

ELECTRONICALLY REPRINTED
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Playback

music & movies that matters

sound-in-the-round

MIRAGE OS³-SAT/OS³-CC/MM-8



overview

Mirage
OS³-SAT/OS³-CC/MM-8

Consider this system if: You're intrigued by the prospect of a system that breaks free of the boxed-in sound of conventional speakers. Also consider this system if you're looking for the smallest possible subwoofer.

Look further if: You want a "normal," very direct sound, or if you require a subwoofer big enough to energize a relatively large home theater.

RATINGS

(relative to comparably-priced surround systems)

highs



mids



bass



soundstage/imaging



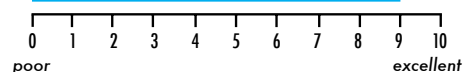
dynamic



versatility



value



Mirage—what a great name for a speaker company! The name really does conjure up a perfect one-word description of the company's speakers' sound. **Not a maker of conventional box designs, the Canadian company's specialty is omni-directional speakers that project sound in a 360-degree radiation pattern.** For this review we're looking at the new third-generation Omnisat Series speakers, specifically the OS³-SAT satellite and OS³-CC center speaker. Low-end support was handled by Mirage's ultra-compact MM-8 subwoofer.



MirageSpeakers.com

Features

The OS³-SAT and OS³-CC center speaker feature Mirage's latest Omnidirect defectors, which create the speakers' omni-directional sound. One deflector is positioned directly above the tweeter, and the tweeter is housed atop the mid-woofer's deflector. The speakers project sound directly towards the listener as well as reflect it off walls, ceilings and other surfaces.

A little over 8-inches tall, the pod-shaped OS³-SAT can serve as a front, center or surround speaker. It employs a 1-inch pure titanium hybrid tweeter and a 4.5-inch polypropylene titanium deposit hybrid woofer with an aluminum phase plug and Ribbed Elliptical Surround technology. The OS³-SAT comes with a wall/ceiling mount bracket that allows the speaker to be rotated. For surround channels the speaker can be mounted upside down (when it's mounted more than six feet off the floor). The OS³-SAT comes in high-gloss black or white with matching grilles.

The three-way OS³-CC center channel speaker looks a little more conventional

and employs a 0.75-inch pure titanium hybrid tweeter, a 3-inch poly titanium deposit hybrid midrange driver and two 4.5-inch poly titanium deposit hybrid woofers with neodymium motor structures and aluminum phase plugs.

The center speaker comes with an integral table stand and a metal wall-mount bracket. The speaker is only available in a high-gloss black finish; its magnetically attached grille is covered in black cloth.

If the center speaker's fiendishly recessed speaker wire connectors are a test of manual dexterity, I flunked. It must have taken me five minutes to thread the + and - wires through the push-to-open connectors. The OS³-SAT five-way binding posts are also recessed (into the speaker's bottom) but presented no problem for me.

The 300-watt MM-8 subwoofer is a 9-inch cube, with a front-mounted 8-inch concave black-anodized aluminum woofer and a matching 8-inch passive radiator on each side. The woofer is covered by a black cloth grille, but the passive radiators are naked to the world. Gawd, the MM-8 is a tiny thing, but the black gloss finish and overall build quality is high.

For my review system, I used four OS³-SATs, one OS³-CC center, and one MM-8 sub.

Sonic Character

Mirage's Omnipolar dispersion projects a deep, wide, and high soundstage. It's really very different from what you'll hear with box speakers, sounding more like a dipole panel speaker. The tonal balance is essentially neutral and never undernourished. The MM-8 subwoofer's dynamic sock is beyond what you'd expect from a 9-inch cube.

Movie and Music Examples

I used the *Cloverfield* monster/horror DVD to flex the Mirage system's home theater muscles. The film's story of a monster attacking New York City unfolds before you from the point of view of a single video camera, and the sense of immersion with the terrifying events was total. The Mirage Omnipolar designs did their thing, so the sounds of the panicked crowds' screams, the low rumbling tremors of the approaching monster, and the Statue of Liberty's head bouncing down the streets of New York were all in the room with me. Wow! The sense of being in the midst of



the action really added to the excitement of the film.

True, the MM-8 didn't reach as low as a larger sub would, but it supplied the monster's booming thunder like a champ.

I didn't realize it when I bought the *Rufus! Rufus! Rufus! Does Judy! Judy! Judy! Live From the London Palladium* concert DVD [Geffen] that it was stereo only. No 5.1 Dolby Digital sound, but that didn't faze the OS³-SATs one bit.

The stereo soundstage was huge, Rufus Wainwright's big voice emerged from the phantom center channel with startling presence, and the orchestra's spread was magnificent. I also listened to the DVD in Dolby Pro Logic II, but it really didn't add enough to matter; the front two OS³-SATs summoned a big, wide and deep soundstage, thank you very much!

Actor Terrence Trent Howard's *Shine Through It* CD [Columbia] is an ambitious effort. Howard's gutsy vocal on "War," backed by a funkified jazz band totally tears it up. With just the stereo OS³-SATs going, the soundstage was huge, spreading way beyond the actual positions of the speakers. The MM-8's contributions were superbly integrated, but definition was a tad flabby for my tastes.

BOTTOM LINE: *Mirage's latest rethink of its Omnipolar design strategy is a winner. The OS³-SAT and OS³-CC speakers project large scale soundstages beyond what you'd have any right to expect from comparably sized and priced box speakers. PB*

Specs & Pricing

OS³-SAT (satellite speaker)

Driver complement: 1" titanium hybrid tweeter, 4.5" polypropylene titanium deposit hybrid mid-bass driver
 Frequency response: 70Hz-20kHz
 Sensitivity: 89dB
 Impedance: 8 ohms
 Dimensions (HxWxD): 8.25" x 5.25" x 6.1"
 Weight: 4.8 lb. each

OS³-CC (center speaker)

Driver complement: .75" titanium hybrid tweeter, 3" poly titanium deposit hybrid midrange, 4.5" polypropylene titanium deposit hybrid woofers (2)
 Frequency response: 70Hz-20kHz
 Sensitivity: 91dB
 Impedance: 8 ohms
 Dimensions (HxWxD): 5.2" x 17.8" x 4.6"
 Weight: 5.6 lb. each

MM-8 powered subwoofer

Driver complement: 8" woofer, 8" passive radiators (2)
 Integrated amplifier power: 300 watts, RMS, 12000 watts (dynamic)
 Dimensions (HxWxD): 9" x 9" x 9"
 Weight: 16.7 lb.

Total System Price: \$2,200

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 miragespeakers.com