

AUDIO
FILE

Six-driver, DSP-controlled active speaker/eight-driver sub
 Made by: Kii Audio, Bergisch Gladbach Germany
 Supplied by: Sound Design Distribution Ltd, Cardiff, UK
 Telephone: (0)800 009 6213
 Web: www.kiiaudio.com; www.sounddesigndistribution.co.uk
 Price: £29,990-£32,290 (with Kii Control)



Kii Audio THREE BXT

Following in the 'multi-driver active speakers with clever DSP control' path of B&Os Beolab 90 [HFN Dec '16], we had the less ambitious Kii THREE [HFN Aug '18]. But what you see here is the £29,990 THREE BXT – the Kii THREE atop a 'bass bin', to put it simply (and a retrofit for existing users at £16,670/pr).

In each THREE BXT there are ten Ncore Class D power amplifiers. The THREE itself, which can be removed from the BXT and used independently if required, contains six – one per drive unit (tweeter, midrange, two side-firing drivers, and two rear-firing drivers) – while the BXT has four driving its eight drivers (four forward-firing, four side-firing) in pairs, with each amplifier rated at 500W/2ohm.

'They slammed into the track with a literal kick in the drums'

Mating the THREE and BXT is easy, as is decoupling them. The THREE slides into position on lipped rails, and short electrical connections for mains power, signal and data are made between the rear panel of the THREE and top rear panel of the BXT. These are then made to the BXT's lower panel, a three-pin XLR providing for either analogue or AES/EBU digital inputs.

USB, Toslink optical and coaxial S/PDIF inputs are available via the optional Kii Control wired remote, which also provides volume and access to tone controls, etc.

INSTANT INTEGRATION

It's laudable that the first impression the Kii THREE BXT creates is that the package hangs together as if it was designed as a single speaker. Right from the sparkling opening notes of Britten's Piano Concerto

[Howard Shelley, BBC PO/Edward Gardner; Chandos] the percussive attack showed their speed and definition, and their ability with the microdynamics of the music, with the balance between piano and orchestra sounding both entirely natural and insightful.

Off to a good start, then, yet Donald Fagen's title track from *Morph The Cat* [Reprise] took us all by surprise, the Kii combo slamming into the track with a literal kick in the drums before the whole kit sprang into life, soon joined by a satisfyingly grumbly and tight bass and the chiming keyboards, guitar and then brass.

Fagen's voice had bags of character, with no sign of the sibilance some speakers can elicit, and as the track became busier and the mix denser, the speakers just let it do so, with no confusion or compression.

In other words, all the quality here is subservient to the main task of making music rather than technical showboating, and the same holds true for soundstaging – broad, deep and focused, it's just there, a stage where performances are set.

Even with the least complex music we played, Keith Jarrett's very familiar *The Köln Concert* [ECM 1064/65; DSD64], the quality of the Kii Audio speaker system was evident in the luminous piano sound and ambience, the way each note decayed into space, Jarrett's exertions and the thud of the pedals laid out for inspection, as was the beauty of the tumbling musical expression. Via these speakers it was once again mesmerising.

VERDICT

This THREE BXT is visually striking, offering effortless soundstaging and focus, remarkable levels of detail, power and dynamics, and breathtaking musicality. Fabulous! ☺



ABOVE: You can have the THREE BXT in a range of colours, including the THREES in one shade and the BXTs in another!

HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Frequency response error (300Hz–20kHz)	±2.1dB / ±1.7dB
Pair matching (300Hz–20kHz)	±1.0dB
LF/HF extension (–6dB ref 200Hz/10kHz)	<20Hz / >40kHz / >40kHz
THD 100Hz/1kHz/10kHz (for 90dB SPL/1m)	0.5% / 0.1% / 0.3%
Dimensions (HWD) / Weight (each)	1200x200x400mm / 51kg