



## **Imperial Series™ LISZT Reference – Owners Manual**

Thank you for your investment in one of the world's most advanced loudspeaker designs available. We have worked tirelessly to produce this loudspeaker system and trust that you will enjoy the musical performance this product offers. To achieve this new level of performance, special care has been taken in the construction, the materials and the execution of this entirely new design. In order to take full advantage of your new loudspeaker system, critical setup attention must be taken to ensure that it performs as intended.

Please read this manual carefully and utilize the setup suggestions discussed. Ultimately, the most important part of the process is to listen to music and enjoy. Our suggestions are just that, suggestions. If you find in your listening environment that a slightly different adjustment in setup results in a more enjoyable sonic picture, then follow it. All rooms are different and thus, we cannot give an accurate, single installation instruction guide that will cover all possible environments. Please feel free to contact us or your local distributor with any setup related questions. It is our collective goal to ensure that you achieve the best possible performance out of this sophisticated product.

Thank you again and happy listening.

Sincerely,  
Your Vienna Acoustics Team

## Product Description

### Technology

The Imperial Series™ LISZT *Reference* loudspeaker features an extensive list of new technologies. Beginning with the new patented Flat-Spider-Cone™ midrange driver, special care has been taken with the choice of materials and crafting. This driver is created from a compound of several thermal plastic polymers as well as added glass fibers. This material composition offers both a considerable stiffness to mass ratio while also possessing the necessary self silencing necessary to ensure a lack of coloration in sound reproduction. That is, the cone material itself is virtually silent eliminating the need for notch type filters in the crossover. The goal is to eliminate the problem of cone resonances before they begin. Added to the special material composition is the new flat design which further removes the sonic signature of the driver by eliminating the cone diffraction of the cone walls most often referred to as horn-loading. It is through the process of concentrating on both physical construction or forming and with special quiet materials that we are able to achieve this new level of performance that is free of the normal mechanical limitations as well as resonances present in most conventional midrange cone designs.

LISZT *Reference* is the result of a many year development project working to further advance our patented Flat-Spider-Cone™ coincident driver system first used in our flagship model, The Music, as well as throughout the rest of the Klimt Series™.

By concentrating on driver development, in both the mechanical domain and the material domain, we are left with the ideal of a highly simplified cross-over. As with our other designs, we begin with a first order cross-over. This we believe allows us to achieve the most seamless integration of all of the drivers into a single, cohesive whole. This is in part why we have chosen to offer only the purest and simplest hook up interface of single-wire terminals. Special care has also been taken with the formulation of the alloys used in these propriety Vienna Acoustics speaker terminals to ensure the quietest connection interface between speaker and speaker wire.

In addition to this entirely new flat midrange driver, we have installed a special, hand crafted silk dome tweeter in its middle or pole location. Doing so allows for a timing or phase correctness that cannot otherwise be achieved. Ultimately our final complete coincident driver pairing is capable of reproducing the entire human vocal range, and beyond, without any cross-over interference particularly within the most critical human vocal range. The end result is a system that takes on a presence which until now has only been available in compact monitors. A further advantage of this design is the mentioned timing or phase correctness of the overall combination. The complete assembly results in a dispersion characteristic that creates much more of a "sweet area" versus the typical "sweet spot" found in most designs. For this reason we prefer to describe this entire assembly as the *Music Center*.

## Construction

LISZT *Reference* features a top section or head which is a completely independent module of equal internal volumes. This construction allows us to control and carefully position the critical *Music Center*. To eliminate the potential for extraneous mechanical information to reach up from the bass cabinet, the *Music Center* is similarly attached through one centered high grade aluminium turning mechanism. The overall goal with this sophisticated design is to allow the entire *Music Center* to be positioned at its optimal angle towards the chosen listening position while also being completely isolated mechanically from the bass cabinet.

***Caution:*** *Under no circumstances should the speaker be carried or moved by holding the Music Center. The result can be permanent damage to the adjustment mechanism.*

The bass cabinet of LISZT *Reference* is sophisticatedly divided into two chambers. The top woofer occupies its own cabinet with dedicated venting. The two additional woofers share their own dedicated cabinet with venting port. The three Vienna Acoustics proprietary X3P Spider-Cone™ woofers are then run in parallel with the upper bass unit most directly extending the bass performance of the *Music Center* and the two lower bass units aiding in further extending bass and overall dynamics. This entire bass assembly acts far more like integrated subwoofers compared to more typical bass units.

With a complete speaker system of such mass, it was also necessary to develop special hardware that not only would allow for the fine adjustment in final setup but one that is substantial enough to physically support it. Each individual spiked foot features an oversized threaded center core with a large specially formed head allowing for easy adjustment. Additionally, there are four lock ring nuts that allow for the final locking of each spiked foot after proper setup has been completed. In the event these speakers are installed on fine wood or stone floors, specially created floor protectors are also supplied.

***Caution:*** *We strongly recommend to install the base hardware for optimal performance.*

## Accessories LISZT Reference Base-Kit

ALUMINIUM BRACKETS: 2 pcs.

SPIKES with LOCKING NUTS: 4 pcs.

PROTECTION PLATES for SPIKES: 4 pcs.

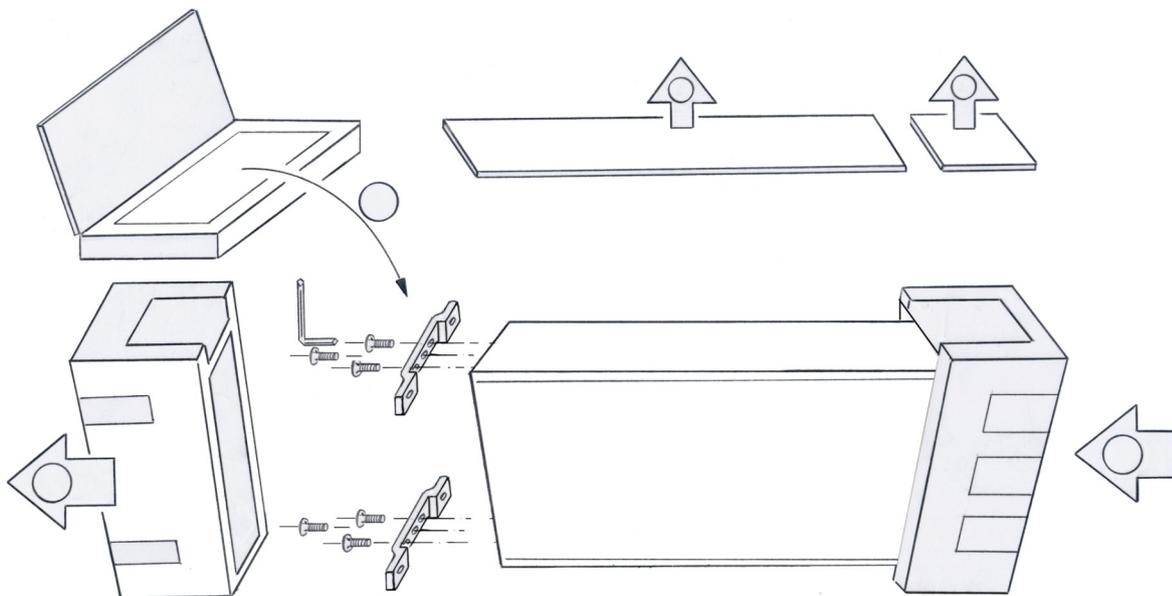
HEXAGON BOLTS for fixing the BRACKETS: 6 pcs.

HEXAGON TOOL (Allen Wrech Key): 1 pce.

HEX DRIVER 2mm: 1 pce.

for fixing the Turing Mechanism of the upper Speaker Cabinet (*Music Center*) in any chosen position (0 to 28 degrees).

GLOVES: 2 pcs.



**Caution:** Please carefully put the speaker on its backside, while mounting the base-kit.

## **Connection Instructions**

### **Amplification**

The most common question asked of a speaker manufacturer is whether valve amplification or solid state amplification is preferred. The simple answer to this question is that we require good electronics. There are many fine examples of both amplifier technologies that will work perfectly with this loudspeaker system. We as designers and manufacturers have done all we can to insure the greatest flexibility in amplifier selection.

There are a couple primary considerations that should be kept in mind when selecting a proper paired amplifier for this loudspeaker system. First, what are your listening habits? Do you listen to extremely dynamic material at high volume levels? If so, you should consider a more powerful amplifier. Second, do you have an unusually large space that these speakers are being installed in? If so, again you should consider a higher powered amplifier. Otherwise, our recommendation is to select the finest sounding quality amplifier in the fifty and above wattage range (see specifications). This can be either valve or solid state. The sonic differences in these designs are of personal preference.

### **Cable Selection**

Cable selection is a difficult area of discussion. So many aspects of cable design and sonic signature exists that careful and thorough investigation with your audio retailer is recommended. We have worked extremely hard with a variety of cable manufacturers selecting the internal wiring used. Aside from this, we must refer you back to your dealer and suggest taking the greatest care in listening. Remember, the goal of this speaker system is to produce music.

We encourage and recommend the use of high quality speaker cables and believe them to be an interesting tool for the enthusiast in obtaining maximum enjoyment from their music reproduction system. High quality cabling is capable of finetuning a system for performance. As with any purchase, listen carefully and allow your ears to guide you.

### **Connections**

The massive Vienna Acoustics input terminals are designed to accept banana plugs, spade terminals or bare wire connection. Make certain that all connections are well tightened since poor contact between speaker cable and input connector can lead to degradation of sound quality.

It is also a good idea to make a point of regularly cleaning all connections in your system since oxidation will build up on a regular basis. We use gold/silver terminals which do not oxidize, but contaminants or surface build-up on your speaker cables and connectors may degrade sound quality.

While it is popular among some audiophile circles to fit duplicate sets of binding posts for "bi-wiring", we have chosen to follow sound engineering practises. Our crossovers are configured as an organic whole, intended to optimize every known aspect of driver integration.

It is our belief that with the high quality of wire currently available, it is in most cases possible to obtain higher performance from a single run of superior cable to two lesser runs of cable. By keeping a single ground plane in our crossover design, we are better able to control the many variables that can be negatively affected by poorly executed bi-wiring choices. The result for you is consistently superior musical reproduction.

## **Setup Instructions**

### **Break-In**

While there has been exhaustive testing performed on all parts of this speaker system throughout the manufacturing process, proper break-in is necessary. This process does not take particularly long, but special care during this process is particularly important.

The most critical time in the overall break-in process is the first fifty hours. During this time please desist from playing the speaker system at exceptionally high volume levels. While completing the initial break-in period the speakers should only be played at comfortable listening levels. The easiest way to complete this process is to place a CD on repeat and play the speakers for a few days. The speakers will sound fine during this period. However, you will experience a blending of all the drivers into a more coherent single sounding speaker as the process is completed.

The second stage is much more gradual and one that may not be noticed immediately. This is the fifty to approximately three-hundred hour period. During this final period of break-in, there is a further refinement in the micro-dynamics or inner detail that will become more defined. In other words, the presence of the musicians becomes more intimate. It is during this period that final setup should be completed.

### **Positioning LISZT *Reference***

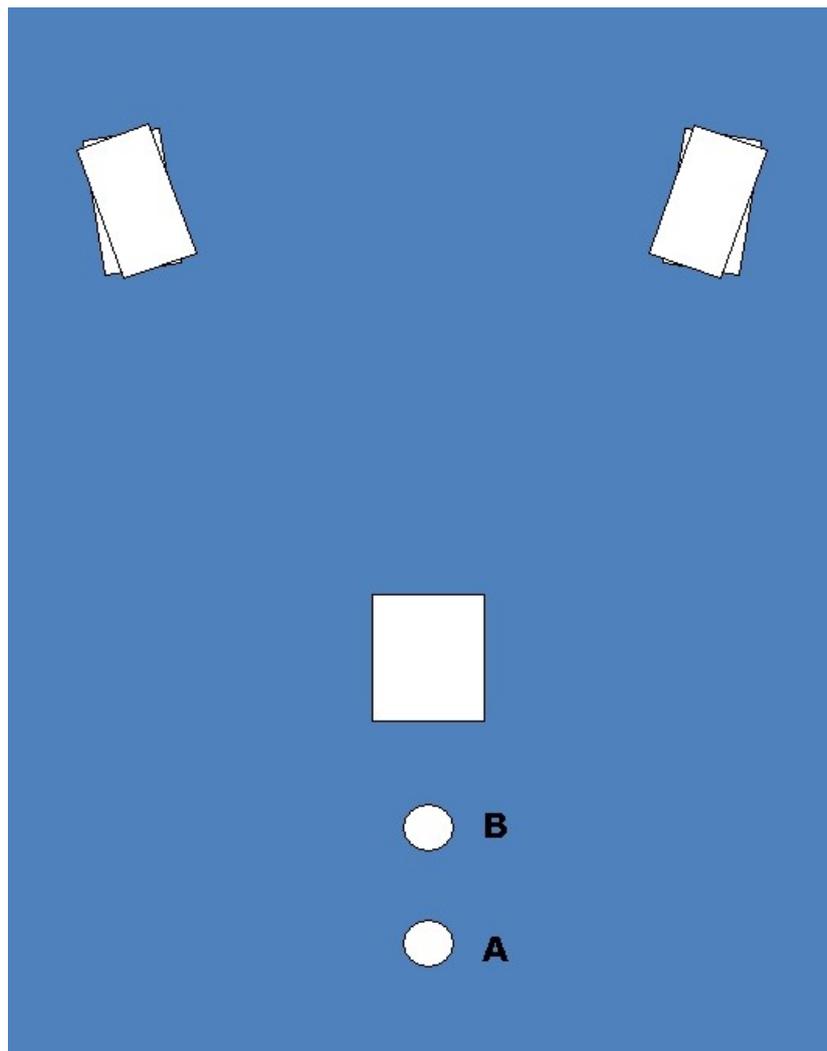
While there are several recommended methods used in proper speaker setup, the only process that we believe in is one that includes listening. If you are not listening to the speakers, it will be impossible for you to know whether you are making the correct adjustments.

The first area of consideration when setting up a large scale, sophisticated speaker system, is the distance between the speakers. Unfortunately, it is our

experience that people leave their speakers positioned far too close together to take full advantage of the scale and size of presentation that a modern reference speaker system is capable of. The basic rule to follow is to position the speakers with at least an equal distance between the left and right channels as you are from them. For example, if you are three meters away from the speakers, the speakers should be at least three meters apart.

The second area of setup is commonly referred to as toe-in. With a two-piece speaker design, this process requires more care than the typical single cabinet design. The simple starting rule is to have the bass or lower cabinets aimed approximately one to two meters behind the center or listening position (A) while the top or *Music Center* is aimed approximately one-half this distance (B). See the following image:

**Caution:** Before attempting any movement of the Music Center, please make sure that the turning mechanism of the speaker is unlocked. It is possible to force the movement of the Music Center when it is locked down. Doing so will permanently damage the pivoting hardware.



Following the positioning or toeing-in, attention needs to be turned to the distance of the speakers with respect to the back and side walls of your listening room. While it is possible to achieve positive results positioning the speakers close to the rear wall, this position typically gives up some potential bass extension as well as some soundstage depth. Ideally, the best starting place is approximately one meter from the rear wall. This distance is also a recommended starting point from the side walls. However, because of the driver selection and their dispersion characteristics, it is possible to get quite close to the side walls with care. In the event that the room does not allow anything else, distance apart will be far more critical than the actual distance from the side walls.

With LISZT *Reference*, before moving the speakers into the room it is necessary to have the spiked foot kit installed. We suggest starting with each spike set with approximately one centimeter of thread between the top of the foot bracket and the bottom of the lock rings. This will allow for the greatest amount of adjustment when doing the final fine adjustments. With the speakers playing something with extended pulsing bass, something like a full double bass instrument, carefully pull the speakers further into the room until a natural, fully resolved and extended bass line can be heard. What you are listening for is full resolution without a boominess or slowness. Typically you will find this location within one to two meters from the back wall. It may be necessary to use furniture slides given the weight of each speaker in order to complete this step. Remember to never move the complete speaker by handling the *Music Center*. All movements must be done by gripping the bass cabinet only.

After achieving ideal bass performance, carefully ensure that the cabinets are level and stable. This should provide for a noticeable improvement in the clarity and definition in bass performance. At this point, final adjustments to the *Music Center* should be done.

Before attempting any movement of the *Music Center*, please make sure that the turning mechanism of the speaker is unlocked. Then, carefully make small adjustments both angling in the *Music Center* both in and out on either side until the desired sonic image is achieved. The basic rule is that movements towards the listening position (in) will result in a slightly warmer sound while movements away from the listening position (out) will offer greater clarity and speed. As with all experiences, too much of a good thing is no longer good. Too much warmth results in a dullness, while too much clarity and speed will result in a harshness. After finding the ideal balance, please mind to lock the *Music Center* in the selected position; over tightening is not necessary.

As mentioned from the beginning, this setup guide is just that, a guide. Nothing can replace careful listening within the given room of installation. If you find that an adjustment in your system, which is contrary to these recommendations, yields better sound and more musical results, trust that first. Ultimately your ears are the most important tool in proper speaker setup.

## **Fine Adjustments for LISZT *Reference***

Before attempting to work with any of the following fine tuning recommendations, please be sure you have exhausted all prior recommendations.

Careful adjustment of LISZT *Reference*'s main bass cabinet has the potential of improving both detail as well as overall bass extension. By carefully listening to something with a pronounced and rhythmic bass, like that of the double bass instrument recommended earlier, listen to each speaker and determine where in height off of the floor the bass line has the greatest detail and coherence. If this location is lower than the listening position, carefully extend the front spikes until this clearer position is aimed at the seated location. Be aware that adjustments as small as an 1/8-turn can have dramatic results. As earlier, pay special attention to the stability of the speaker. In the event that greater clarity was higher than the listening position, do the reverse.

Toe-in of the overall cabinet as well as distance between the speakers can also result in improvements in overall clarity and resolution. If there appears to be a doubling or sluggishness to the center of the sound stage, try pulling the speakers slightly further apart or aim the overall cabinet further away from the listening position. If there is a vagueness to the soundstage or a lack of central focus, it is possible that you will need to either move the speakers closer together or angle-in the overall cabinet slightly more.

## **Listening**

After having completed a thorough break-in and then completing a full and comprehensive setup, listening can and should begin in full earnestness. As with the city we live, design, work and ultimately build this product in, Vienna is about music, music and music. While most acclaimed for our classical music halls and performances, Vienna also has one of the most vibrant jazz scenes as well as rock and everything in between.

Music comes in all colors and forms. We are not here to tell you what to listen to. We have done all we can to produce a product that is capable of reproducing the music that all of us at Vienna Acoustics listens to. What does that mean? Simply put, all music!  
Just listen and enjoy.