

TWICE THE FUN

Sometimes good things are hidden from our view.
The floorstanding Titan 606, for example, uses a second
bass driver in isobaric configuration as a clever
means of reducing the cabinet size.

It's been three years since I last listened to a pair of Kudos loudspeakers: the X3s for £2,250 a pair. Their design was quite obviously based on the idea of keeping things simple. High-quality drivers – developed in what can only be described as a friendly cooperation with Scandinavian manufacturer SEAS – allow Kudos to use simple, low-order crossovers for a short pathway from signal to sound. The Titan 606 is clearly derived from the flagship model, the Titan 808. What Kudos aimed for was a somewhat smaller model with a similar musical performance and a more affordable price point, making the company's top line-up available to a wider audience.

Utterly coherent

In the smaller of our two listening rooms, the 606s were a true experience: the unobtrusive floorstanders delivered an amazingly delicate and precise performance, with an elegant sense of flow and wonderful timbre. The fun factor was off the scale but accompanied by unmistakably high, audiophile quality.

Especially the midrange and treble wowed our panel of experienced listeners with the high level of transparency and microdynamics. Kudos themselves put it down to both the excellent drivers as well as the simple, low-order crossover filters.

Its tweeter is a custom version of the well-known Crescendo driver, manufactured exclusively for Kudos, dubbed K3 and first used in the flagship 808 loudspeakers. Now found in every Titan model, the K3 is equipped with an improved magnet system, a copper shorting ring, a re-designed resonance chamber and a new face plate profile.

The 606 uses two mid/bass drivers in isobaric configuration within a sealed chamber (see box). The bass is well defined and integrates seamlessly, with an impressive heft and precise texture that belie the relatively modest dimensions of these speakers.

Two 180-mm drivers, derived from the model used in the Super 20s and

positioned back to back, enabled Kudos to build a compact loudspeaker without physical compromises.

The cabinet is made of HDF panels varying in thickness from 9 to 50 mm, strategically reinforced and damped by means of twelve compliant membrane pads which minimize the detrimental effects of vibrations. The low-resonance baffle on which the drivers are mounted is 18 mm thick. In the bottom of the cabinet one finds an aluminum port

guide with a fixed boundary gap that serves as a reflex port for the twin bass drivers. Bass precision is exemplary: the lower registers are never overpowering or bloated and always in perfect time, meaning the bass, due to being mechanically controlled via the second driver, never lags behind. Nevertheless, it's worth experimenting with the distance between the speakers and the rear wall, which can still have an effect on bass impact.



▲ The beautiful and surprisingly compact cabinets of the Kudos 606 almost appear to be suspended in mid-air



▲ The 606s come with a set of high-quality spikes

Highly musical

With a limit of 40 Hz, the smallest floor-standing model in the Titan range certainly goes low. The currently best Luxman integrated amplifier, the L-509X, exerts excellent control over the 606s – it’s a match made in heaven. It seems these speakers benefit greatly from high-quality amplification and, what’s more, allow you to easily detect any tweaking and smallest improvements in the set-up.

You might find speakers in the 10,000-euro range that offer a bit more in terms of macro-dynamics, the Quadral Vulkans or Dali Epicon 6 or 8s, for example. But the 606s’ utterly compelling and coherent quality has a charm of its own, transporting them into the upper echelons of loudspeakers in this price range.

The ease with which the Kudos 606s reveal complex structures in Michael Bublé’s “Feeling Good” or showcase

acoustic instruments like Al di Meola’s guitar by almost letting you see the grain in the wood, the way they instantly transform Tori Amos’ voice into goose bumps is something you simply need to hear for yourself.

Owing to the compact dimensions and beautiful finish, these speakers also make for a visually attractive purchase. As you’d expect, the 606s are available in several designs: black oak, satin white, walnut, tinoe and, like our review sample, red tinoe, which comes from Argentina or Chile.

Last but not least: the Titan 606s can be also used in active configuration with external crossover filters designed by Kudos for use with Devialet, Naim and Linn amplification.

Tom Frantzen



▲ The jumpers can be removed for active operation

ISOBARIC CONFIGURATIONS EXPLAINED

This “tandem” driver technology employs two bass drivers (instead of one) in a single loudspeaker, with both drivers coupled to one another by a small, defined volume of air. The drivers are usually mounted one behind the other, magnet to membrane, and operate in phase; only one driver is visible. However, in some configurations the drivers are mounted back to back or front to front and operate out of phase. While an isobaric configuration is more complex to build, it offers the advantage of requiring half the cabinet volume to achieve

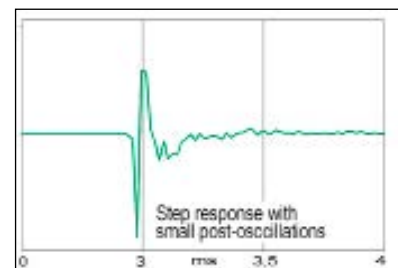
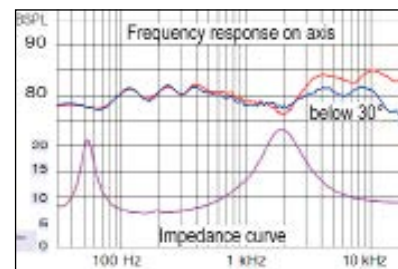
the same amount of bass output. Moreover, mechanical distortion caused by one driver will, in most cases, be reduced by coupling it to another driver. Because the membrane area is doubled, sensitivity will be decreased by 3 dB, requiring a more powerful amplifier. The technology was used more often in the past, by Chario (Ursa Major), Dynaudio (Consequence, Compound) and Linn (Isobarik), for example, but it is still a good means of achieving equal or slightly better bass response with much smaller cabinets.

KUDOS TITAN 606

From £9,000 a pair
 Dimensions: 26 x 95 x 32 cm (W x H x D)
 Warranty: 12 months
 (extendable with registration)
 Contact: Kudos Audio Ltd
 Tel: +44 (0)845 458 6698
 www.kudosaudio.com

The Kudos Titan 606s are exceptionally musical, compact floorstanders that will integrate well in most environments. Their natural sense of ease, agility and rhythm is second to none. The two mid/bass drivers in isobaric configuration ensure a strong, tight bass response. These are superb-sounding speakers..

MEASUREMENT RESULTS



DC resistance	8 Ω
Minimal impedance 7,5 Ω at	180 Hz
Maximum impedance 23 Ω at	1900 Hz
Sensitivity (2.83 V at 1 m)	82 dB SPL
Power for 94 dB (1 m)	50 W
Low frequency response (-3 dB)	42 Hz
THD at 63 Hz/3 kHz/10 kHz	2,0/1,0/0,3 %

LAB COMMENTS

The on-axis response shows a substantial treble rise that disappears when the speakers are set up with no toe-in, so it’s worth experimenting with positioning, which includes the distance to the back wall. Timing is excellent, the impedance curve is benign, sensitivity is somewhat low.

STEREO-TEST

SOUND QUALITY	91 %
PRICE/PERFORMANCE	
★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	
EXCELLENT	