

Floorstanding Loudspeakers

GENESIS G7.1f

Price (in Poland): 7400 EUR

Manufacturer:

Genesis Advanced Technologies

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Country of origin: USA

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Speaking quite frankly, the brand Genesis was for me until recently, the audiophile equivalent of the yeti - apparently out there somewhere, some argue that it is cool, but something no one has seen with their own eyes, and is only known from stories. That's what has happened with the loudspeakers of this meritorious American company. The name that rings a bell for many people – but a brand that surely someone, somewhere out there can recall.

Probably only a few lucky ones such as I have associations. Genesis is a large American loudspeaker producer, with lots of different models on offer. They boldly claim that the highest model is perhaps the best loudspeaker in the world, and look at their price - 218 thousand Euro per pair. In any case, I can state today that the company is not only a legend – I am having a really nice tete-a-tete with one of its products in my room.

Even before the loudspeaker reached me from the Polish Distributor I glanced at the manufacturer's site - not having studied carefully the description, I was so distracted that I did not notice one thing - G7.1f model is equipped with an active bass module, and this is not the only thing that distinguishes these loudspeakers.

SOUND

The recordings used in the test (a selection):

- Marcus Miller, *A Night in Monte Carlo*, Concord Records, B004DURSBC, CD.
- The Ray Brown Trio, *Summer Wind*, Concord Jazz CCD-4426, CD.
- Louis Armstrong & Duke Ellington, *The Complete Sessions*, Deluxe Edition, Roulette Jazz 7243 5 24547 2 2 (and 3), CD.
- Al Di Meola, John McLaughlin, Paco de Lucia, *Friday night in San Francisco*, Philips 800 047-2, CD.
- The Oscar Peterson Trio, *We Get Request*, Verve / Lasting Impression Music, LIM K2HD 032, CD.

- Keith Jarrett, *The Koln Concert* ECM 1064/65 ST, LP.
- Beethoven, *Symphonie no. 9*, Deutsche Grammophon, 445 503-2 DG, CD.
- Arne Domnerus, *Antiphon Blues*, Proprius, PRCD 7744, CD.
- Rodrigo y Gabriela, *11:11*, EMI Music Poland, 5651702, CD.

Japanese versions of the CDs available at CD Japan.

The G7.1f is a considerable 5-driver, 3-way floor standing loudspeaker with an active bass module. The term "considerable" refers mainly to the complexity of these loudspeakers, because the width of the front is small and the depth is not impressive. Front panel (with a rather *funky* shape, by the way) is finished with a black automotive lacquer. The enclosure is also finished in high gloss, but in dark gray (steel? - as a guy I only know the Six colors of Christ, so please do not ask for more precision in the description). On the front, we find two midrange drivers and a tweeter; all can be hidden under a magnetically fastened grille. On the side we have an 8-inch woofer, and on the back of the loudspeaker, the fifth driver - this is a ring ribbon tweeter (the same as that on the front).

The subwoofer is powered by an amplifier module operating in Class D, hence the presence of an IEC connection, switch and socket fuse next to the single speaker connectors on the back panel. There we also have two knobs that allow regulation of the amount of treble (+/- 2.5 dB) and bass to a certain extent, though it must be said that the manufacturer recommends setting them at 12 o'clock to start listening because this should be correct in most rooms. The bass knob regulates the amount of gain of the woofer power amplifier. Of course there is nothing to stop one from experimenting on their own, to find the best setting – the treble I actually did not move, but for example when listening to recordings of Marcus Miller I allowed myself a little tweak in the bass – and this is something one can do so easily that strengthening the bass (or the treble) even for only one disc is not a special problem.

Each, quite heavy (about 45 kg), loudspeaker stands on a black plinth, simple spikes are screwed in through the top, which (according to the manufacturer) should protrude only a few millimeters through the base (probably the thing is not to raise the loudspeaker too high – with the tweeter at the height of the ears, and no higher).

The tested Genesis loudspeakers combine advanced technology with fairly simple elements. These straightforward elements include decent but not market-leading high current speaker terminals and the previously mentioned simple solution of spikes screwing into the base of the loudspeakers. Advanced technology include use of a ring-ribbon tweeter (the same that the company uses in its top of the range model), two for each loudspeaker operating in dipole configuration (which significantly reduces distortion arising from the overlapping of successive side-wall reflections of sound waves), and the servo system that controls the bass.

From what he writes in his materials, the idea of the latter is quite simple. It uses an accelerometer to measure the motion of the woofer cone and this signal is compared to the input signal. If the system detects a difference, it corrects the output signal to the

transducer, so that it compensates for the detected differences. This is to aid in the reduction of distortion arising from bass reproduction. As an example the manufacturer gives of this system, in a situation where driver cone does not move as quickly as it should (at a very rapid rise of the signal), the servo system simply "prescribes" a momentary increase in power, which allows the speaker cone to keep up with the signal from the source. The same applies if the signal is rapidly extinguished, and the momentum of the speaker diaphragm does not allow it to slow down with such a rapid suppression of sound - then the control system sends a signal in anti-phase, which makes the diaphragm stop a lot faster. In other situations where the loudspeakers are not equipped with a servo-system, whilst the driving amplifier is of the highest class, audible distortion simply arises, which is perceived as a "pulling bass," or as a problem of timing.

The fact is that listening to the Genesis (though I must admit that they were powered by great, powerful amplifiers - Integra Vitus, or Array Audio monoblocks) gave me the most incredible moments associated with the bass and the biggest impression was of excellent control, or in other words, no distortion in this area. But more about that later.

COMPARISON WITH ART EMOTION CLASSIC 12 SIGNATURE

Audiophiles all have their personal preferences, and when listening to new products, attention is drawn first and foremost to some specific aspects of sound. I have since long been a fan of the more softly toned (tube) equipment. But, often, I can also enjoy equipment with an exceptional top bandwidth - well-voiced, full, airy and clear. Initial listening to the Genesis made me expect, initially, more the second feeling.

I of course first studied the manual, which clearly stated that the optimum position of the loudspeaker should be about 45 cm from the posterior wall (but not closer than 30 cm) - in my situation, the latter worked best. This second tweeter on the back of the loudspeaker should be turned off if you have to be less than 30 cm from the rear wall to the rear of the speakers.

Installed as recommended by the manufacturer, the loudspeakers rewarded me with an extremely clear, detailed sound, to which my ears had to adapt – they rarely get such a magnitude of information in this part of the band.

Since I listened to the Genesis loudspeakers almost immediately after listening to the ART speakers, comparisons are inevitable. These 2 loudspeakers are of two different worlds – the ART is primarily about musicality, smoothness of tone, with emphasis lying in the transmission of tone color. And yet ... from this perspective, I must admit that it is their midrange, to a small extent, but still, the preferred range. The presentation of the loudspeakers is also Scottish Retail and transparent, but these are not the most important characteristics of communication. In the case of the Genesis, it is the amount of extremely precise detail shown and generally the impression of transparency and accuracy of presentation that grabs one at once by the ears. It is by no means being so insistent about the presentation of details (analyticity?) that it kills the music, but a more accurate idea in the approach to high-fidelity – if all these details are contained in the

recording, they will be shown with an open hand.

I must admit that after the very musical and relaxing insertion of the ART, at first I was a little stunned by the presentation of the American loudspeakers, and wondered if that would not be tiring in the long run. But nothing like that happened. What's more - the longer I listened to the loudspeakers, the more I liked them. I have listened two or three days, during which I listened to these loudspeakers probably even ten hours at length (with small breaks), and ended up without a headache, or even fatigue.

Of course we must remember that while the built-in Class D amplifier is responsible to a large extent for the bass, the character of the high frequencies and the midrange are determined by the amplifier which is driving the loudspeaker. The two main ones used during the test were the Vitus RI-100 and Array Audio monoblocks, both high-quality transistors amplifiers, offering smooth coherent sound. They do not add a penny of brightening or sharpening to the sound (unlike what happens with low-and mid-range transistors), or even the "sandy" aka "technical" sound attributed to solid-state amplifiers for such "tube maniacs" like me.

Probably, to some extent, it is thanks to Genesis that they do not sound sharp, dry, or just simply painfully, as might happen when driven by weaker amplification (not only in the sense of power class). The manufacturer mentions in their materials that, given the fact that an active bass module is used, the loudspeaker can also be driven by tube amplifiers, although the suggested minimum power is 25 W - unfortunately I did not have such a tubeamp during the test, so I could not check how the Genesis would sound with tubes. I will not complain, because with just the two amplifiers mentioned above, the transistors played well and thanks to them listening to the American speakers gave me lots of joy and satisfaction.

Digression

At the moment the theme strays away a bit from the loudspeakers (recently something happened to me that diverted the test from the main theme - I hope you are not bored, I am just sharing "discoveries", and you can always just skip this section). Well, while listening to these loudspeaker I got to test cables, among others from Lithuanian manufacturer Lossless (which recently created a sensation in the world - with a lot of great reviews, even from the friendly "6moons.com") and the recommended (by me) Furutech e-TP-609 power strip. Some of you may have noticed that I have kept myself from testing power-units, -bars, -conditioners etc., and this because usually the differences that I can catch are simply negligible, so I would not really have anything to write about.

This time I made an exception, though originally I contacted Lossless for their interconnects and speaker cables (not their power cables), the power cables have been "squeezed" in to me at the delivery. Plugging the setup (on which I tested the Genesis) into power cables from Lossless and the Furutech strip caused a small shock for me (I will not go into detail, because it does not relate to the test, but the loudspeaker and system sounded much better). As I mentioned this has never happened to me before (to

note major changes after testing with different power conditioner/strip). This time the difference was obvious from the first moment, which probably contributed to two issues. The first was to change the entire power supply - all components were plugged with the same power cable to a (single) great power strip.

The second is associated with the extremely transparent system – the Genesis showing everything at a glance, driven by the excellent Array Audio amplifier (some time ago a duoblock was tested, with the pre and phono, and then the manufacturer assured me that the monoblocks are even better - he was right). An implication of this lesson for the future – *power does matter*. End digressions.

The bass, although not one of my personal priorities (especially since listening to the Hansen Prince V2 in my own room, which no loudspeaker has yet been able to match, but are beyond my reach financially), had me simply kidnapped with the Genesis speakers. With Marcus Miller's recording, his mastery of the bass guitar is shown, in some respects better than by any other loudspeaker before, with those Hansens included. Unless there is the perfect control of the subwoofer, bass is not so important to me, because it always sounds as if the strings are being dragged by resonance even when the musician quickly dampens the strings. With the electric bass it is another story. Here, a musician can do everything - almost any sound dragged into infinity, or quickly suppressed. And there appeared the genius (yes, I do not hesitate to use this word) of the servo-control solution. Best way to hear this is when the sound is attenuated in a split second and immediately begins another sound – the Genesis can actually show this, and the other loudspeakers I have heard – cannot. Of course you must take into account that such excellent bass control is the result of the "cooperation" between the amplifier and loudspeakers, but even the fantastic Tenor Audio 175s amplifier did not provide such control over the woofers of the Prince as the servo-system did in the tested loudspeakers (which does not mean that even better amp would not be able to do so). The Genesis not have the bass pregnancy of the Hansen – here there was full freedom even at the lowest frequencies, which physically massaged my intestines.

Here, a similar effect can be achieved with slightly OC bass, but still I did not have feeling so much freedom to reproduce bass, and until such downforce, as in the case of Prince. It is of course a trifle – the tested loudspeakers are circa 5 times cheaper. The Hansen are my ideal bass reproduction and the best speakers I heard at home, but the Genesis probably jumps into second place, and without a shadow of doubt, in the category of price/performance, beating the first loudspeaker on the head.

SUMMARY

I actually wanted to finish this review. But after reading what I've written, I found that I actually did not say too much about the specific experience of listening to music. Why? Somehow that just came out. Simply thinking about all the days of listening I did, I cannot identify any recordings that sounded bad. Regardless of whether I listened to acoustic recordings, or electrical/electronic, vocal or solo instrumental spectaculars, jazz or classical, blues or rock or film music, I sat on the couch as if bewitched. Perhaps if I had finished listening after the first few days, I would have written that the

Genesis is better at playing music electrical/ electronic music, where the fantastic bass control shocks and we are forced to redefine the concept. With acoustic music, still having in mind the ART playing with 300B's, or even with Vitus, I had reservations about the color of the instruments (reservations by comparing precisely because in absolute terms it was so accurate). My change in attitude coincided with the aforementioned change of the entire power system - from that moment on the jazz players reigned with the likes of Ray Brown, Oscar Peterson or Miles Davis and I could not get away from listening, admiring the organic sound of the double bass, piano and trumpet. Next came almost the entire ECM discography of Rodrigo y Gabriela with two fantastic guitars, Tomasz Stanko's trumpet and the violin performances of Hilary Hahn. The same occurred in my mind, as I have previously objected to the coloration of any instrument sound. Some of these recordings were not the best from the standpoint of technical accuracy, and although the present system exposes weaknesses in the CD, it clearly does not disqualify great artistic value and does not destroy listening pleasure, which can happen with analytical systems. Was it a question of changing the power, "reaching out" to the new (at the time of writing) monoblock Array, or perhaps just my preference to another sound - I do not know. For me the most important was that any reservations vanished at the sound.

So I could enjoy the individual records, or recordings. Imagine listening to familiar records, and the Genesis Series 7 showing you everything in a new light. With bass control, that you could not have yet met, and perhaps did not think that is at all possible. With a beautiful, complex, extremely voiced, detailed and precise treble and midrange, that perfectly combines the edges of bands, not giving away one iota of class. The sound is neutral, but not cold, very detailed but not overly analytical. The soundstage is remarkable and it's probably thanks in large extent to the dipolar tweeters. You'll get a little "American" sound, but in the best sense of the word - everything is great (not exaggerated!) - you get a big, powerful wall of sound, but with very precise location of the selected virtual sources, with subsequent plans, with fantastic distances between the various instruments, with minute sounds, wandering reflections on the walls (eg in recordings carried out in the great churches). The sound easily detaches from the speakers - just close your eyes, and it will be difficult to point out where exactly they stand. Their spacing will not limit the size of the stage, and this despite the fact that (especially in the not too large areas) the manufacturer does not recommend their set-up too wide.

Do these speakers have some disadvantages? Hmm ... If I had to nitpick, it can be concluded that they are not too green (in the ecological sense) – at the end, we have two more amps in the system drawing a bit of current [but ultimately with amplifiers operating in class D, and therefore they are as much "green" as possible - editor]. I cannot find any other. They look really good (even if personally I would prefer a different color) they play fantastic - what more could you want? I know what else – to cost a lot less, but after I have already said that it is a great product, that thought is of entirely selfish motives. As for value for money and quality offered, they are rare. As it turned out in my case, the encounter with yeti was absolutely unique and delivered an extraordinary experience. I can only encourage you to not to disregard the loudspeakers

of this brand when you search out new loudspeakers for your systems. Listen and decide for yourselves, but give them a chance - I think it is really worth doing.

Post Scriptum (FOR FANS OF 300B)

I allow myself to such an unusual form, because it is consistent with what actually happened. Having heard the American loudspeakers, I wrote my article, I sent the article to the Chief and the case was essentially closed. Except that:

- a) the loudspeakers were with me a little longer,
- b) I was once again caught up with my discopathy,
- c) I got to listening to my beloved SET 300B amplifiers in the system,
- d) I did not want to move the nearly 40 kg loudspeakers and place the almost 100 kg amplifiers (so heavy are my tube amps with the granite pedestals).

The recommendations provided by Genesis are clear: "loudspeakers can be connected to tube amplifiers, but the minimum recommended power is 25 watts per channel." The 300B can "squeeze" out 8 W (for 8 Ω) and the Mastersound amplifier is no exception in this matter. Given all the circumstances, however, I thought "what the hell?" At least I will have something playing until I have the strength to replace the loudspeakers, and by the way the amplifier is a little "tease". So, I plugged it in, fired up Rodrigo y Gabriela concert and ... I loved the Genesis even more. I do not know why the manufacturer recommends a minimum of 25 W - with the disposal of only 8, the volume was not turned outside the hour 9 (to be clear: the scale starts on the 6th!). The bass of course fared well with the built-in amplifiers, which admittedly with the Mastersound took on a slightly rounded, but very colorful, well-differentiated, beefy bass and imposed incredible control and added more dynamic kick. In this way, the bass was the best I have heard from 300B tubes - of course I remember about the integration of the entire servo-system and Class D amplifiers hidden in the loudspeakers, but the fact remains - the bass was excellent. Add to that a fantastic midrange of my beloved triodes, which the Genesis gave almost as good as my wide-rangers, and of even the paramount, dipole highs that put such a "dot above and" - this is difficult to describe the natural softness and even more realistic soundstage. The whole meant that if I had to end my job as a reviewer and simply just listen for pleasure, then (as far as financially possible of course) I would chose my SET with exactly these loudspeaker here. And I would happy. I know that it means nothing of the whole myths of the purist "300B plus horns" thing... seeking phenomenal midrange class and hoping to complement excellent bass and outstanding high frequencies. The Genesis provides such a possibility, even if the manufacturer did not take it into account.

CONSTRUCTION

G7.1f is a fairly large 5-speaker, 3-way floor standing speaker with an active module the bass. At the front there are two 6-inch midrange speakers with diaphragms made of

titanium, and a 1-inch ribbon ring tweeter. A second, identical tweeter is placed on the rear of the loudspeaker, so that if you can set loudspeaker in the appropriate (not less than 30 cm, optimally about 45 cm) distance from the rear wall, this second tweeter operates in dipole. An 8-inch woofer with an aluminum cone is placed on the side of the loudspeaker. It is driven by a class D amplifier with 180 W of power (per channel). The bass module also incorporates a special servo system, in which an accelerometer measures the deflection of the woofer diaphragm and compares it to the input signal. If the system finds differences, it corrects the signal supplied to the amplifier, so to compensate for detected discrepancies.

On the rear panel, besides the individual speaker connectors is an IEC socket (obviously required by the power amplifier), fuse and switch bass module. Additional features include a rear tweeter switch (which is used if the loudspeaker is placed near the rear wall) and regulation of high and low frequencies. The loudspeaker was equipped with magnetic grilles - the manufacturer does not recommend removing them for listening.

The solidly constructed enclosure is painted with high gloss paint (black front panel, the rest dark gray), which combined with the slender shape gives it a modern look. The loudspeaker rests on a black pedestal, into which are screwed in four simple, yet robust spikes.

Technical data (according to manufacturer):

Construction: 3-way

Frequency Response: 22 Hz to 36 kHz, + / - 3dB

Sensitivity: 89 dB (1 W, 1 m)

Nominal Impedance: 8 Ω

Tweeters 2 x 1 inch ribbon ring Genesis

Midrange: 2 x 6 inch speakers Genesis titanium diaphragm

Low frequency driver: 1 x 8-inch cone speaker with aluminum Genesis

Built-in amplifier: 180 W Class D

Dimensions: 1224 x 305 x