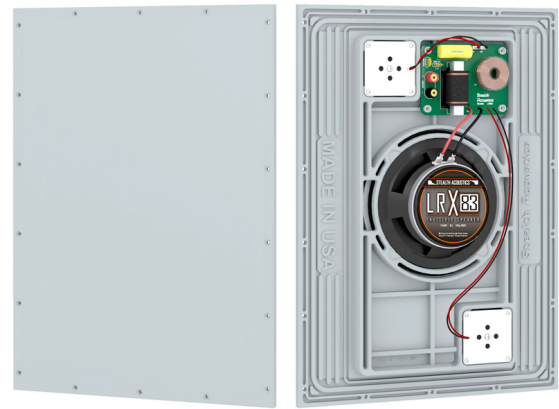


## Stealth Acoustics LRX-83 Invisible In-wall Speakers

By Jerry Del Colliano | December 18, 2019

It is no secret to readers that I simply love invisible speakers. I started into the world of invisibles in my last house (which I sold this past spring) almost on a dare. You see, most AV reviewers have a hard time with in-wall speaker reviews, and invisibles are a whole other level of complexity and cost to review, so Sonance basically said, "Look, we will give you the in-walls that you might want to use in your place if you just try one pair of our invisibles." It isn't uncommon for in-wall speakers to stay installed as a part of the review process, since paying to patch, sand, and paint a reviewer's drywall is easily as expensive as just



### HTR Product Rating

Performance	★★★★
Value	★★★★
Overall	★★★★

leaving the speakers in. Well, if I knew back then what I know now, I would have asked for all invisible speakers. I just loved the look, the concept, and, amazingly, the sound.

If this is the first you are hearing about invisible speakers, the concept is that you can install in-wall speakers that emit energy differently than traditional in-walls, in that they have a flat transducer (or transducers) that can be covered by (most likely) drywall mud or wallpaper or fabric. The end result is singularly the most wife acceptance factor product that the AV industry has ever seen. Or not seen, when you get right down to it. When friends come over and want to check out my AV system, I often start by pointing at the speakers in the ceiling in the living and

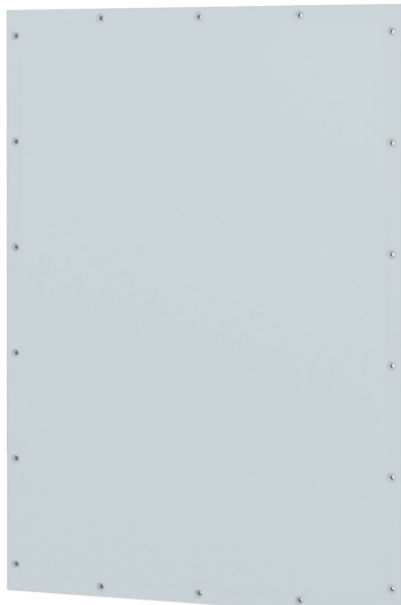
dining room like an idiot, which is course part of the gag because there's nothing to see. Start playing some music through them, though, and there's an "ah ha!" moment for all of my guests.

Paired with a subwoofer, these speakers deliver wonderfully dynamic sound without contributing to any sort of "wall/ceiling acne." And in a home like this, that really makes a difference. I worked hard and spent enthusiastically to get rid of the gold hardware throughout my house and replace it with brushed nickel. I replaced each and every light switch with Crestron keypads (not fully programmed yet but coming soon to a living room near you). I replaced every electrical outlet. I got rid of the stained,

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nasty HVAC vents and replaced them with brushed nickel vents that are much nicer looking. We even replaced all of the six-inch, out-of-date lighting cans with new three inch LED cans that are color adjustable to 2700 Kelvin. This all sets up the venue for the Stealth Acoustics LRX-83 speakers.



### Technology & Design

The Stealth Acoustics LRX-83 is a three-way, full range, invisible speaker made in America. Unlike most other invisible speakers, Stealth utilizes a combination of transducers and traditional cone woofers in every model in the line. Stealth owns a patent on this driver configuration, and claims that the inclusion of the cone woofer driver is a big benefit when it comes to performance. With the optional back box installed, there is reported bass extension as low as 40 Hz. With a subwoofer, and Stealth Acoustics makes invisible ones, you can expect true, full range sound from your invisible setup. Much like other invisibles, the Stealth Acoustics LRX-83s have not one but two protection circuits that protect your installed speaker investment when your kids are trying to play Kanye at 130 dB while you are on vacation. And thank God for that.

### Installation

By no means was I going to install these speakers myself, as that is way above my pay grade. Simply Home Entertainment punched up my walls and ceilings to mount the Stealth Acoustics LRX-83s in the stud bays of my ceilings. That part is about the same as any in-wall or ceiling speaker. The patching of the holes and mudding and sanding of the skim coat over the speaker is the part that is where invisibles get more expensive. But also, as the name suggests, more stealth. There is significant mess made in this process, and there is additional cost versus just snapping grills into place and being done with it.

With that said, the aesthetic improvements are so substantial over traditional in-walls or in-ceiling speakers that I can't imagine not using invisibles for most applications going forward.

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Placement is a key issue for many when it comes to invisible speakers, specifically when talking about imaging. In-ceiling applications are excellent for background music, but if you are trying to get a more high-performance installation, you will likely want to install the speakers in-wall and more like traditional speakers. Invisibles can image better than you might expect when installed thoughtfully. What they can't do that traditional speakers can is present an incredible depth in soundstage. That's just physics. Physics also suggest that traditional speakers can't disappear in your living room, so there is some give and take.

### Listening Impressions

For most of my listening, I focused on the sound of the Stealth Acoustics LRX-83s on their own. The source that I have been most compelled by is Amazon's new HD Music, which offers a wealth of audiophile-quality streaming. I haven't gotten that deep into Sonos and all of its streaming music options just yet otherwise, but Amazon HD provides a lot of diverse tunes at seemingly good resolution.

On the sing-songy "Killer Queen" by Queen (Amazon HD), I loved the level of detail that I could hear on the piano in the opening moments. The super-overdubbed Freddy backup singer effect was lively and fun.

Brian May's guitar had air around it and retained its unique sonic signature without sounding muffled.

My only critique is that the speakers being in the ceiling didn't image as fantastically as they could have if they were in the wall. With that said, that is not any ding on the speakers so much as the physical reality of my office.

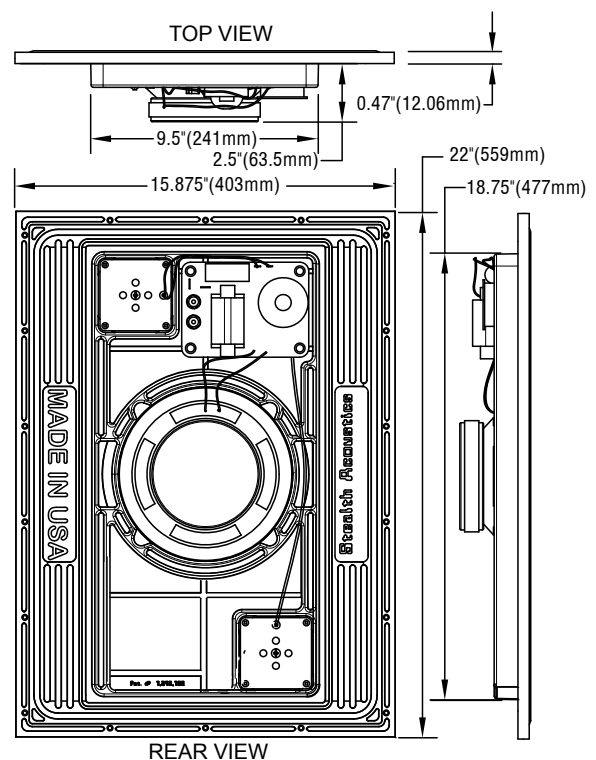
Although this song will always be tied to the last scene in *The Sopranos*, "Don't Stop Believing" (Pandora via Sonos) sounded both familiar and correct to my ears. This legendary track has a lot of space and uses its dynamic window nicely as it builds in intensity. The bass guitar isn't thunderous without the subwoofer, but it is clearly there and as good as any larger, traditional in-ceiling speaker.

Steve Perry's voice beams while the rest of the musical bed is layered nicely - not compressed or muddy as one might stereotypically expect from something like an invisible speaker.

To torture test the LRX-83s (and you knew I would), I fired up Disturbed's cover of the Genesis classic "Land of Confusion," which is loaded with dynamic, growling guitars, strong bass, and lots of production cues.

At meaningful levels one might expect to hear a dull sound because of the skim coat over the speakers, but that isn't the case. The tonality of the track sounded great, realistic. The dynamics were powerful even without a sub.

These speakers can, without question, rock.



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### High Points

- You literally can't see the speaker, but you sure as hell can hear it, and when you do it sounds far better than most expect.
- Made in the United States is a nice perk for consumer electronics in 2019, as most everything today is made in China.
- I didn't do it, but I like the idea of these speakers being covered by wallpaper or fabric.
- Say goodbye to wall and/or ceiling acne.

### Low Points

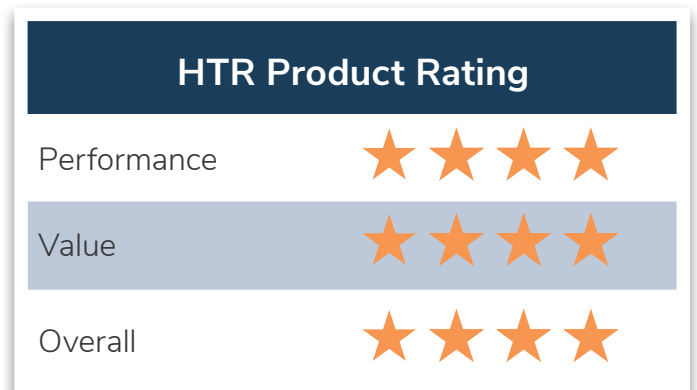
- If you're looking for realistic imaging, the LRX-83s really need to be installed in your walls rather than in-ceiling.
- There's an increased cost associated with these speakers that has nothing to do with MSRP. They require more labor from your AV installer, as well as even more of a spend on your drywall and painting contractor. Then again, when you're done, they disappear entirely, which is pretty damn cool.
- You don't need a subwoofer, but you want one to do truly full range sound in rooms that can justify the investment.

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### Conclusion

In my new house, I didn't just use invisible speakers for distributed music around the house; I also used them for effects channel speakers in my pending family room home theater. The invisible concept is simply a game changer and the Stealth Acoustics LRX-83 is a strong performer. Yes, you can spend less money on traditional in-wall or in-ceiling speakers if budget is a key factor, but if you've got the coin to spring for invisible speakers, you owe it to yourself to take a look at the Stealth Acoustics lineup of products - especially they LRX-83 which is simply an excellent all-around invisible speaker option.



### Additional Resources

- [Visit the Stealth Acoustics website](#) for more product information.
- The review originally appeared in [HomeTheaterReview.com](#) and has been formatted for the local market.

[View the original here](#)



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