

Marten Parker Trio



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Listening

Naturalness ranks at the very top of the list of properties for Marten loudspeakers and even in the face of very high inherent resolution and great transparency, their speakers always sound unforced to me and very natural indeed. After having reviewed the higher-tier Mingus Quintet in 2017, I anticipated the more affordable Parker Trio to introduce some concessions. But it has to be said, these concessions are not at all obvious, and the Parker Trio portrays all of the typical hallmarks of a Marten speaker.

Sure enough, the resolution and transparency are beyond reproach. The speakers are easily as highly resolving as my Magico S1 MkIIIs and offer fuller bass that goes significantly deeper. The Parker Trios have a wonderful cleanness and purity with excellent detail retrieval, yet they are



sweet and sound remarkably lush. These speakers are precise but with a relaxed musicality-first approach. You will hear flaws in recordings but never in an unforgiving manner. In part, this is because while they are articulate and highly resolving, they also possess a gentlemen-like restraint that generally avoids hardness and sharp transients. Another reason is that the bass is not of the iron-fisted kind but rather more akin to how a full-range dipole ribbon speaker reproduces bass. It's just all there with no effort at all as if radiating from a very large surface.



The Parker Trios work well with pretty much all genres such as classical, soul, vocal, pop, fusion, world music, and electronic, but their relaxed smoothness makes them arguably work less well with rock and other styles that require a decidedly iron-fisted or hard-hitting speaker behavior. The speakers will happily pump out the most demanding of music styles and as loudly as you like (louder than I can take,

actually) but I would say they are more suited for the riper music lover and audiophile.

Imaging is rock-solid while the soundstage hangs airily and entirely freely all around the speakers. The overall presentation is relaxed but not slow. Likewise, I would not characterize the imaging as either forward or laidback but rather in-between, with the stage expanding equally in all directions.



The Parker Trio's treble performance in particular is truly superb. It may occasionally be just a tad spicy but thanks to its utter purity and articulation, combined with its remarkably immediate, impulsive, and dynamic behavior, I feel that this speaker's high-frequency range is superbly realistic. Hi-hats, for instance, not only have the familiar shimmer, but the initial energetic attack with that characteristic wood-on-metal whack is also reproduced in a thoroughly convincing manner.

While on the subject of treble, I should note that one area in which the Mingus Quintet improves on the Parker Trio is in terms of ultimate refinement. When I reviewed the Mingus Quintet, I was amazed at the immense subtlety and refinement of the Diamond tweeter, especially since it was combined with retina-like resolution. At the time, I had a long and recent history of using Magnepan and Apogee ribbons and I vividly recall feeling that the Mingus Quintet was the first speaker to offer not just an alternative but even more highly resolving and even more delicate treble performance. With that experience in mind, the Parker Trio's treble is admittedly relatively a little less finely resolved and less delicate. But these relative differences aside, the Parker Trio's treble is *infinitely* more refined than the average soft-fabric dome tweeter.

Just to be sure, I set out to obtain a second opinion from my younger neighbor Jessyca who is not spoiled by audiophile pretensions but has very sensitive ears. Not having told her what to look out for, I had her listen to a few tracks. She never flinched and when asked later confirmed that the treble could indeed be on the edge, but never overbearing, and actually generally sweet. Moreover, she praised the speaker's naturalness and unforced soundstaging. I guess that says more than enough:-)



Stable as a Rock

The Marten Isolators not only provide resonance control but they also plant the speaker extremely firmly on the floor. Especially when you have a hard floor like the laminate that I have, you will find that the Isolators will create a vacuum seal with the floor, preventing the speaker from ever coming from its place. That is unless you want it to as it can easily be decoupled by tilting the speaker sideways.

Jorma Cables

Along with the speakers, I was also provided with a range of Jorma Cables: the Unity XLR interlink, Unity Speaker Cables, and Unity Power Cables. Rather against my prediction, the cables turned out not only to work superbly synergistically with the Parker Trios, but they also proved a smashing success by further elevating the overall quality of the system. Both the interlinks and speaker cables were instant successes, improving the definition and expression while remaining fluid, tonally rich, and natural.

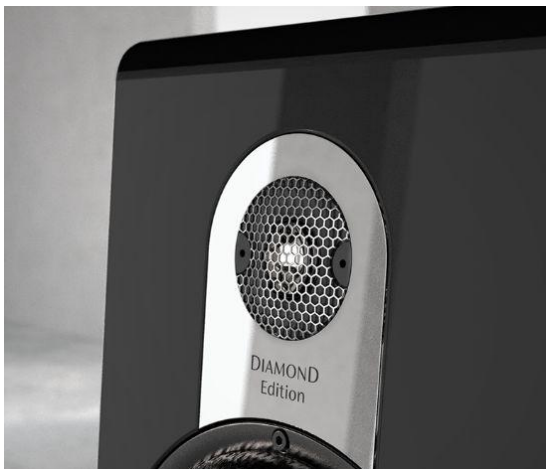




Driade Flow Reference 808 Speaker Cables worked wonderfully well but there was an extra special synergy when using Jorma Unity speaker cables

The power cables leaned more toward the sweet and voluptuous side, providing a particularly lush delivery that was just a little too mellow for my system and taste. As it follows, this review was carried out with the Jorma Unity interlink and speaker cables in place, and they never left the system! These cables are so exceptional that they deserve a separate review:-)

Diamond Edition



If there's a lust for the elusive infinite refinement and delicacy that diamond tweeters can bring, then it is good to know that the Parker Trio can be upgraded to Diamond edition. This upgrade entails not only a Diamond tweeter, but also more advanced crossover components (including copper foil capacitors and inductors), improved terminals, and Jorma *Statement* internal cables. I'm told that this upgrade is far from subtle and I believe it! Of course, it comes at a price, but I'd wager that the extra 13k will bring the Parker Trio significantly closer to the Mingus Quintet.

Conclusion

At a hair under 20,000 euros, the Parker Trio may not be a bargain but it has to be noted that this speaker possesses a heck of a lot of the typical hallmarks of much more expensive Marten products. In today's world of ever-inflating audio equipment prices where one often pays more to get less compared to 10 years ago, the Parker Trio delivers true value for money.

The Parker Trio provides a wonderful cleanness and purity with excellent detail retrieval, yet with remarkable sweetness and lushness. These speakers are precise but with a relaxed musicality-first approach. You will hear flaws in recordings but never in an unforgiving manner. The Parker Trio is a speaker for those who not only want to relax into the music but also want to hear what is going on in the mix whilst avoiding turning into an audio critic.