

# Kii Three BXT in test – perfect sound for living room and studio?

The Kii Three BXT is designed to deliver the ideal sound anywhere, regardless of the listening room. We have tested the active speakers extensively.



Tim Hundenborn (<https://hifi.de/autor/tim>) 6.7.2024 – 10:46 a.m. Reading time approx. 18 minutes



**driver:** 14 (1x tweeter, 1x midrange, 12x woofer)

**Performance:** 3,500 watts per channel

**Inputs:** 2x XLR (analog & AES/EBU), 1x TOSlink, 1x coax, 1x USB-B

**HDMI ARC / eARC:** – / –

**Sources wireless:** Bluetooth (SBC, AAC, aptX)

**Streaming:** –

**Dimensions (WxHxD):** 200x1,200x400mm

**Weight:** 51kg

**Price per pair:** 31,355 euros / 33,755 (premium colors)

## 9.1 Kii Audio Three BXT



**9.1** Kii Audio Three BXT  
EINZELTEST (07/2024):  
**SEHR GUT**

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## Shortly

“ *The Kii Three BXT comes frighteningly close to the sound that artists and mastering engineers had in mind. Their cardioid radiation produces a sound that is virtually unadulterated by the room and brings out every detail. Unfortunately, streaming options, remote control and app are missing.* ”

## Advantages

- + Almost completely independent of the listening room
- + Brutal resolution and crystal-clear stage drawing
- + Extensive configuration
- + Stylish and solid workmanship

## Disadvantages

- No app, no remote control

Hear every detail of your music, regardless of the position of the speakers. The Kii Three promises nothing less. Sophisticated sound processing and a special driver arrangement should make it possible. This gives the active speakers a constantly growing fan base in hi-fi and especially in studio circles. We tested the Kii in its bass-enhanced floor-standing version, the Kii Three BXT.

## Kii Three BXT in detail

The Kii Three is a special active loudspeaker (<https://hifi.de/bestenliste/aktiv-lautsprecher-101530>) in several respects . Its sound modulation means it can play well even close to the wall. At the same time, the not-so-compact bookshelf speaker (<https://hifi.de/bestenliste/regallautsprecher-74129>) should also offer enough power to fill large rooms with sound. Wait, bookshelf speaker? But it looks more like a full-blown floor- standing speaker (<https://hifi.de/bestenliste/standlautsprecher-74109>) in the photos ! That's because we're testing the Kii Three BXT in this test. Here, the Kii Three rests on an additional bass module, which gives the speaker more bass power and an additional 2,000 watts per side. This increases the total output to an impressive 3,500 watts per side.



*In our listening room we fed the Kii Three BXT with a wide variety of genres.*

The Kii Three was the first product from Kii Audio and has been very popular for almost 10 years - and not just in living rooms. The speaker is also very popular as a mastering monitor. Many big names in the music industry trust the Kii Three. Among them are sound artist Jacob Collier and mastering legend Christoph Stickel. Not only its very neutral sound, but also its extensive setting options ensure that it also feels at home next to the mixing console.

In return, Kii Audio completely foregoes streaming options or app control, such as those offered by the KEF LS60 Wireless (<https://hifi.de/test/kef-ls60-wireless-test-108751>) . For wireless streaming luxury, the Kii Seven is currently being launched (<https://hifi.de/news/kii-seven-vorgestellt-kleine-schwester-der-kii-three-jetzt-mit-streaming-158268>) . The Kii Three BXT is more in line with the GGNTKT Model M3 S (<https://hifi.de/test/ggntkt-model-m3-s-test-194687>) , which also relies on existing music sources. Both are therefore active speakers without streaming (<https://hifi.de/bestenliste/aktiv-lautsprecher-ohne-streaming-200887>) . We'll tell you how it performs outside of a mastering studio and in our listening room in the sound test.

## **Driver record and mostly digital**

Each Kii Three BXT has a total of 14 drivers. A new record in our listening room. Of these, 12 drivers alone are responsible for the bass. Two of them are located on the back of the Kii Three, which is mounted on top. We will explain what they do there in more detail later. The Kii Three BXT tested here is 120 centimeters high and weighs an impressive 51 kilograms.



*The two bass drivers take up practically the entire back of the Kii Three.*

Instead of using an app or remote control, you operate the speakers using the included Kii Control, a wired modem. Most of your sources can also be connected here: TOSlink, coax and USB-B. Each Kii Three BXT also has an XLR socket. You can send either balanced analog signals or digital signals à la AES/EBU to this. There is also Bluetooth for a quick connection. There is no connection to the Internet, and therefore no streaming without additional components.

## **Studio sound for the HiFi world? Kii Three BXT in the sound test**

Once set up in our listening room, we connect the Kii Control to our Mac and start Roon (<https://hifi.de/ratgeber/roon-musikserver-system-test-30297>) . The first test song is called *Rootless* by the Petro Girls. After the melancholic intro of the electric guitar, the drums enter the show - from far, far beyond the actual boundaries of our test room. This is not an overly forced spatiality, but the most realistic reproduction of the studio atmosphere. The recording was made in the Middle Farm Studios. The drums are particularly far away from the other instruments here. Without realizing it, we have listened through half the album and are repeatedly captivated by the juicy, absolutely realistic hits on the snare drum.



*You can easily connect Kii Three and the BXT module using two short "LAN" cables and a power cable. You only need to connect the XLR sockets if you also connect a corresponding source to the base of the BXT module.*

From the studio in South Devon we move to the Kirsten Kjær Museum in Denmark. This is where the (Young) Danish String Quartet recorded the album *Wood Works*. With *Five Sheep, Four Goats* you quickly notice how much softer the recording - or the room - is. The four strings group themselves one after the other in a semicircle around you. Then the flugelhorn starts its solo and you think you can hear every square inch of metal that the air passes by.

### **Merciless wealth of detail**

A similar spectacle awaits us with *Till Tomorrow* by Yello. This time with Till Brönner on the trumpet. Here we get the feeling for the first time that the tweeters might be a little too well-meaning. Yes, the track lives from quick impulses that are right on the pain threshold - and, incidentally, with their transients, are responsible for the free, airy character of the piece. When we pause for a moment, the sound effects seem to have settled into our ear canals for a little while longer.



*The Kii Three BXT offers you almost limitless volume reserves.*

But we can't stand the break for long. Next we want to test it out and put on *The Brain Dance* by Animals as Leaders. The guitar strings at the beginning of the piece speak a very similar language: The tweeter does its job incredibly well, completely separating the strings from the speakers and allowing the guitar to appear in the room in front of us. While the sticks directly to the left strike an insane rhythm. Only the combination of Wilson Audio Sasha V (<https://hifi.de/test/wilson-audio-sasha-v-test-187581>) and the Dan D'Agostino Progression Integrated (<https://hifi.de/test/dan-dagostino-progression-integrated-test-189362>) have been able to play so "tight" and fast. For some ears, however, this flawless reproduction of the Kii Three BXT, as if it were made for the mastering studio, comes at the expense of long-term audibility.

### **More for the studio than for the living room?**

Would you like to spend a whole day in the studio with these absolutely neutral killing machines? Anytime. At a rock concert on your own sofa, however, we would probably turn the volume down late or late - or have to resort to the extensive sound settings. We don't want to rule out the possibility that this is due to our relatively young - and sensitive - ears. It's quite possible that this is exactly the right treble setting for you. However, we can only hear the Kii Three BXT with our ears - and they lasted longer with the GGNTKT Model M3 S, (<https://hifi.de/test/ggntkt-model-m3-s-test-194687>) for example . Even if they don't manage to create quite as big a stage and can't play quite as airily.



*The tweeter of the Kii Three BXT may mean well at times, but it produces an incredibly realistic image.*

Enough lines about tweeters and midrange speakers, which together make up just one seventh of the Kii Three BXT's drivers. There are four bass drivers in the upper part of the actual Kii Three alone. Another eight in the BXT module. The 3,500 watts have to be used up somewhere. Aurora can start with her latest album *What Happened to the Heart*. As is usual for her, she takes a central position in *When the Dark Dresses Lightly* with her bell-like voice. Then the chorus starts all of a sudden and we find ourselves in the middle of contoured bass beats.

Not overloaded, not a bit of booming, it seems as if the beats are just intended for our ears. This can seem a little strange at first if you're used to your room giving the bass a little more power. The Kii Three BXT gets you closer to the effect intended in the studio than most other speakers.



*A nice detail: The two i-dots of the company logo serve as status lights.*

## **Bass boost through BXT**

But how does the sound character of the Kii Three change if we steal the bass module? On paper, the "small bookshelf speaker" should also be able to reach down to 20 hertz. Conveniently, you can remove the bass module from the equation - and the signal path - in the Kii Control in no time at all. What remains is the Kii Three, with an adapted sound signature - on a neat stand for just under 16,000 euros. That's how much the pair of BXT modules would cost separately.

Prepared like this, we start *Ratchets* by Hedegard. The piece with its techno beats has accompanied us through almost every listening test since the last High End in Munich. And the Kii Three doesn't disappoint either. The bass pushes towards us, bone dry and with a lot of momentum. It's a lot of fun, even if our diaphragm doesn't have to jump along as much as with the Kii Three BXT. With the bass module, the recording seems a bit more musical, more relaxed and even more lively. For our last test track of the day, we want to rely on the full power of the Kii Three BXT again and switch the module back on. Because now we're bringing out the big artillery.



*Even stronger as a team: The Kii Three BXT can generate significantly more sound pressure thanks to the large bass module.*

“Caution! Digital Cannons” is emblazoned on the cover of Erich Kunzel's famous recording of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Tchaikovsky's score was taken very seriously here - and real cannon shots were subsequently mixed into the finale. If you want to see the bass and midrange speakers really jump, start this record. But be careful. The impulses have already shown the limits of many a pickup and loudspeaker. The Kii Three BXT are unimpressed and shoot energy around our ears like cannonballs. But they never lose sight of the bigger picture and present the orchestra as large and realistic.

## **DSP taken to the extreme**

The Kii Three BXT can do things that we have never heard from speakers before - active or passive. This includes the incredible speed, the almost limitless control and the ability to seemingly disappear completely behind the music. This gives you a completely new impression even when listening to your favorite albums for the umpteenth time. However, we can only recommend the Kii Three BXT to a limited extent for relaxed long-term listening. It is too much like a studio speaker for that. But if that is exactly your thing - and you want to hear music as if it was probably mixed in the studio, the Kii Three BXT is the benchmark.

Not quite right for you? In our best list you can find a comparison of all the active speakers without streaming that we have tested:

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## Take space out of the equation with the Kii Three BXT

The biggest enemy of good acoustics is your own listening room. You are hardly protected from standing waves and early reflections in any living room. Like the GGNTKT Model M3 S, the Kii Three BXT wants to tackle the problem at its root. Instead of putting bulky bass traps in the corners - or your speakers two meters away from any wall - the Kii Three BXT modulates its sound so that the rear wall can barely influence it. This is necessary because sound spreads out more and more spherically from around 700 Hertz downwards. So even if the drivers of your speakers are looking directly at you, their sound will also travel behind the speakers.

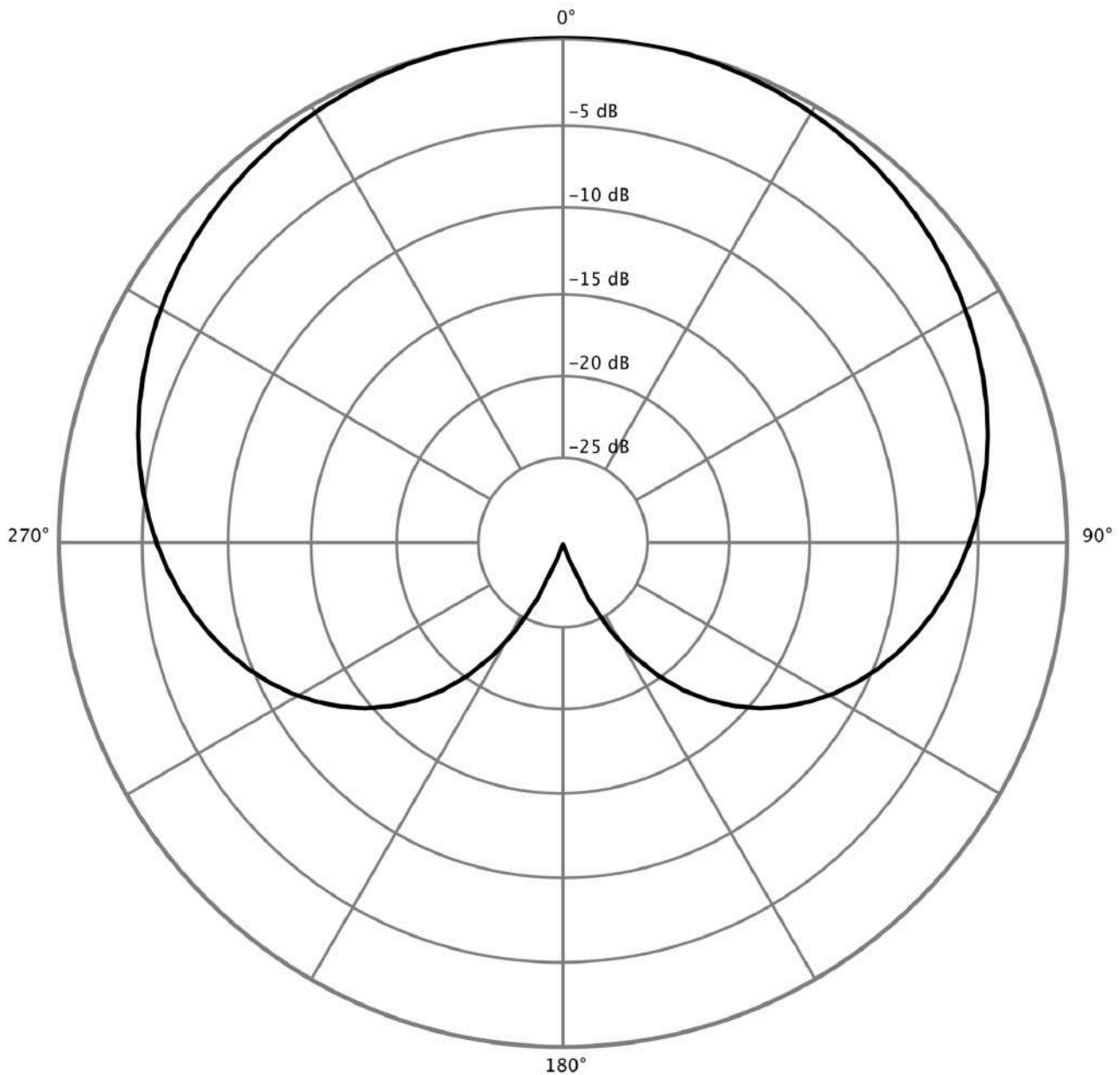


*The Kii Three BXT also has bass drivers on the sides – with special tasks.*

The two rear bass drivers of the Kii Three do not simply reproduce the same signal as the side ones, but the exact negative of that. They play with opposite phases. Similar to noise-cancelling headphones, (<https://hifi.de/bestenliste/noise-cancelling-kopfhoerer-37279>) they cancel out the bass frequencies that would otherwise build up between the wall and the speaker. In expert circles, this is referred to as a cardioid radiation characteristic.

### A question of phase

The rear drivers can cancel out frequencies from 700 to 50 Hz in this way. The remaining 30 hertz up to the frequency limit of 20 Hz are no longer cancelled out. Here the sound waves are so large that they reach you almost in phase - especially in conjunction with the reflection from the rear wall - and thus even amplify the bass in these lowest ranges. Accordingly, levels can even be too high here. You can counteract this with the Boundary EQ. Here you can soften the bass in 12 steps, depending on how close the Kii Three is to your walls.

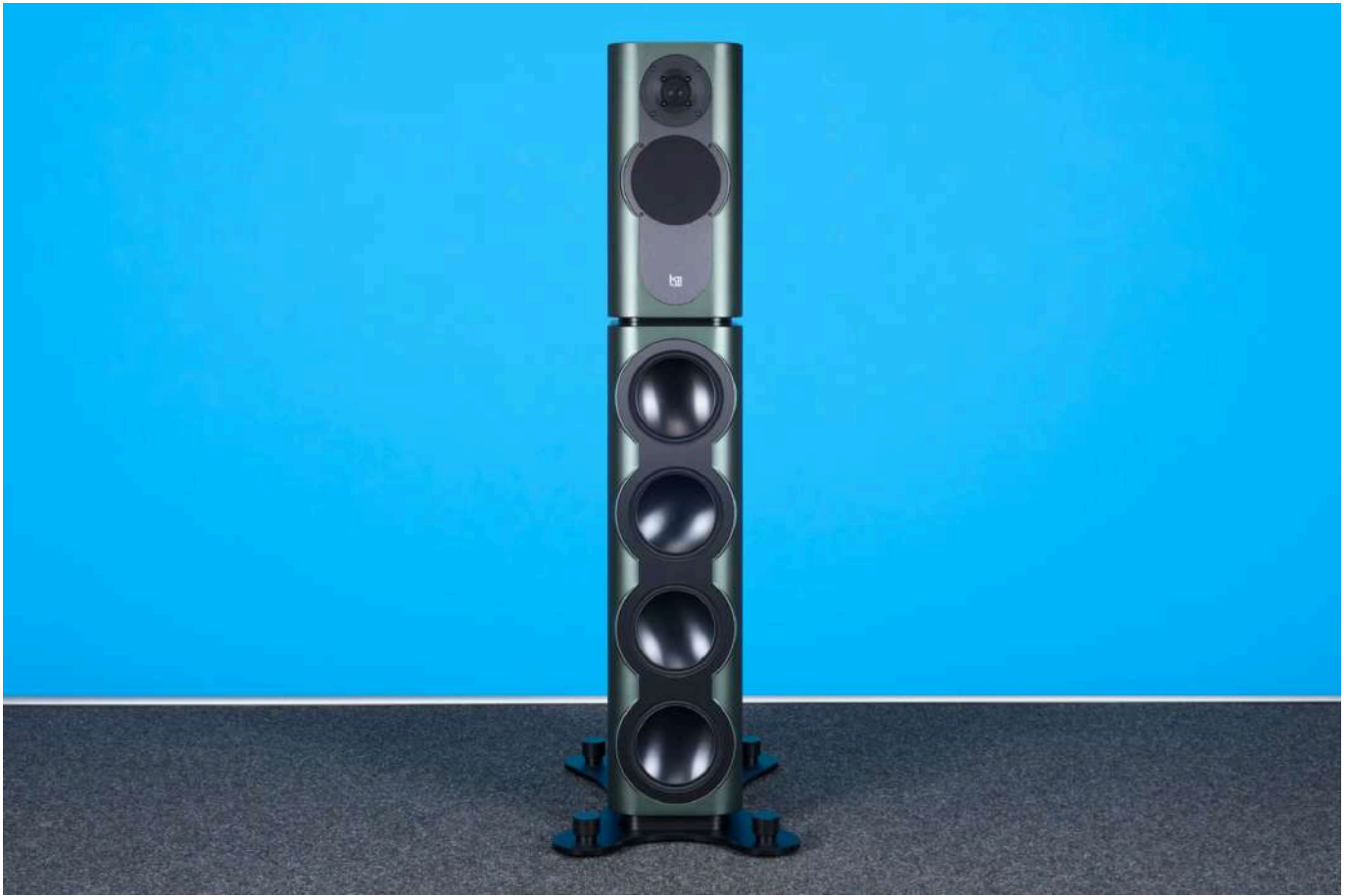


*With cardioid radiation, the sound is distributed mainly to the front and sides. Behind the speakers there is relative silence. | Image: nicoguaro @ wikimedia*

But Kii Audio goes one step further. The midrange driver can also reproduce very low frequencies, which could theoretically be a problem. The side bass drivers now take care of these. In the high mids and high frequency range, the sound is already so directional that further measures, with the exception of a waveguide, are no longer necessary.

### Point source or line source?

If you connect the Kii Three to the BXT module, the loudspeaker not only naturally gains sound pressure, but also turns into a "line source". You have most likely seen such a source at large concerts as PA loudspeakers arranged in a line array. In contrast to a point sound source, such as the Cabasse The Pearl (<https://hifi.de/test/cabasse-the-pearl-test-141361>), there are several identical drivers in a row one above the other. In the case of the Kii Three BXT, that means four woofers.



*The four front bass drivers of the BXT module shoot their sound energy forward in a very concentrated manner. The floor and ceiling get very little of it.*

This design not only ensures that the sound energy in the near field is higher, but also that the sound spreads less vertically. Accordingly, less sound hits the floor, from where it would be reflected. This is nothing new in itself. Other speakers also make use of these physical principles - or take them to the extreme, like the Dali Epikore 11 (<https://hifi.de/test/dali-epikore-11-test-174188>) . The Kii Three BXT also combines this with cardioid radiation. According to managing director Christian Reichardt, this setup is unique on the market.

## Every driver has his drive

The bass drivers themselves have sandwich membranes with a diameter of around 152 millimeters. A honeycomb structure inside gives them great stability, while the mass remains pleasingly low. For the midrange driver, Kii uses a paper membrane with a diameter of 127 millimeters. You can't see it, of course, because it is hidden behind the single - and non-removable - fabric covering. Above them, in the middle of its waveguide, sits the tweeter with an aluminum membrane. Each driver is individually powered by Class D power amplifiers. These come from Purifi, which is hardly surprising. After all, its co-founder, Bruno Putzey, is also the mastermind behind the Kii Three BXT.



*The spikes allow you to set up the Kii Three BXT without wobbling.*

All of this is housed in sturdy metal housings that have been topped with POM in tactical locations. We often come across this particularly hard and low-resonance plastic in high-quality hi-fi. The platter of the Transrotor Max Nero, (<https://hifi.de/test/transrotor-max-nero-test-107880>) for example, is made of this material. A solid metal plate sits between the listening room floor and the speakers. Four spikes are inserted into its arms. This is how the Kii Three BXT is coupled to the floor and leveled at the same time. So that you don't have to constantly look at the metal threads, they are in black covers - also made of POM. If you are worried about your floor - with a weight of over 50 kilograms per speaker - and quite rightly so - you can either use spike plates or place the metal plate directly on the floor. Its underside is rubberized.

## **Practice – No app, but many functions**

For every pair of Kii Three, whether with or without a BXT module, you get the matching control unit. This is called Kii Control and communicates with one of the two speakers via a LAN cable. This then passes the music and commands on to the second speaker via another LAN cable. Wireless operation is not possible. You should also not think of mistaking the CAT5 sockets for Ethernet sockets. The Kii Three BXT does not understand the Internet. The manufacturer even explicitly warns in the operating instructions against connecting the speakers to the home network via LAN, as this could damage the speakers.



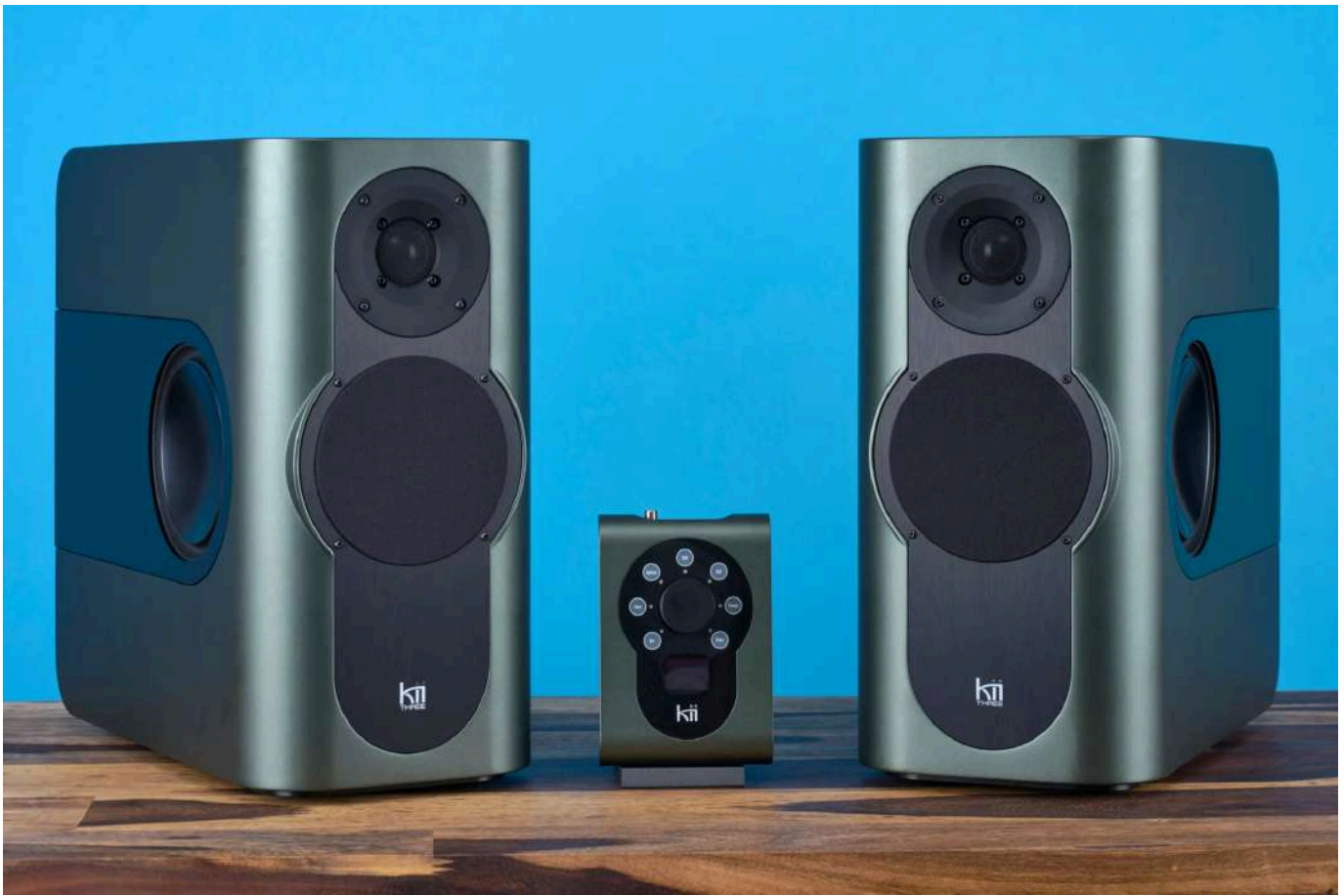
*Most of the connections can be found on the Kii Control control unit.*

The Kii Control has space for three digital sources: USB-B, TOSlink and coax. This selection is supplemented by a combo XLR socket on both speakers. This can receive digital signals via AES/EBU or analog signals. The highest possible data rate via USB is 24 bit and 384 kHz. In addition, the Kii Three BXT understands high-res (<https://hifi.de/ratgeber/highres-audio-59043>) in DSD64 and DSD128. The other digital inputs are limited to 192 kHz. Alternatively, you can also use Bluetooth (<https://hifi.de/ratgeber/bluetooth-alles-was-du-wissen-musst-128864>) . The Kii Control supports version 5.0 and the SBC, AAC and aptX codecs . (<https://hifi.de/ratgeber/bluetooth-sbc-aac-aptx-40695>)

No connection to the internet means no music streaming (<https://hifi.de/bestenliste/musik-streamingdienste-35500>) . We think that's a shame, but we're making do with our Mac Mini and Roon instead. The Kii Three BXT is at least Roon tested.

## **Kii Control – Not for the sofa**

If you look closely, you will find a very small display under the centrally mounted volume control, which you can use to make all the settings. Kii Audio could have been a bit more generous here. You can tell that the Kii Three BXT was also designed for studio use. You will have less trouble reading the display at the mixer than from the sofa. You won't be operating the speakers from here anyway. The Kii Control must be wired to the sources and speakers. An app would have been the logical solution here. Unfortunately, there isn't one, so we have to get up every time we want to adjust the volume or select a different source.



*The Kii Control offers you many useful options, but unfortunately does not replace a remote control.*

The Kii Three BXT does offer a small consolation. You can program an infrared remote control, which can then be used to transmit the most important commands. However, it must be an RC5 remote control. The best example of this is the old, silver Apple Remote. It is questionable whether you can use this feature, as Apple and many other manufacturers are increasingly switching to Bluetooth remote controls.

Alternatively, you can connect a classic preamplifier such as the SPL Director MK2 (<https://hifi.de/test/spl-director-mk2-test-146212>) or a network player with an adjustable output to the XLR sockets. The Eversolo DMP-A6 Master Edition (<https://hifi.de/test/eversolo-dmp-a6-master-edition-test-167600>) is ideal for this. The Kii Three BXT can then be controlled using its remote control or app.

## **Equalizer of a special kind**

The menu offers an immense number of options for adapting the speakers to your needs. We will only present the most important examples here, such as the sound settings. For this, Kii Audio has opted for two shelf filters instead of a conventional EQ with two to six bands. You can freely select one frequency in the treble and one in the bass range and either raise or lower the level of the entire range beyond this value.



*The equalizer takes some getting used to, but then offers a lot of freedom.*

If that's not enough for you, you can also tweak the sound much more specifically. The Kii Three BXT offers you extensive filters for this. Here you can choose between Low Pass, High Pass, Low Shelf, High Shelf, Notch and two parametric equalizers. However, these settings are hidden in the Pro menu under Advanced Settings and for good reason. You should only play with these parameters if you know exactly what you're doing. However, if, like us, you want to tweak the treble a little, you can use one of the two parametric equalizers to lower individual high-frequency frequencies. This makes S sounds a little softer, for example, without losing any of the enormous spatiality that would inevitably suffer with the simple shelf filter.

# Parametric (PEQ1/Constant Q)

Parameters:

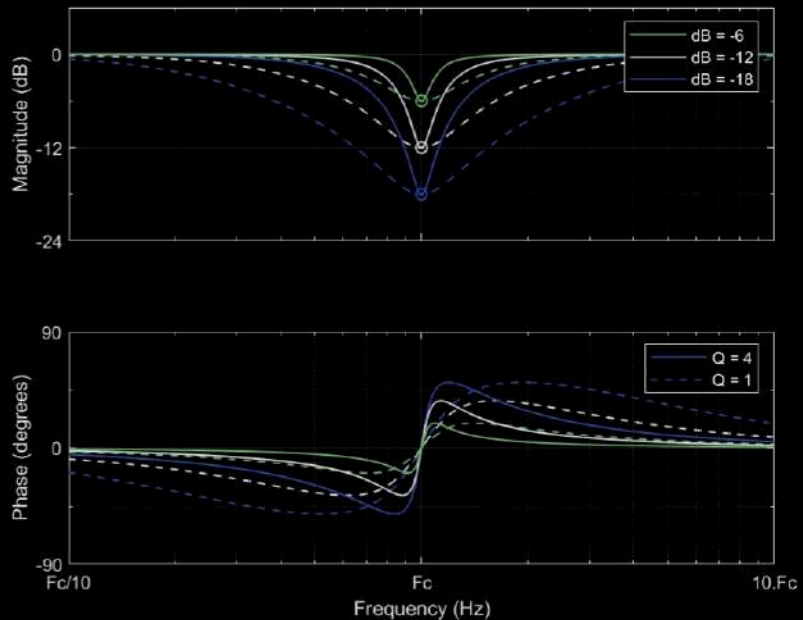
- Frequency
- Q
- Gain

Attenuation (or amplification) of a **Frequency** band by an amount set by **Gain**.

**Q** controls the width of the bump/valley.

Constant Q:

- Sharpness remains constant
- Width of the band increases



*Just one of the many possible sound filters. The user manual online tells you what each of them does using graphics like this. | Image: Kii Audio*

In addition, as mentioned above, you can adjust the boundary EQ if the low bass is too powerful or too weak. You can also adjust these parameters identically for both speakers or individually if one speaker is in a corner and the other is free in the room.

Another practical feature that unfortunately not every active speaker offers is the choice between master and slave. In the menu, you can select the speaker that is closer to the Kii Control and your music sources so that you have less cable clutter in the living room. You can also play with the polarity of individual sources, the latency and the digital filters. The most important feature, however, is the ability to save all of the settings listed here as a preset. This means that you can not only change the source at the touch of a button, but also adjust the sound, polarity and delay to suit the source and your ears at the same time.



*Despite its size, the Kii Three BXT can be easily adjusted to your listening room.*

## **Design – Steampunk meets engineering**

The Kii Three BXT shows from every angle that its developers were serious. From the joint dimensions to the paint, everything fits perfectly together and makes an extremely stable impression. We already saw how stable and well thought out the speakers are when we assembled them. Once they were lifted out of their transport boxes, we could simply slide the BXT module onto the base over two rails until both audibly clicked into place. The same thing again with the BXT and Kii Three: Done. No annoying fiddling with screws while you're crawling around on the floor. Kii Audio even thought of a handle in the top of the BXT module.



*The guide rail for the Kii Three sits on the BXT module like a horseshoe. You can see the handle in the middle.*

The Kii Three BXT is available in a total of twelve colors. Among them is the version we tested in green metallic paint. Of course, you can also mix and match and put yellow Kii Threes on black BXTs, for example. Kii Audio divides the color variants into two price categories, a pair in premium colors costs 2,400 euros more.

## Our conclusion on the Kii Three BXT

Kii Audio has taken the most difficult requirements that you can expect from a loudspeaker and turned them into its greatest strength. Whether close to the wall or in the corner of the room: uncontrolled booming is a thing of the past. Instead, the Kii Three BXT offers you one of the driest and most controlled basses that we have encountered in our listening room to date. As a nice side effect, the Kii Three delivers an enormously high proportion of direct sound, which explains the phenomenal spatiality and the precisely drawn actors on the sound stage. Here the loudspeaker disappears completely.

The only criticism we can find is the lack of a remote control or app, and the high tones, which are a bit too rigid for our taste. However, you can get the latter under control with a little practice using the various filters if necessary. With its completely neutral, unpretentious sound, the Kii Three BXT is ideal for you if you want to feel every nuance of the recording.

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## 9.1

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Kii Three

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## Technical data

driver	14 (1x tweeter, 1x midrange, 12x woofer)
Type	3-way, closed
Performance	3,500 watts per channel
Frequency range	20 Hz – 20 kHz (-3 dB)
Inputs	2x XLR (analog & AES/EBU), 1x TOSlink, 1x coax, 1x USB-B
HDMI ARC / eARC	- / -
Sources wireless	Bluetooth (SBC, AAC, aptX)
Outputs	-
Streaming	-
Voice assistants	-
Operation	KiiControl
Master/Slave connection	CAT5 (LAN cable)
Dimensions (WxHxD)	200x1,200x400mm
Weight	51kg
Available colors	12, in two price ranges
Price per pair	31,355 euros / 33,755 (premium colors)