard the Getz. During "I'll Be Seeing You," the spatial relationships between the clarinet, standup bass, nylon string guitar, and vocalist are eerie in their authenticity. This was also about as accurate as sound as I've ever heard from a recorded classical guitar.

Depth retrieval didn't quite extend to the extreme back of the hall like the almost supernatural Jamo 909—a bipolar speaker—but was noteworthy nonetheless.

The overall character of the Getz is a cooler and drier one, somewhat consistent with my experience with ceramic drivers. Consistent, too, is the speaker's speed, detail, and coherence. It doesn't reveal any spurious box resonances. Tonally the presence range emerges with just a shade of added forwardness which lightly outlines the edges of images, violin for example. With drivers of lesser quality this might have been more of an issue, but the Getz inverted tweeter never sacrifices its intrinsic sweetness and bloom for "manufactured" details.

There is to my ear a narrow dip in upper-bass energy that enables the vivid midrange and treble octaves to come forward a step—a choice that sharpens articulation. Speaker placement—a little more backwall reinforcement, in particular—does ameliorate some of this effect (as it did in my room), but with a baritone vocalist like Sinatra singing "Angel Eyes" from *Only The Lonely*, there's a little less weight and chest resonance on each note. On orchestral recordings, the slight attenuation of dynamic thrust in the "power" range validates my view that Marten sought this specific voicing—not an unflattering one, but one more weighted towards finesse and midrange fluency.

In overall bass response, the Marten performed vigorously in my room down to a rock-stable 40Hz with plenty of useable energy below that. The speaker was also striking for its consistent sense of pace and coherence as the music dropped into the bass region. When I listened to "1A" performed by the trio of cellist Yo-Yo Ma, bassist Edgar Meyer, and fiddle player Mark O'Connor, there was no driver discontinuity or isolation—an anomaly that's easy to hear with this disc. Speaking of which, the musicianship on this CD is a kaleidoscope of soaring high-speed maneuvers and bravura techniques, like a musical relay race with the baton getting passed every so often. What is especially instructive to listen for are the timbral and resonant differences that occur as the players play solo and together. On this track Edgar Meyer draws a heavy bow across the lowest notes of his acoustic bass and the result is a wonderfully rich, growling image that should tickle the soles of your feet. The Marten did well to preserve much of this element, although I still felt the transition to the bottom string of the acoustic bass lacked some of the full resonant energy I expected.

The passive radiator deserves credit for control and a distinct lack of localization artifacts, but that's not to say it is completely invisible. Bass quality tends to be a personal issue that is often shaped by your favorite musical genres. Given the Marten's price ranges and physical specs, I felt comparisons to the acoustic-suspension Magico V2 and the ported TAD CR-1 were appropriate. In that company I felt the Marten was strongly competitive, offering a boatload of refinement and pitch control. But there was also a hint of overdamping that subdued the heaviest dynamics. Ultimately, for explosiveness on a triumphant scale (if that's your thing), the Magico or TAD has more weapons.

Transient response and mid-to-upper frequency dynamics are uniformly excellent, but the Getz's pace is even better—a quickness and responsiveness akin to the fast-twitch muscle fibers of a gifted athlete. Acoustic guitars, harpsichord, high-hat rhythm-marking, cymbal crashes, basically any instrument where the transient report is sharply encountered simply materialize in and around the Getz with definitive clarity. Ceramic drivers are noted for this quick-launch trait, but I think equal credit is probably owed to the cabinet. It doesn't sponge up transient speed and micro-information. The Getz has seemingly shed residual enclosure artifacts to the extent that images seem to materialize in the vicinity of the cabinet as if the box itself were a mere afterthought—existing only to suspend the sound at an accurate level, like a stage that exists to support actors and allow them to be seen by the audience.

The Marten Getz is quite a musical and communicative loudspeaker, not without its own accent, but persuasive in the manner it conveys intimacy, pace, and transparency—in other words, the lifeblood of the music. It's a solid contender deserving a special place on every audiophile's short list. I haven't had this much fun hanging out with a couple of Swedes since Mama Mia! opened.

Specs & Pricing

Type: Three-way passive radiator

Drive units: 9" ceramic , 9" aluminum (passive), 7" ceramic, 1" ceramic

Frequency range: 30Hz–40kHz +-3dB

Sensitivity: 87dB/2.83V

Impedance: 6 ohm

Dimensions: 9.8" x 45.7" x 13.8"

Weight: 73 lbs.

Price: \$20,000/pr.

SOUND ADVICE

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