



the art of natural sound

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CES – 2012: The Imperial Show

Four years ago at High End in Munich, Peter Gansterer announced our newly patented Flat-Spider-Cone™ coincident driver system that is at the foundation of the Klimt Series. As part of this announcement, Peter also shared a vision that this technology would find its way into our critically acclaimed Concert Grand Series.

After over two years of exhaustive work, this year at CES we gave the world a sneak peak of the Beethoven Imperial Grand. With an anticipated retail of less than €9,000/pr, Beethoven Imperial Grand is the first of an envisioned series of speakers utilizing this new driver technology derived from our Klimt Series. These products will bridge the gap between our best selling Concert Grand Series and our reference Klimt Series.

At the heart of this new model is a new, smaller Flat-Spider-Cone™ coincident driver. The flat midrange driver is built around a ground up Vienna Acoustics/ScanSpeak large silk dome tweeter. This new coincident driver system is then mounted, in similar fashion to the upper portion of the Beethoven Concert Grand, in its own sealed enclosure.

In addition to the second generation, smaller Flat-Spider-Cone™ coincident driver, the Beethoven Imperial Grand also gains a new ring radiator super-tweeter designed with ScanSpeak – a first for both companies. This super-tweeter differs only slightly from the new model currently shipping installed in The Music.

Low bass is handled by three Spider-Cone™ woofers for powerful and fast bass extension while maintaining our recognizable thin cabinet design. This form has become a recognizable feature of all of our loudspeakers that both aids in better placement freedom and our clean aesthetic.





Since the new Beethoven Imperial Grand was not ready for public listening, what else could prepare the attendees at CES for what was to come but its bigger sibling, The Music? This year we demonstrated The Music with an outstanding new electronics package from Jeff Rowland Design Group. After just finishing the development of their A/B 725 mono blocks, the famed 625 that was released last year got some additional improvements.

The preamp was their fabulous Corus and for the source we implemented their Aeris DAC. All of this was fed via an Apple MacBook Pro using an external hard drive and Amarra's latest release software feeding a M2Tech hiFace USB - S/PDIF adapter. All cables were furnished by Transparent Audio. This year our cable compliment was comprised of Reference MM2 throughout and power conditioning via PowerIsolation Reference with commensurate power cables.

Like systems in the past, the sound coming from our small hotel room was both effortless, dynamic and in a word, profound. Literally, everything we played on this system, from the Pixie's to Mahler to Marvin Gaye, was fluid and musical.

Throughout the rest of CES we had the great fortune of supplying speakers to a number of great electronics manufacturers. In the Boulder Electronics room we setup The Kiss. Perhaps we're biased, but we thought this system was especially beautiful. With the stunning aesthetic of The Kiss and the view out from between the speakers, it all worked to create one of the most beautiful rooms I've seen in Las Vegas. Of course, most importantly the sound was fantastic.

In the room immediately next door to us was Bladelius. In their suite they were showing their new streaming product and installed a truly contemporary system around our Weberns. Lastly, down another hall on the 30th floor was Mystere. As last year, they demonstrated their great electronics with a pair of The Kiss. As usual, this system made the kind of music that had people talking. The combination of Mystere's KT-88 valve amp and the musical nature of The Kiss worked its magic.