

“ ... **FANTASTIC** ...

... superbly natural ... wonderfully defined

... very convincing ... ”

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by Gordon Brockhouse

#### FOUR FANTASTIC SPEAKER SYSTEMS

(... an excerpt from a MarketNews comparison review of four well-known high-end speaker brands.)

This Canadian-designed, Canadian-made speaker is the third iteration of the second-from-the-top model in Paradigm's premium Reference series. My review sample had a "super-laminate" sycamore (blonde) finish. The modifier "super" is not an exaggeration: it looked amazingly like real wood veneer. The Studio 60s are also available in cherry, rosenut and black ash.

Instead of being flat, the top of the cabinet is rounded upward, with a black rather than a wood finish. The effect is very stylish. The outrigger feet at the bottom add stability and a nice cosmetic touch. Along with just one other speaker, these Paradigms are the most visually attractive speakers in this roundup, the other being more elegant and the Paradigm more distinctive.





The Studio Tweeter

The Paradigm Studio 60 employs a 2.5 way design. Two seven-inch drivers produce the bass. A mineral-filled polypropylene woofer operates up to 500 Hz, while the mica-polymer bass/midrange operates to 2 kHz, where it crosses over to a satin anodized dome tweeter. The bass/midrange unit's mica-polymer cone has very high stiffness-to-mass ratio, Paradigm says, delivering excellent midrange clarity. The woofer cone meanwhile is designed to be highly rigid, giving weight and authority to the bass. Both drivers have die-cast chassis and heatsinks to dissipate heat, thus maximizing power handling. Paradigm says the low-mass, highly rigid satin-anodized aluminum dome makes the tweeter sound airy and transparent.

*"... piano sound in the Mozart recording was very convincing ... orchestral balance in the SACD recording of the Beethoven Fifth was natural and convincing ..."*

While the presentation was not quite as transparent as on another speaker in the review, we were won over by the superbly natural tonal balance of the Studio 60s. Whether it was Norah Jones singing "Don't Know Why," or Diana Krall singing "Dancing in the Dark," it was as if the vocalist was right in the room. On the Jones track, the piano, drums, bass and guitar were all wonderfully defined, each in its own area of the stereo image. Similarly, we were impressed by the accuracy of the male vocals on the Santana DVD-Audio recording.

The piano sound in the Mozart recording was very convincing, though the midrange sounded a touch "forward." I had the same observation on the DVD-Audio recording of the *Elgar Third*. The orchestral balance in the SACD recording of the Beethoven Fifth was natural and convincing. While the four speakers in this review are all excellent, the Paradigm is the one I kept returning to for after-hours movies and music.