

# Kroma Audio Mimi stand-mount loudspeaker

by Alan Sircom

**T**he Mimi is a clever and distinctive two-way stand-mount bass reflex loudspeaker. However, there are a gazillion two-way stand-mounted loudspeakers, many of which are ported. Do we need another one? Kroma shouts a loud 'yes!' and on the basis of the Mimi, the company makes a very good case for its inclusion in the mid-sized stand-mount pantheon.

Kroma Audio is a Spanish audio company. Spanish audio brands are relatively rare, but the manufacturing community there can best be summed up as 'small, but perfectly formed', with a few brands generally making outstanding products, as opposed to a plethora of companies making some OK and some not so OK product lines. Kroma makes seven loudspeakers, two stand-mounts and five floorstanders, of which the Mimi represents the entry point. It also makes a generic stand for bookshelf loudspeakers and cable elevators. The Mimi's cabinet – like all the other speakers in the range – is made from Krion, a material produced in Spain made of two-thirds gibbsite (aluminium trihydrate, or 'ATH') and one-third resin. Think of Krion as a rival to Corian, but with a look closer to porcelain (Corian often goes for marbled or stone-like finishes, thanks in part to its extensive use in kitchens and bathrooms).

Mimi itself is a back-swept design with a fully Krion cabinet. Although the front, rear, top and bottom of the cabinet are finished in white or black, the side-walls have a range of options that go from 'contrasting' to 'wild' with the Vacas art finishes. There's even a 24ct gold leaf finish! It features a Hiqophon tweeter with a 165mm Scan-Speak mid/woofer. The single-wired, front ported cabinet hides a crossover made of some of the finest new and new-old-stock components known to man, all sealed in resin. The matching stand is also made of Krion, but with a Panzerholz top plate and feet. Panzerholz is an extremely high density 'tank-wood' plywood material that can be used as a metal substitute and is actually bulletproof (think of it as a 21st Century alternative to ebony without the terrifying sustainability issues). This means you get the anti-resonance and acoustic damping effect of Panzerholz and Krion combined. Because the loudspeaker

itself is backswept and tall the stand is relatively low, but the speaker+stand combination looks good and the Panzerholz plinth stands slightly proud in the middle of the speaker's lines. The Mimi comes with a set of tiny clear plastic blobs to attach to the base of the speaker, just to stop it moving around on the semi-matt top of the Panzerholz plinth. The combination of Krion and Panzerholz is also used in the new Organic range of Artesania Audio stands, which is perhaps not that much of a surprise when you discover there is a business connection between these two Spanish companies.

An interesting aspect of the Mimi, and Kroma speakers in general, is the nature of the port. It's a carefully tuned choice of cedar or fir, as used by Spanish and Flamenco guitar luthiers.

The Mimi is a 'Tiger Moth' of a loudspeaker. While that probably prompts a solid 'huh?' from most people, to a few that explains a lot. Here's why; the De Havilland Tiger Moth biplane was a well-liked trainer aircraft used by the Royal Air Force (and others) from the mid-1930s until the 1950s because it was considered an easy aircraft to fly but a hard aircraft to fly well. Virtually every allied pilot flying in the Battle of Britain learned their craft in a Tiger Moth, and some are still in private use to this day. This is useful for more than simply padding out the text, as partnering and installing the Mimi is also easy to do but hard to do well, hence the whole RAF-related aside. You can use it with more or less any amplifier (90dB efficiency and an eight-ohm load would not tax any modern amp design except possibly one of the handful of super-low powered single-ended triode amps), but careful choice makes a big difference.

Similarly, the difference between getting the loudspeakers broadly in the right place in the listening room and taking time to micro-manage that right place is crucial. In fact, this was one of those loudspeakers that benefitted from being fired along the room rather than down its length. It seems placement relative to the rear wall isn't as important as its position relative to the side walls and any reflections produced by those walls. Some subtle room treatment for side wall reflection is also useful, suggesting a loudspeaker with excellent dispersion qualities. ▶





*“Mimi always makes music fun thanks in part to its deceptively deep bass.”*

#### TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Two-way stand-mount loudspeaker  
**Drivers:** 1 × Hiquphon 0.75mm soft dome tweeter, 1 × 165mm ScanSpeak Classic mid/bass cone  
**Sensitivity:** 90dB (anechoic)  
**Nominal Impedance:** 8Ω  
**Recommended amplifier power:** >15W  
**Finish:** various (see text)  
**Dimensions (H×W×D, excl stand):** 39.8 × 20.8 × 25cm  
**Weight:** 1.6kg per loudspeaker  
**Price:** £7,950/pr. Gold/Vacas finish: add £1,595/pr  
**Stands:** £3,495/pr  
**Manufacturer:** Kroma Audio  
**URL:** [kromaaudio.com](http://kromaaudio.com)  
**UK Distributor:** Boyer Audio  
**URL:** [boyaudio.com](http://boyaudio.com)  
**Tel:** +44(0)330 223 3769

▶ Interestingly, while getting the partners and placement right is paramount, the Mimi is not so fussy as to room size; its physical size and that it has a single 165mm bass driver per side puts it more into small to medium-sized rooms (the kind of spaces most urban city-dwellers might have), there is a good degree of flexibility in room dynamics. In no small part, that comes down to the bass delivery from that driver, which is capable of some extremely deep and rich tones. The Mimi just about passes my Trentemøller test, as those fast, almost square-wave deep beats in ‘Chameleon’ [*The Last Resort*, Poker Flat] don’t choke up the front port unless played at ‘healthy’ levels. However, in playing that track, the ‘fight or flight’ response one can get to deep, malevolent bass tones is fully retained. Usually, those deep bass notes are the stuff of bigger loudspeakers than the Mimi, so making those Lovecraftian rumbles is a sign of quality.

Really good loudspeakers fall broadly into two camps; those that go for absolute precision and fidelity to what is recorded, and those that go for a more musically integrated approach that is always a pleasure to hear. The Mimi falls very much into that latter camp. Those who want to extract sonic information from their recordings to get that peculiar ‘accuracy under duress’ stark presentation will find the Mimi wanting; this is all about making a sound that is lifelike and engaging; you are always aware of listening to music – not simply the sound music makes while trying to escape the loudspeakers – through the Mimis. That means a lot of those test-bed recordings that I’ve played so much I’ve worn the digits flat, end up either being musically uninspiring (I’m looking at you, Rachmaninov’s *Symphonic Dances* and also at you *Un Bal* by Berlioz... it’s a fine piece of music, but not the classical be-all and end-all it sometimes becomes in audio reviewing), but others truly shine.

This is a loudspeaker that can play loud comfortably, but most importantly also Mimi always makes music fun thanks in part to its deceptively deep bass. In the process, your attention is directed away from musical micro-management elements like micro-dynamics and filigree detail and all the ‘tinkly’ bits some audiophiles crave; this is all about the music. A deceptively big sound with a wide soundstage from a relatively small speaker makes the Mimi hard to ignore, especially as it looks as good as it sounds. +