

“ ... DETAILED ...
SUCCINCT ... SEAMLESS
... exactly precise.”

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“The Mini Monitors are so at home with any form of music that they aren’t phased by anything it seems.”

by William Kelly

MINI?

We’ve done a few reviews of the Paradigm entry level range of speakers starting with the Titans and the Micros and now the Mini Monitors. Each pair has always impressed by sounding bigger and more believable than their physical dimensions suggest, and as the size of the speakers slowly increase, so does the impression value.

Starting with the dimensions for the Mini Monitors at 34 cm x 21 cm x 29 cm, the more alert and avid readers will discover that these are quite a bit bigger than the Titans or indeed the Micros. But this is just the beginning because the Mini Monitors fall into the Monitor series of Paradigm speakers which is a cut above the entry level range in a number of respects.

The mid/bass driver is similarly constructed to the ones used in bigger models, and is an injection moulded co-polymer poly-

The New Mini Monitor
(Improved over version reviewed for even better sound.)

propylene unit with an apical former. The cone is translucent which makes for an attractive looking driver that is revealed when the grilles are removed.

Special attention is also given to the tweeter in this two way design. It is no less than a 25 mm pure titanium dome and former with ferro fluid cooling and damping which believe me delivers the sort of tops that are quite out of sync with the asking price. Again, this is nothing new for Paradigm but by now we hardened reviewers expect no less!

Crossover is achieved via a third order ‘electro/acoustic’ affair at 2.0 kHz. Low range frequency extension is a claimed 43 Hz whilst standard frequency responses are from 57 Hz through to 20 kHz. Sensitivity is rated at 89 dB, maximum



input power is 80 watts and overall impedance is 8 ohms. Each unit weighs in at about seven kg and they are suitable for stand mounting. They are of a traditional bass reflex design with rear firing ports.

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Stand mounting is a very necessary fact of life with the Mini Monitors and not some cheap plastic thing either – a good stand will reward the listener ten times over its investment price. One does not need to go to the Eagle Audiophile Reference type stands (primarily since they cost close on the same price of the speakers!), but select a pair closely and the best your budget will allow you to.

The Mini Monitors were spiked top and bottom and positioned a metre or so into the room with the right amount of toe in so as to just make the sides of the speaker invisible. Presented with a flat fascia then, the speakers were firstly run in and secondly listened to at length with a great variety of music. Recommended amplifier power is from 15 – 100 watts although I hooked them up to the Electrocompaniet 120 watter for most of the time, with reference to the H/K 1400 40 watter for reference.

The Mini Monitors are easy to drive. Even a smallish amplifier will do them justice, although the old adage of more watts for better performance still applies. With 120 watts of EC power behind them the Mini Monitors were certainly afforded an optimal reference point!

The music that the speakers produce is detailed, succinct and accurate to the point where the speakers virtually disappeared as point sources, with an imaging that was exactly precise. Soundstaging was uncompressed and allowed to express itself in a three dimensionality quite unexpected at this level.

Timbral accuracy was remarkably good with pianos sounding very much like the real thing. The lightweight bass is compensated for by positioning the speaker close to the back wall, although I preferred sacrificing some bass for a more free standing position with the speakers.

Tonal integration as expected was seamless with the mids and tops transition unnoticeable. The lower end of the bass exhibited a distinctive roll off but this was only at the really deep end of the sonic swimming pool. The bass is well controlled and extremely accurate which leads to a perception of a deeper bass than there might actually be.

But the mids and tops of the speaker are where things take off. Here is an accuracy and penchant for sheer musicality that encourages more and more listening with more and more forms of music. The Mini Monitors are so at home with any form of music that they aren't phased by anything it seems.

As a speaker that does everything well and nothing badly, the Mini Monitors recommend themselves. What more could anyone want?

P E A K S

VERDICT

A pair of bookshelf speakers that reflect the best of the breed.