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Grant Fidelity SPT-100 Super Tweeter

By Mark Marcantonio

publisher@affordableaudio.org

Specifications:

Crossover options: 12kHz and 15kHz
 Frequency Response range: 10kHz - 40kHz (by theory it will go up to 100kHz)
 Sensitivity option: 86dB or 92dB
 Finish: Silver or Gold.
 Weight: 3.6kg per pair Net.
 Optional connection 5N copper speaker cables - 5 ft in length at extra cost.
 Comes with a rigid aluminum carrying case.
 Weight: 9 lb
 Price: \$749
www.grantfidelity.com

Last November I was in search of a solution to a problem. Over time I had begun to notice that my pair of Polk LSi9 monitors were lacking the top end that so many of the review speakers I was getting in had. Part of the difference was due to the Vifa tweeter being a low noise/hiss emitter. I had no problem with that, but the more I listened the more obvious it became that in Polk's attempts to control the tweeter, they had constrained the sonics. The balance of the monitor's sound was impressive, therefore, I began to seek out options. After some searching, I remembered that Grant Fidelity had a high quality super tweeter that might just be the solution. A return email from Ian Grant contained both good and bad news; yes, he'd be happy to send me out a sample of their SPT-100, but they were currently out of stock and it may be 6-8 weeks before he'd have a pair to send me. I told him I'd happily wait.



Normally, patience is a virtue of mine, but as the stock market continued to fall along with used audio prices I decided to move on in my audio journey and sold the LSi9's. Of course, just a few days later the SPT-100's showed up. Now I was in an embarrassing situation, what to do with such a specialty piece of gear. After all, not many rigs really are in need of super tweeters. But I marched onward, trying them with a variety of speakers that came thru my house. Luckily, a local Polk owner, David (first name only at his request), offered up his LSi9's during the month of April as he would be out of town, and I quickly agreed.

First off, the SPT-100 are, in reality, a pair of shiny metal sculptures. The best way to describe their shape is to take a teardrop and slice it in half length-wise. Or, for those of you old enough, think of the alien "eye" from the original *War of the World's* movie, not the Dakota Fanning screamfest remake. The chrome finish silver shows finger and hand prints, thankfully,

Grant Fidelity provides cloth gloves for handling inside the aluminum, professional sound gear case. The back-side panel resides under the teardrop overhang. On the far outside edge of each side are the db switch of 86 or 92, and the 12k or 15k frequency setting. Between them sits the banana plugs for the positive and negative speaker wire. The bottom of the SPT-100 sits three flexible feet that allows for placement on curved top speaker cabinet, a very nice touch, especially with the unique cabinet shapes that occupy higher-end audio.

The tweeter itself is made up of two ribbons instead of one. Grant Fidelity asserts that the shorter lengths improve vertical dispersion, something that single ribbons have been accused of being a shortcoming in their design. The magnet is made of neodymium and is multi-wired in parallel to improve the overall performance. Connecting your speakers is quite easy, just use a free banana input on your five-way binding post, that's it.

Normally, I pick a wide variety of music and listen for example of both quality and areas that need improvement. However, since I reviewing a rather narrow range of sonics, I went about looking for songs that pushed the SPT-100's to the forefront of the music. First up was "The Goodbye Look" from Donald Fagan's *The Nightfly* cd. The multitude of cymbals, tambourines, and other treble percussion can immediately challenge many speakers. Without the SPT-100, the restrained Vifa tweeter in the Polk LSi9's just cannot present the song with true high frequency accuracy. With the SPT-100's plugged in, it's a whole different ballgame. The entire latin percussion sounds bring the song to life, adding spice and detail that were sorely lacking.

A closed high hat unfortunately, is easily miss-reproduced with many speaker systems, either the ring of the brass is exaggerated, or dampened to the point of missing the ring altogether. Having played the drums in my youth, I have a tendency to listen for cymbal reproduction, especially the hi-hat as depending the cymbals position in relation to one another the sound can vary tremendously. Joe Jackson's "Heart of Ice" from the album *Body and Soul* is one of the few song's that I know of where the hi-hat is front and center throughout the nearly seven minute track. The SPT-100 allows for a slight reverb and decay of the hi-hat, which is very appropriate as the foot pedal was at some 90% closed position.

The upper echelons of violins, brass, and flutes can also task many tweeters, limiting vital sonic information that belongs in the presentation. The opening of "Buckaroo Holiday" from Aaron Copeland's masterful *Rodeo* pushes the upper frequencies. The SPT-100 performs effortlessly, even with the multitude of instruments, something I feared it blend together. In addition, the richness and micro details were a wonderful addition to this classic piece of music.



Final Thoughts

Unlike most add-on products, the Grant Fidelity SPT-100 Super Tweeter should in no way be considered a tweak. But at the same time its application should be weighed carefully. Many speaker systems with well-engineered crossovers or an overly bright presentation may not benefit from what the SPT-100 has to offer. The super tweeters provide what is missing without adding in the undesirable. The clarity of the SPT-100's presentation is the difference between itself, and budget offerings that create more noise than music. Therefore, if you have a truly quality speaker that lacks a fine top end and crave percussion and symphonic music, the Grant Fidelity SPT-100 may just provide the high frequency solution to your system.