

“... DYNAMIC ... TRANSPARENT ... REFINED ...

a crisp presentation that will delight ...”

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“... fullness and warmth ... tops were refined with good detail ... dynamic as it is transparent, with the speakers effortlessly dropping a singer’s voice perfectly into position with the correct weighting and depth ... At the asking price of these speakers any listener is getting a bargain.”

by William Kelly

4 YEARS BETTER

Hard to believe that four years ago I was listening to the then Monitor 7s from Paradigm and I recall how impressed I was with them then. As with the older model, the new 7s sport a tweeter straddling two mid/bass drivers that in turn are positioned over a front firing bass reflex port. The cabinet construction appears to be identical, although I must confess to thinking that the quality of the finish has improved over the already high standard set by the previous range. I was, as always with these speakers, impressed with their looks without the grilles, but I have to add that these handsome units on review looked pretty damn good with the grilles on as well.

The bass reflex port incidentally is quoted as a quasi 3rd order resistive port. This you can take to mean whatever you like, but Paradigm claim improved performance from it. And whilst we’re on the 3rd order, the crossover is also a 3rd order electro acoustics design set at 2 kHz.

The New Monitor 7
(Improved over version reviewed for even better sound.)

The tweeter though represents a more radical departure, being a titanium domed ferro-fluid-cooled unit that imposes, and we’ll see a little later what it does for performance ...

The two mid/bass drivers are 165 mm units in a die cast chassis formed from injection moulded polymer polypropylene with Apical formers – a Paradigm trademark. The pair deliver – in conjunction with the cabinet – a low 34 Hz frequency response at the bass side of things with the tops taking things up to the usual 20 kHz cycle range. SPL is up from 91 dB to 93 dB and the easy nature of the speakers makes them a snap for just about any amplifier to drive (from a claimed 15 watts), although my recommended wattage is no less than 100 watts if you really want to exploit the potential of the speakers.



The speakers incidentally weigh in at 34 kg a pair, which is more than I recall their predecessors weighing. Spikes are provided and are strongly recommended for reasons espoused further on.

"... soundstage is where it should be: slap in front and at the right height ... the new 7s inject a degree of enthusiasm into the treble that in turn generates an excitement of the music, an attention-grabbing performance throughout."

OK, enough technical stuff. The soul of the speaker is in its musicality, and with a good front end combination of both entry and mid-level range equipment, the Paradigms were set up to strut their very best. I started with the H/K 40 watter line amp-lifier and then proceeded onto the 100 watts of my current AV receiver for comparison.

The H/K 1400 drove the Paradigms with consummate ease. It was always in control and the speakers are commendable in their ability to fall in line with minimal effort from the amplifier. I was very happy to see that the fullness and warmth of the speakers has been maintained from the previous model, and that the accuracy has been preserved.

"The body of the music is fleshed out ... a cleaner, deeper sounding bass that extends low enough to make you sit up and notice."

In comparing my notes from before I see that the tops were refined with good detail. In the latest guise though, this has been raised a few notches and now the soundstage is where it should be: slap in front and at the right height, but with a crisp presentation that will delight many. In fact, the new 7s inject a degree of enthusiasm into the treble that in turn generates an excitement of the music, an attention-

grabbing performance throughout. I was also surprised by the tenacity of the tweeters to deliver an upper midrange that is both dynamic as it is transparent, with the speakers effortlessly dropping a singer's voice perfectly into position with the correct weighting and depth.

The mid/bass drivers do a good job of trying to match the tweeter's resolute performance. The body of the music is fleshed out by these drivers and the low end grunt is present in levels that don't overwhelm and don't get out of hand. If anything, the bass side of things is cautious rather than booming and this translates into a cleaner, deeper sounding bass that extends low enough to make you sit up and notice. So often the temptation must be to extend the bass beyond useful limits of the cabinet, ruining the sound in the process, but selling more speakers based on impression value alone. Well done to Paradigm for not taking that easy road.

As always Paradigm continue to strongly back their value for money image. At the asking price of these speakers any listener is getting a bargain. Rather than hold that against the brand, you would do well to take a close listen with your ears and not only your bank manager will thank you for it, but your ears will too.

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Verdict:

Time flies when you have a job like this. Even better than I recall their predecessors which represented good value for money ...