KRK Rokit RP10-3 | £1,098 per pair

Monitor moguls KRK launch their first three-way offering. ***Greg Scarth*** listens and learns

WHAT IS IT?
Three-way active monitors

CONTACT
Who: KRK Systems
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HIGHLIGHTS
1 Three-way design with 10" woofer, 4" mid and 1" tweeter
2 Response down to 31Hz
3 Far more detailed than 2-way Rokit designs

SPECS
Reinforced MDF enclosure with black vinyl wrap
1" silk soft dome tweeter, 4" aramid/glass fibre mid, 10" aramid/glass fibre low
Frequency response: 31Hz to 20.8kHZ (±3 dB)
Crossover frequencies: 350Hz and 3.5kHz.
Subsonic filter: 30Hz
Input: balanced XLR or ¼" TRS. Unbalanced RCA
Controls: HF level (-2dB, -1dB, 0dB, +1dB); LF level (-2dB, -1dB, 0dB, +2dB), volume (-30 to +6dB)
Class A/B amplifiers: 30WHF, 30WMF, 80WLF.
SNR: 93dB. THD+N: 0.01%.
Dimensions:
545 x 325 x 365mm
Weight:
21.1kg each

Home studio owners are spoilt for choice. KRK are just one of the many manufacturers who've flooded the market with accurate, revealing near-fields at attractive prices. Strangely, affordable choices are much more limited in the three-way monitor market.

KRK's new Rokit RP10-3s aim to address this discrepancy, bringing three-way monitoring down to an affordable new price point.

Rokit don't stop it

The RP10s bear significant similarities to the rest of KRK's Rokit range, featuring front-firing ports, a vinyl-coated MDF enclosure, glass/aramid low-frequency driver and a 1-inch soft dome tweeter. The major difference is the presence of a third driver; where the rest of the Rokit range are two-way designs, the RP10s are a three-way design with a 10-inch woofer and 4-inch mid-range driver. For our test I borrowed a pair of RP8 G2s in order to make a direct comparison. The difference in physical stature between the two monitors is obvious, and on setting them up together and trying them side-by-side it's clear that the sonic difference is equally dramatic.

The RP10 is significantly better in every respect: the bottom end's tighter and deeper, there's no honkiness from the port at any listening level, the mid-range is more detailed and transparent, and the top end is smoother and more revealing. The RP10s don't sound hi-fi in the hyped, flattering sense, but there's an enjoyably involving character to the sound which is missing from the smaller models.

Fat bottoms

The RP10s' low-end frequency response is seriously deep, with a bump at around 40Hz followed by a gentle roll-off down to the -3dB point at 31Hz. Needless to say, you won't need a subwoofer with these. Strangely, KRK have chosen not to offer acoustic space settings to tame the bottom end. Instead, you'll have to make do with adjusting the LF level switches, but the maximum of 2dB low frequency attenuation might not be enough to compensate for placement near a wall or other equipment. Soffit mounting is also out of the question, but horizontal placement is made possible thanks to a rotating sub-baffle which houses the tweeter and mid.

Given that most of the competition costs at least twice as much as the RP10s, it's inevitable that there must be compromises in the design. Like the smaller monitors in the Rokit range, the frequency response of the RP10s isn't the flattest we've ever heard. Likewise, they certainly aren't the most powerful three-way design you'll find, with a 30W class A-B amplifier for the highs, 30W for the mids and 80W for the bass. Even so, they're relatively efficient and there's plenty of clean power before the amps break up.

Conclusion

The RP10s are highly capable monitors which compete favourably with products twice their price. Whether as a near-field with an incredible low-end response or as a dedicated mid-field to supplement an existing pair of monitors, I see no reason why they won't be popular with producers working in absolutely any genre. My only major concern stems from their size and imposing bottom end. The list price of £1,098 is likely to translate to a street price just over £800 – by pitching such a large monitor at a project studio-friendly price, KRK run the risk of attracting customers whose rooms really aren't big enough or sufficiently treated for the RP10s to work properly. That's not a criticism of the monitors, per se, but a warning. Assuming your room can handle them, the RP10-3s have to be considered an attractive option at this fantastic price. FM

FutureMusic VERDICT MDR-7520

BUILD
VALUE
EASE OF USE
VERSATILITY
RESULTS

The RP10-3s offer high quality three-way monitoring at an incredibly competitive price.