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AUDIO REVIEWS

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The Krell Resolution 3s don't bring you so close as to spotlight only certain portions of the music, not so close that you lose sight of the forest for the trees. Not so microscopic are they that you're punished for trying to enjoy non-audiophile recordings. *Fun* may be an underused word in the audiophile's vernacular but one of the reasons that the Krell Resolution 3 succeeds to such a high degree is because it delivers just the right amount of audiophile goodies with a generous helping of hedonistic fun. It's one speaker that will appeal to both the "sophisticated" adult as well as her head-banging offspring.

#### Sidebar

With a voicing that strikes an excellent balance of insightful detail and overall musicality and with necessary compromises so wisely chosen, the Resolution 3 reflects a designer more interested in making music than impressing with HiFi. Indeed, I found the Res 3s an unusually mature product. I wrote Irv Gross (my sales and marketing contact at Krell) and asked him to comment on how this could be in what amounts to a second-generation product (or first generation when you consider that the



One of the first CDs I played over the Resolution 3s was Roger Waters' *Amused To Death* [Columbia CK 47127]. This two-channel surround spectacular is "Q-Sound" encoded and therefore relies heavily on manipulations of phase and time to create 3-D sound effects around the room and listener. In all respects, the Resolutions performed spectacularly. On 90% of the bass effects, the Resolution 3s had both the depth and power to convince and where it fell short, it didn't miss by enough to truly disappoint. As for placing those voices, animals, crickets and instruments all around the room, the Krells did as well as I've ever heard and better than most. Some speakers can manage placing effects to span in front of the listener and out to the 9:30 and 2:30 positions. The Krells easily placed Marv Albert's voice on "Perfect Sense, Part II" well to my left and slightly behind me. Likewise the barking dog at the very beginning of "The Ballad of Bill Hubbard" was beyond my room walls and way off to my right. The thunder crack on "Perfect Sense, Part I" not only moved right to left above my head but the Krells went a step further by placing the thunder's path slightly *behind* me.

It takes both time and phase coherence to get this disc as right as the Krells did. The only speakers that I can think of that did it as well were various Thiels with their concentric mid/tweeter

Resolution series is the first that I would call "affordable".) I was informed this recent foray into speaker design is not the first for Krell's Dan D'Agostino. In fact, fresh out of college this electrical engineer became involved with a now defunct avantgarde Canadian loudspeaker manufacturer, *Dayton-Wright*. According to Gross, D'Agostino's designs on electrostatic speakers were to become the progenitors for designs by Martin-Logan and others.

Gross told me that D'Agostino's typical MO is to build the very best he can at any given price category. With that benchmark in mind, his next task is to revisit those designs using more affordable components and techniques. As for the Resolution series, here is how the line was born:

About six years ago D'Agostino was using the Wilson Grand SLAMMs as his reference speaker. His desire for reference quality deep bass inspired him to design his own subwoofer. He knew that he could design the subwoofer to meet his needs but it would take several things: a) the right driver(s), b) a suitable enclosure, and c) sufficient amplification. After an exhaustive search, he found his woofers and hey, building the right amplification is what Krell has always been about. The remaining challenge was the enclosure. D'Agostino's no-holds-barred approach led to an enclosure of 1-inch-thick machined aluminum billet with 2-inch thick baffles. This was considered the next best thing to the completely impractical concrete and lead alternatives. This gave rise to the 400-pound and \$35,000 Master Reference Subwoofer (MRS).

With the MRS, D'Agostino discovered just how effective aluminum was in enclosure design so he applied it to full-range speakers and the LAT (Lossless Acoustic Transducer) series was born. With it came the realization that for many folks, the LAT Series was price-prohibitive so he embarked on the creation of the Resolution Series. True trickle-down technology resulted in the Resolution 1, which was very similar in shape and concept to the LAT-1, and then the Resolution 3. With the realization that customers would be looking to fill out home theaters, Krell followed with the wall-mounted Resolution 4 and the Resolution C for surround and center

arrays - and that speaks volumes for the Krells. Sonic apparitions aside, the Krells' musical prowess and athleticism made them well mated to the Pink Floyd-like sonic spectacle. Waters' vocals as well as the assorted female soloists and background vocalists were presented with excellent clarity and balance. The Krells' speed and weight also served the highly percussive nature of the music well. To listen to this disc was to sit through it twice.

### A Few Comparisons

I'd easily classify the Resolution 3s in the super monitor category despite the existence of its Lat 1 sibling, which sells for multiples of the Resolution's price and which I have not heard. I've already identified the JMLab Mini Utopia as another leader in the class and it should be evident by now that I prefer the Krell. Though very solid in its own right, the JMLab doesn't go quite as low as powerfully or fully as the Krell, which I additionally find more musically natural.



As a studio or location monitor, few approach the JMLab but for musical enjoyment -- a more cohesive and natural experience -- give me Krell.

Another favorite monitor of mine is the Thiel PCS, which sells for \$1K less than the Krell. On its own the Thiel can't hope to keep pace with the Krell in terms of bass power and dynamics. I'm not sure that the Thiel can play as loudly either but that's of little interest to the civilized audiophile, right? In most respects both speakers are highly evolved examples of the genre and where they differ, their respective success will have to be judged on matters of taste and preference. The Thiel is slightly more forward and a bit more extended in the treble. The Thiel is the more incisive of the two while the Krell is the smoother, richer and more forgiving. When it comes to the retrieval of detail, I believe the two speakers to be similarly adept. If the Thiel is a scoop of quality vanilla ice cream -- rich, pure, simple and satisfying -- the Krell would have to be likened to a good French vanilla with maybe a little hot fudge; slightly smoother, richer, more robust and just a little more sinfully satisfying.

the Resolution 3 for surround and center channel duties respectively, as well as the Resolution Subwoofer and the Resolution 2 floor-standing loudspeaker. Not exactly an overnight gestation, Gross says that 18 to 24 months transpired between the Resolution Series conception and birth - I guess that's why they call it *trickle* down.

By the way, proving that what trickles down can also trickle up, some newly inspired thoughts on drivers and crossovers resulted in the 2005 CES introduction of the LAT-1000 and LAT-2000 loudspeakers, the next steps beyond the LAT-1 and LAT-2 respectively.

Gross continued that what makes their speakers special are their crossover networks. In the Resolution 3, there are separate crossovers for the tweeter and woofer and a woofer EQ board with a notch filter at about 1kHz. Conceding that some may think these networks overbuilt, Krell considers them necessary to achieve the performance required to handle the power of Krell amplifiers. For me, the proof was in the pudding - the Resolution 3 is one sweet speaker indeed.



Dayton Wright XG 8 MK 3

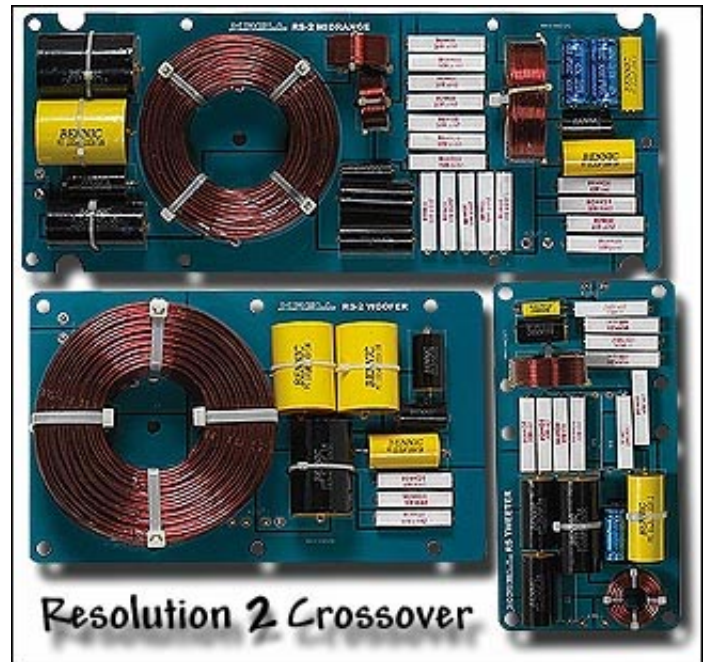
Indeed, there is a lot to rave about here. But at the same time, I must be clear that the 3s cannot be all things to all people. With bass extending only to 45Hz, deep bass and pipe organ fanatics will either be disappointed or in need of a good subwoofer. Those looking for the most illuminated and extended of trebles may also be mildly disappointed. And as good as the Resolution 3s midrange is, it's not as penetrating and detailed as that of some speakers (most of which are considerably more expensive to boot - if that's your cup of tea).

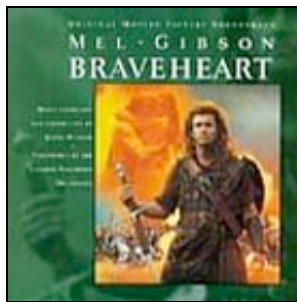
But if you have a smallish listening room where deep bass can be problematic, then the little Krell's bass response will work very well for you. If you have a large room and a subwoofer, the Krells will work splendidly. Their voicing falls into the musically forgiving camp and the design goal seems to be aimed at delivering the most unfailingly musical experience with the widest cross-section of recordings, systems and rooms. If you'd rather listen to music than dissect what's on your CDs, the Krells will likely have more than enough resolution to keep you happy. The notion that the Krells will thrive on good solid-

state electronics and that the Resolution 3s have a smooth and relaxed treble response that is all but guaranteed to be a synergistic match shouldn't shock anybody. Myself? I'd love to hear them with a stack of Krell's finest. Of course, owners of powerful tubes would be wise to give the Krells a listen as well. Aesthetically, the speakers are simply gorgeous. Well finished and substantial, they don't overwhelm the room with size or flash but at the same time nobody will mistake them for those silly lifestyle systems. The Krells look as profound as they sound and will engender genuine pride of ownership. At their asking price and in today's market, the Krell Resolution 3 loudspeaker is a reasonable value and offers a combination of fortitude and finesse that makes it a true reference speaker and a very easy recommendation.

## Conclusion

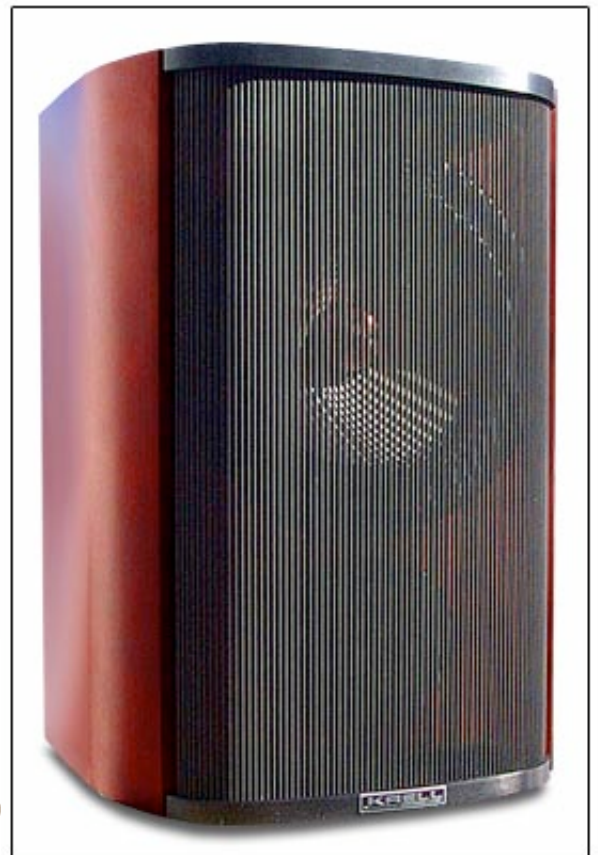
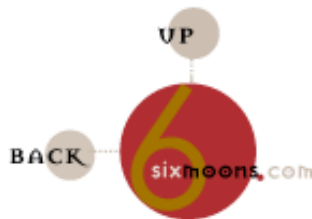
It's been 5 years since Krell first entered the loudspeaker market with the introduction of their LAT series of loudspeakers and I couldn't help but marvel at what a mature product the Resolution 3s are. The market is replete with products from companies that have been specializing in speakers for far longer than Krell yet fail to produce such a well conceived and executed product. Despite my distaste for unbalanced rave reviews, I've been doing a lot of raving about the Krell Resolution 3 loudspeaker.





*John Potis*

Krell [Website](#)



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