

Dream speakers - the bizarre story of Theophany

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Locally-made Theophany loudspeakers feature a very unusual cabinet design.

Sometimes truth can be stranger than fiction, and with Garth Murray, the owner of Theophany Speakers, this is definitely the case. Fortunately for us, his story, which could have gone so dreadfully wrong, has an almost fairytale ending.

Theophany speakers have developed a cult following with audiophiles, as sales to go from strength to strength as the world beats a track to Garth's door to listen to the Theophany speakers do their stuff.

According to Garth, 90 per cent of people who come to Theophany showrooms end up purchasing speakers and even more impressively, 30 per cent have actually cried upon hearing them for the first time. If these statistics seem somewhat bizarre, they're just peanuts compared

to how Theophany speakers came to be.

Before designing speakers, Garth worked as an air traffic controller and was diagnosed with a serious case of septicaemia after having surgery. After returning home, his health continued to worsen. His memory began to waver and he found himself mixing up names and other previously unforgettable details. Eventually it was discovered that Garth had suffered some minor strokes, leaving him with long term memory damage.

One side effect of all this was that Garth was spending hours sleeping. Fortunately for audiophile kind, it was during these bouts of extended slumber that Garth began to experience the first in an ongoing a series of dreams where he was making speakers.

Noting details such as the speaker dimensions off of a ruler in one of his dreams, Garth began to take notes whenever awoke. As he began to recover, Garth started to learn how to build what were literally the speakers of his dreams.

The speaker dreams still continue to happen and have formed the basis of Theophany's latest speaker, the M3b. According to Garth, he dreamt that he "walked out to the workshop one day and then saw before me the M3b."

Later he called two of his workers over and told them what he wanted them to build. In a bizarre twist of coincidence, his phone rung as he was explaining the M3B's with a guy describing the speakers he wanted to buy - the M3Bs. According to Garth it was "an hour later the phone rung again and another guy bought some as well. In three years we had never had a single request for anything like the M3B then within an hour of me seeing it we had sold two pairs."

Garth's illness also had another silver lining, one which has left him uniquely positioned to design speakers. Injuries to Murray's brain have left him with a condition called hyperacusis. Whilst most of us can tune out irritating environmental noise, Gath has lost the ability to do this. The upside however is that Garth has can distinguish audio distortion that'd be unnoticeable to all but bats, dolphins and whales.

Garth's audio odyssey eventually put him in touch with speaker driver whiz kid, Matthew Simmons of Arvus Loudspeakers. Using Arvus's innovative drivers and Garth's visionary cabinet designs, the Theophany sound was eventually born.

Receiving rave reviews locally, Theophany speakers have gone on sale internationally and Garth is now gearing up to tap into new international and emerging markets: "We still anticipate further growth this year as we tap into yet unexplored markets internationally including Russia and other countries in the Middle East. We are also very interested in exploring our options in the wealthy areas of India."

Theophany M3B's

The M3Bs may be bookshelf speakers in stature, but in practice they're delivering a near floor standing

speaker performance that can only be described as astonishing. Even more impressive is their \$2,999 sticker price, which sees them delivering sound I'd only ever previously heard from with speakers costing many times the M3B's price.

The design features which give Theophany speakers both their unique look and trademark sound are all present and accounted for in the M3Bs. The curvaceous design not only gives the speakers an aerodynamic look, but also means there are no parallel surfaces, which goes a long way towards eliminating cabinet generated audio distortion. Their curvy fronts allow for even and smooth airflow around their drivers, significantly enhancing audio accuracy.

Another hallmark of Theophany speakers is their gently-sloping front, which sees the top of the speaker slightly set back from its bottom. This clever design quirk means that the main tone generation area is forward of the woofers where the speaker cone retracts into the cabinet.

In a nutshell this means that the tone generation points from the speaker drivers to the listener's ear are aligned and accurately phased. Not only do clever design elements such as these give insight into the sheer amount of thought and complexity that went into producing the M3B's, it also allows the M3Bs to deliver incredible audio.

Settling in for an extended testing session with a teetering pile of my favourite CDs, I was constantly amazed at not just how accurate the audio was from the M3Bs, but also by just how emotionally engaging they were to listen to.

I'd find myself muttering "just one more track", only to find it was starting to get dark outside.

Having reviewed my fair share of audio gear over the years, its great to see a product not just competing against big overseas brands, but actually showing them a thing or two in the process.

Building speakers capable of delivering reasonably accurate audio is one thing, but doing at such an impressive price point is another kettle of fish altogether. If you're in the market for a set of speakers, put Theophany at the top of your list.

Theophany M3B

RRP\$ 2,999+GST

Frequency response: 35hz to 22Khz +/- 3Db

Power Rating 150watts RMS

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