



# MARTEN

## A SWEDISH SUCCESS STORY

**F**amous Swedish loudspeaker manufacturer Marten is a family concern. It's run by three brothers. Jörgen Olofsson is Marten's CEO, Leif Olofsson is Marten's Chief Designer, and Lars Olofsson is Marten's Art Director. So why isn't the company called Olofsson? It's because it was Leif who originally founded the company (in 1998) and his full name is Leif Mårten Olofsson. Originally called Marten Design, the company abbreviated its name to the crisper, snappier 'Marten' in 2007.

In 2018, to commemorate its 20th anniversary, Marten released the Mingus 20, which it calls a 'special edition' of the company's first production speaker, which was called the Mingus, but since the original Mingus was a two-way design, and the Mingus 20 is a three-way design, it's obviously a very special edition! In fact, the Mingus 20 is essentially a custom version of the company's current Mingus Quintet (pictured left). Marten says it has built only 20 pairs of the Mingus 20, all using Jorma Statement cables for their internal wiring, all with 'exclusive' components used in the crossover network and all finished with a solid Zebrano wood top. It also says it will build no more, so it is truly a 'limited edition' 20th anniversary loudspeaker.

Apparently, the reason Marten chose to use the 'Mingus' name on a completely different loudspeaker design from the original Mingus was because the Mingus model name holds a special place in the company's corporate heart.

*"It was a Eureka moment when the first Marten loudspeaker was born," says Olofsson. "Leif christened it 'Mingus' and it was a two-way, floor-standing model with one bass unit and one tweeter. The next model was a bigger 2.5-way floorstander, that he called 'Miles'. Miles is still available today, now in its fifth version."*

One common thread that has run through all Marten designs, from the original Mingus to the new Mingus 20 and 2018's Coltrane Momento 2 is that they use drivers with pure ceramic diaphragms that are made for them in Germany by Accuton or — since 2003 — Accuton tweeters with pure diamond tweeters. In fact it was Leif's discovery of Accuton's ceramic diaphragm drivers in the mid '90s that spurred him to start building loudspeakers professionally in the first

place. Prior to then he had been only a 'spare time' speaker builder, starting this pursuit while he was studying as an electronics engineer, and continuing with it after he'd graduated. However, after using Accuton's ceramic drivers in his designs for the first time he realised that he was building better-sounding loudspeakers than were commercially available at the time.

*"The rigid pure ceramic cones produced a cleaner, totally transparent sound," he said. "I heard more detail in recordings than ever before, accompanied by greater natural dynamics and extreme speed."*

Since Leif's discovery of Accuton, all Marten speakers have used Accuton drivers, except for the 'FormFloor' subwoofer which is now essentially a discontinued product, and the Django L and Django XL, both of which use bass drivers sourced from nearby Norway (from SEAS). Given that Marten's website states that its speakers are 'Made in Sweden', yet the Accuton drivers are made in Germany, and the SEAS drivers in Norway, we asked Jorgen if there were any other components used in Marten loudspeakers that are not made in Sweden.

*"Many of the components we use in our crossovers are sourced in Germany," said Jorgen, "and our cabinets are made in Sweden, Estonia and Poland, while our metal parts come from different*



Relax in your own surroundings and enjoy music, exactly as it sounds in real life, fully reliving the moment. It's like meditation. It's the Marten way."

THE THREE BROTHERS MARTEN: CEO JÖRGEN OLOFSSON (LEFT), CHIEF DESIGNER & FOUNDER LEIF OLOFSSON (CENTRE), AND ART DIRECTOR LARS OLOFSSON.



## MARTEN TIMELINE

<b>1998</b>	Mingus	2-way floorstander
<b>1999</b>	Miles	2.5-way floorstander
<b>2000</b>	Monk	2-way stand speaker
	Mingus 2	2-way floorstander
<b>2001</b>	Miles 2	2.5-way floorstander
<b>2002</b>	Mingus 3	2-way floorstander
<b>2003</b>	Coltrane	3-way floorstander
	Miles 3	2-way floorstander
<b>2004</b>	Coltrane Alto	3-way floorstander
<b>2005</b>	Duke	2-way stand speaker
	Ellington	active bass unit
<b>2006</b>	Coltrane Supreme	4-way with active bass towers
<b>2007</b>	Bird	3-way floorstander
<b>2008</b>	FormFloor/Centre/Sub	
<b>2009</b>	Coltrane Soprano	2-way floorstander
<b>2010</b>	Coltrane Momento	3-way floorstander
	Getz	3-way floorstander
<b>2011</b>	Coltrane 2	3-way floorstander
	M.Amp	mono amplifier
<b>2012</b>	Django XL	3-way floorstander
	Heritage Update	
	Bird 2	3-way floorstander
	Getz 2	3-way floorstander
	Miles 5	2-way floorstander
	Duke 2	2-way floorstander
<b>2013</b>	Coltrane Tenor	3-way floorstander
	Django L	3-way floorstander
<b>2014</b>	Coltrane Supreme 2	5-way floorstander + passive radiators
<b>2015</b>	Coltrane 3	3-way floorstander
<b>2016</b>	Mingus Quintet	3 way floorstander
<b>2017</b>	Coltrane Tenor 2	3-way floorstander
<b>2018</b>	Coltrane Momento 2	4-way floorstander + passive radiators
	Mingus Twenty	3-way floorstander

suppliers around the world. The technical design and the exterior design, development, mounting the crossovers, assembling the speakers, testing, quality control, polishing and taking care of finish issues, packaging and shipping are from our headquarters just outside Gothenburg centre in Sweden."

Another common thread that links all Marten loudspeakers — except for the previously mentioned 'FormFloor' — is that all are named after famous jazz musicians. We'd already guessed at the reason why this might be, but we had to ask the obvious, so that's the question we put to Jorgen Olofsson and it turns out that he moonlights as a jazz musician, playing drums every week for one of Gothenburg's oldest blues bands. Leif used to play bass guitar in a local rock band in the brothers' home town, while Lars composes music on his computer.

*"Leif, Lars and I — along with most other people that are working together at Marten — all like jazz," Jorgen told us. "But the real reason to use famous jazz names is that these guys are really cool. I mean who can be cooler than Miles or Coltrane?"*

The three brothers say they inherited their musical talents and their appreciation of music from their parents. Says Jorgen: *"Music was present in our family from the very start; it was part of our upbringing. Our mother played piano, and we were all singers, particularly our father, who sang in choir for all his life. He was also a big fan of classical music."*

Olofsson says that jazz recordings are unique in almost always using unamplified acoustic instruments, while the engineers who record it mostly take extreme care to capture the instrument sound faithfully, so the highest-quality recordings are often to be found on jazz titles. Marten is now ensuring this tradition is maintained, because it has built its own recording studio at its headquarters just outside Gothenburg centre in Sweden and is actively recording not only jazz musicians, but also acoustic instruments across all genres of music. However Olofsson was keen to emphasise that this interest in jazz on the part of the company and the three brothers — particularly Leif, who does all the designing — does not mean that Marten speakers are designed exclusively with the reproduction of jazz — or even of acoustic instruments — specifically in mind.

*"I want to underline that that Marten speakers are not only made for jazz or other genres using acoustic instruments," he told Esoterica. "Marten speakers are meant to be all-round but they sound so much better if the recording standard is high quality and this high standard is mostly to be found in acoustic music genres."*

So far, Marten has released five recordings made in its new recording studio, and all are



△ MARTEN IS NOW MAKING ITS OWN RECORDINGS IN A DEDICATED STUDIO. NICE PLAYBACK MONITORS!

available direct from Marten: 'Supreme Sessions 1, 2 & 3' (CD, LP and download), 'Carousel' by Rhythm Art Duo (CD) and 'Duo' by Swedish violin/marimba duo Granmo-Berg.

Swedish products are renowned for their functionality, and Marten speakers ascribe to this same tradition, so that each Marten speaker's function is given priority over its form, yet at the same time encapsulating the Swedish spirit of form meeting function in harmony.

*"You'll find no unnecessarily showy elements," says Jorgen. "Every little detail is there for a reason — to offer a fantastic musical experience to the listener."*



Marten speakers are meant to be all-round but they sound so much better if the recording standard is high quality...

As for the company's philosophy, that too is simple. Says Jorgen, *"The Marten design philosophy is to produce loudspeakers that reproduce, as faithfully as possible, the original performance captured in a recording — all the fantastic musical moments that music fans cherish — and reproducing the sound strictly as it was recorded, without colouring or distorting it with false softness, warmth or fullness. Our goal is to reproduce reality, as closely as possible."*



Many loudspeaker manufacturers around the world ascribe to that aim, and a few achieve it, but the speakers that they design to achieve this result are often described as being 'incompatible with modern living rooms'. Olofsson says that Marten aims to achieve its goals of reproducing reality using speakers of modest dimensions that will look good in any domestic environment.

*"We also look to reproduce this reality, in a real living space, with attractive-looking designs that are easy to position in a room — something other high-end speaker manufacturers don't allow for," says Olofsson. "In this way you can relax in your own surroundings and enjoy music, exactly as it sounds in real life, fully reliving the moment. It's like meditation. It's the Marten way." £*