

Kudos Titan 606 for the long run

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Chris Kelly



Kudos Titan 606 loudspeakers

I have enjoyed a number of the Kudos loudspeakers during my tenure with the Ear so the opportunity to hear the Titan 606, the largest model yet to grace my listening room, was one I jumped on with enthusiasm. Regular readers may recall the positive impression that the C20 and the 10A from the Cardea range made chez Kelly. Both were awarded five star status and deservedly so. I have also had the pleasure of spending time with the Kudos Titan 505, which is the entry point to the range topping Titan series, so the Titan 606 seemed like the next logical step.

Each speaker arrives in its own box, with a handle at each end, and unless you are exceedingly strong it is a two man lift job to get them into the house. The actual speaker weighs 35kg. Once in the listening room the supplied Target floor spikes were screwed into the bottom of the plinth. Both speakers were then moved into the best listening position possible in my room, with no toe in. The latter was strongly recommended by Kudos and is definitely the correct alignment for this speaker. The rear of the top of the speaker from the wall was measured at 25cm on both sides.

This is by no means a room-dominating enclosure, measuring 95cm high (3'1½") and sitting on a plinth it is easy to accommodate in the confines of a British sitting room. Except for the first hour in the room, I played the Titan 606s with the magnetically attached grilles off. After listening to them in both with and without grilles I felt I got the best sound with the drivers visible. I also feel that the 606s are good-looking enough to be shown off in this way.

Speaking of drivers, the Titan 606 is an isobaric design, with fixed boundary bass reflex loading which means that the reflex port is in the base of the cabinet. Midrange and bass are provided by a pair of SEAS-Kudos (made by the former to the latter's specification) 180mm mid/bass drivers. The isobaric aspect indicates that one driver is behind the other, hence the single visible woofer. They each have a coated reed/pulp paper cone, a 39mm voice coil with copper

shorting ring and the exposed driver has an aluminium phase plug at its centre. The tweeter is a SEAS-Kudos Crescendo K3 29mm fabric dome, this is in a recessed mount behind a metal lattice work grille, for protection. The crossover is key to a loudspeakers performance of course, and here Kudos have cut no corners in the Titan 606, using quality components such as Mundorf's Mresist Supreme resistors and air-core inductors and Claritycap's Copperconnect capacitors.



The cabinets themselves are beautifully constructed, as you would expect at this price point. The review pair were finished in a beautiful walnut veneer atop the multi-thickness HDF carcass chosen to control panel resonance. There are five finishes on offer.

When the Titans arrived my Primaluna EVO400 integrated valve amplifier was installed, and connected via its 8 Ohm output taps to the 606s with Audioquest Robin Hood cable. The rest of the system was my usual sources, a Linn Sondek LP12 with an Ittok arm and Dynavector XX2 cartridge, a Gold Note PH10 phono stage and a Yamaha CD-S3000 SACD/CD player with an Auralic Aries Mini streamer connected to its DAC via coaxial cable. A Shunyata Research Hydra Delta 6 power distributor delivers the AC juice.

Listening to the Titan 606

I had been advised that the speakers had plenty of hours of use behind them so I gave them an afternoon and evening to warm up before sitting down the following morning for the critical listening phase.

Ever since Mrs K and I binge watched the TV series *Justified*, I have spent a great deal of time with the music of Dave Alvin, a veteran American guitarist, singer and songwriter. One of the songs on the soundtrack is called Harlan County Line, which is also the first track the album *Eleven Eleven*, which I have on the 10th anniversary vinyl re-release. The track starts quietly and builds and builds, with Alvin's gruff baritone perfect for lyrics. It is a mesmerising start to my time with the 606s. Alvin and his band are arrayed across a wide, deep and tall soundstage. The sense that I am in an intimate Kentucky club listening to this great music is very real. So much so that at the end of the song I got up, lifted the tonearm and played it again. The second track is another half spoken half sung story called Johnny Ace Is Dead, which draws the listener right in. I was in fact so drawn in that I played all four sides of the album before coming up for air.



And that was pretty much how it was with everything that I played through the Titan 606s. The wonderful sense of realism coming through was an absolute joy, with the vital midband in particular having a majestic but never forced presentation. The lower frequencies were very well handled, with perfect weight and wonderfully tonality. Gary Karr's double bass on his recording of Albinoni's *Adagio*, accompanied on pipe organ by Harmon Lewis, sounded magnificent; full bodied, tender, subtle and, for me at least, very moving. I have owned the recording on gold CD and vinyl for a good few years now. I have never heard it sounding more real than this.

Similarly, a streamed hi res DG recording of Hilary Hahn playing Mozart's *Violin Concerto No.5* showed off the character of the Titan 606's soft dome tweeter to perfection. The higher frequencies have an airiness and lightness that puts many other designs squarely in their place, while allowing the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, under the baton of Paavo Järvi, to support her with perfect poise.

Regular readers will be familiar with the roster of recordings that I use for reviewing: Love's seminal 1967 album *Forever Changes*, Pink Floyd's *Meddle*, the Beatles *Revolver* all came and had the Primaluna/Kudos magic dust sprinkled on them. Tube magic and exceptional British design and craftsmanship combined to make every listening session a real joy. I tend to set aside Fridays to explore new releases on the Qobuz streaming service. On these days I delve into music beyond my comfort zone, and am often delighted with what I hear. Through the Titan 606s I explored fado, folk, house, and various sorts of world music and almost always stayed with a whole album rather than jumping from track to track on different albums.

Towards the end of my time with these lovely music makers the Primaluna had to be withdrawn from service for another bout of TLC, so I installed in its place the Lyngdorf TDAl3400 integrated amplifier/DAC. This is pretty much at the opposite end of the technical spectrum from the EVO400. It's an all digital device, converting incoming analogue signals as they arrive. Into it I plugged the same set of source devices, and off we went again. The 606s didn't flinch. The crystal clear, precise sound of the Lyngdorf suited these doughty loudspeakers just as well as the valve amplifier had done, and the change in character was easy to hear. One is not better than the other, but they are very different presentations and the 606s handled both admirably.

We use our hi-fi with the television and here the 606s proved astonishingly good at reproducing the spoken word. They also have enough bass slam when required to handle movie soundtracks with aplomb. Santa had thoughtfully put a copy of *Top Gun: Maverick* on Blu-ray in my stocking and that powerful soundtrack had all the visceral power needed in the high octane scenes. At no time during the review period did I feel the need to add my REL sub

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into the mix. Kudos claim that the Titan 606 has a 30Hz low frequency response, that's not hard to believe.

Titan 606 conclusion

By now you will have gathered that I rather liked these floorstanders. Actually I loved them. If they have any vices I could not detect them. They presented the music, the movies and speech material with stunning realism. Some loudspeakers will muscle their way to the front of an



audition because they draw attention to themselves, which can be very seductive in an hour or two in a dealer's listening room. However, get them home and live with them and they can become fatiguing, meaning that one listens less and for shorter periods. The Kudos Titan 606s are the antithesis of that. They don't shout at you. Rather they draw you into the world of musician or the film maker. For many they will be the end point in that long search for a forever loudspeaker, not just a step on the path. These are grown up loudspeakers for grown up listeners that will not step back in horror if you suddenly ask them to play some dub reggae followed by a requiem mass.

As a minnow who swims in the large pond that is the UK hi-fi community, I know of several seasoned industry stalwarts who have purchased a pair of 606s, or who want to when funds allow. That is a measure of how good these really are. At the current price they are certainly not inexpensive but as a long term investment in your musical pleasure you will have to go an awfully long way to find something better.