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GamuT M'inenT M7 speaker

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The name "M'inenT" peaked my interest when a review of these speakers was first suggested by our publisher, Constantine Soo. I was hoping that by the time I finished this review I'd find out the origin and meaning of the name, but I was so enthralled by the sound of these great speakers that it slipped my mind. I suspect that if you get a chance to hear these speakers you will similarly not care about what they are called - you'll just want to listen. Let me explain.

The M'inenT M7s are floor standing speakers that fit very comfortably in midsize to moderately large rooms. My own room is 28' x 24' x 8.5, so it fits the bill pretty well.

Instructions and setup

There are extensive and helpful instructions for the setup of the M7s, including advanced setup calculations designed to deal with standing waves, midrange character and treble adjustment. Adjustment of the bass performance can be achieved by speaker placement, midrange character by adjusting the tilt, and tweeter level by adjusting toe-in. It's not that this is anything new in speaker setup, it's just good to see a manufacturer think everything through in the manual.

The instructions also prescribe a 200-hour run-in period for the M7s, which I initially followed by letting them run for 5 days before starting any listening (yes, I realize that 5 x 24 hrs/day only equals 120 hours, not 200 hours). I started with the M7s in the same location that I place my **B&W 800D**, with a slight toe-in and ignored the tilt to start.

Acoustic Characteristics of the M'inenT M7

I'm not sure whether it was my particular room or whether this applies to most rooms, but the Gamut M'inenT M7 was one of the few speakers that even in its original placement sounded very good without any room correction from my **Lyngdorf RP-1**. The only other speakers that worked *almost* this well in my room without room correction were the **Coincident Total Victory IV** reviewed in September, 2008, which incorporated side-firing woofers, and I assumed that this feature explained the better bass performance. The M7s aren't side-firing, so there must be something else going on.

The word "disappear" is regularly used to describe speakers that not only throw a deep and wide soundstage, but also project images which seem totally disconnected from the cones, ribbons, etc. that are components of those speakers. There are many fine speakers that have this characteristic when properly set up, but the M'inenT M7 is better than most floorstanders I've heard. Though the majority of the music emanated from the space between the speakers, on good recordings a substantial amount of the music seemed to be to the left and right of the M7s, thus filling the entire 29-foot front stage of my listening room. (29 feet! - CS)

The M7s are also great examples of speakers that are highly detailed but still convey a sense of smoothness. In my experience, this is pretty rare. First of all, "smoothness" is most often a characteristic associated with front-end components, such as CD players, DACs and preamps, and occasionally amps. Second, reviewers typically don't use the word "smooth" when describing speakers, instead using words like "absence of grit" or "lack of glare." Today's high-end speaker is supposed to convey all the detail of the recording regardless of whether the recording is great or terrible. "Smooth" in relation to a speaker can actually imply that the speaker is too polite, that it lacks the detail and extension and does not have the ability to convey grit and raw emotion when those characteristics are part of the music being played. That is not the case with the M7s. To the contrary, the M7s have the rare ability to convey the emotion of gritty music without ever stepping over the line into annoying "grit" or "glare", unless, of course, it's in the recording.

Specifications:

Woofer: 2 x 7" wood fibre cone, low distortion magnet system, GamuT Hand treated cone structure
 Mid: 7" sliced cone, dynamic optimized, GamuT Hand treated cone structure
 Tweeter: Impulse and resonance optimized Double ring radiator, with GamuT stainless steel wave guide
 Impedance: 4 ohms nominal
 Minimum impedance: 2.9 ohms at 250 Hz
 Crossover point: 250 & 2250 Hz
 Sensitivity: 90.0 dB/2.83V
 Frequency response: 29Hz - 50 kHz
 Dimensions: 1280mm (H) 226mm (W) 642mm (D)
 Weight: 42 kg
 Recommended amplifier for maximum performance: minimum 120W into 4 ohms, maximum 600W into 4 ohms

MSRP: \$16,990 - \$21,000 per pair depending on finish

U.S. Distributor:

K.T. Audio Imports
 839 S. Parkglen Place
 Anaheim, CA 92808

Tel. 714-553-6474

URL: <http://www.ktaudioimports.com/Index.aspx>
 E-mail: info@ktaudioimports.com



Refining the setup

All of the foregoing was evident immediately upon initial placement of the M7s, but further adjustment and experimentation revealed that I had not tapped the full potential of the M7. I started making fine adjustments with toe-in to see if by adding more detail I would get glare or screechiness or any other undesirable characteristic. I did not - I only got more detailed treble. When the M7s were fully toed in, pointing at my ears, I judged the detail to be disproportionate and unnatural, so I angled them out further, finding that I preferred them with only modest toe-in. Mind you, the treble never sounded bad or fatiguing even when the speakers were aimed directly at my ears; it was simply that the amount of treble detail seemed unnaturally huge. Modest toe-in provided gobs of detail in a more balanced fashion.

Moving to the speaker's tilt, I experimented with a few different angles, alternately increasing and decreasing the prominence of the midrange. I settled on a slight downward tilt that at the listening position made the midrange a bit fuller and more detailed. Both male and female voices became fuller and more lifelike.

It was also interesting to note that though the effect of this tweaking was greatest at the listening position, the speaker positioning I ended up with also produced the best sound at all of the other listening positions in my room. That is not always the case with speakers, where the best setup for the prime listening position is often one of the poorer setups when sitting at the secondary listening positions.

During this time I was driving the M7s with the 400 wpc Electrocompaniet NADA AW 400, and the sound was quite good. In a moment of insanity I thought I'd see if powering the M7s that same way I power my B&Ws - the 600 wpc Nemos on the bottom and the 400 wpc Nadas on the top - would make any difference. It was fun to try out, but totally unnecessary. The M'inenT M7 speakers definitely don't need that sort of power. In fact, they don't need the 400 wpc power of the Nada's, as you will see below. Consequently, I went to the next stage and tried the M7s with different components.

Another setup

One really excellent combination was the M7s driven by the [Linn 4200](#) amp and fed by the Linn Akurate DS and Akurate Kontrol preamplifier. Cables were the Tara Labs Zero Gold between the Linn DS and Linn Kontrol, Silent Source Silver Signatures between the Kontrol and Linn 4200, and MIT Magnum Biwire between the 4200 and the GamuT M'inenT M7. The level of transparency and glare-free detail in the treble and midrange was addictive, while the bass performance was a great combination of articulation and body. A great example was "Walk Between the Raindrops" from Donald Fagan's *The Nightfly*. This is a lively recording with articulate but laid back bass. On this system the organ, electric piano and synthesizer were all distinct and live-sounding on a broad and deep soundstage, and my feet started tapping involuntarily within the first few notes. I don't think I've ever heard this piece of music, or any other tune from *The Nightfly*, sound this clean, natural and lively.

This system was absolutely stunning on classical music, providing a realistic concert experience in my listening room. Jazz, especially live jazz, was also well served, and the system was excellent at conveying not only the timbre of the instruments and the location of the performers on the soundstage, but also the dimensions of the venue. There is no question that the other components in this system contributed mightily to the quality of the listening experience, but the M7s had to reproduce what they were feeding it, and the resulting sound was definitely excellent, especially when you take into account the M7's price point. This is clearly a speaker that delivers great value for the money.

The one area that the M'inenT M7 was "merely" above-average was slam. Don't get me wrong - you wouldn't notice it without a head-to-head comparison, but in this category the M7 was "only" an 8 and not a 9. Properly powered, my B&W 800Ds can blow your whole body back on crescendos, while the M7s only make your hair blow back. This is likely simply a function of the M7's size. It's a modest-size speaker that easily fits into medium size rooms and even smaller rooms, while the 800Ds outweigh them by 130 pound each and can really move the air.

Conclusion

I have been very lucky in the last three years to have some great components to review. There has not been a disappointing one in the bunch, which attests to the quality of many of today's high-end audio products. Several of these products have been in the upper echelon of the high-end, and some have been great products that also provide great value. In my opinion, the GamuT M'inenT M7 speakers fit into this category. They are not GamuT's top tier speakers, but they obviously draw much from what GamuT has learned about speaker design and manufacturing. If you crave the *Nth* degree of slam and force (and can afford it) or have an absolutely huge room, you'll need to go bigger, but if you get the M7s in any room up to medium/large you will have very good slam while getting transparency, articulation, detail, soundstaging, naturalness and body that are among the best at this price point, and in several cases better than speakers that are much more expensive. As always, component matching is critical, but the M7s should definitely be on your short list if you are looking for speakers in the \$16,000 to \$21,000 range, maybe even up to the \$24,000 range.

