AKG K712 Pro | £379

AKG's new top of the range studio headphones have arrived. ***Trevor Curwen*** warms his ears as he listens

WHAT IS IT?
Open back, dynamic, reference studio headphone

CONTACT
Who: Sound Technology
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HIGHLIGHTS
1 Impressive sound quality
2 Comfortable fit
3 Replaceable cabling

SPECS
Type: Open-back, circumaural, dynamic headphones
Frequency response: 10Hz – 39.8kHz
Sensitivity: 105dB/V
Rated impedance: 62 ohms
Max input power: 200MW
Cable: 3m single-sided (99.99% oxygen free)
Connections: Gold plated stereo jack plug 3.5mm (1/4") plus gold-plated convertible jack plug adapter 3.5/6.3mm (1/8" to 1/4")
Included accessories: Additional coiled cable, premium carrying bag
Weight: 235g

There are many reasons to have a really good set of monitoring headphones in the studio – we may need to work quietly because of noise constraints or perhaps we don't want to listen to the same set of speakers all day. Then there's the comparison during mixdown – home and project studios may not have the space or the funds for multiple pairs of monitors but, with headphones, there's always the option of checking mixes on something other than the solitary set of speakers.

Of course, it's no good having a crap set of headphones for the job. Cheap closed back types may be fine for handing out in a tracking session, the fact that they have minimal leakage being a practical advantage. But if you are going to be using headphones to help make crucial mixing decisions you really need a good comfortable open-backed set and AKG's new K712 Pro are designed to be just that.

Top of the range

Released earlier this year, alongside the more affordable (£149) K612 Pro, the top of the range K712 Pro are described by AKG as reference, open, over-ear headphones for precise listening, mixing and mastering. AKG say that they have improved low-end performance by 3dB over their predecessors, the K702, which now sit between the two new models in the range.

Hand-crafted in Austria, the build quality of the K712 Pro is excellent. Where the K702s offer a black and silver finish, the K712 Pro favour a darker scheme, black throughout with burnt orange detailing, mainly in the two aluminium arches of the headband and the matching cable. The soft leather part of the headband that sits directly on your head is narrower than on the K702 and eschews that model's rippled undersurface for a flat profile that feels more comfortable and may offer an advantage in longer listening sessions. Adjustment is dead easy – these things self-adjust! Just pull them on and the elastic-loaded headband finds its natural position. The earpad cushions have a smooth black velvety finish and completely cover the ears, soft and pillow-like.

The headphones come with two cables, both of which have a solidly-locked three-pin mini-XLR connection to keep them firmly anchored to the left earpad. The cables terminate in a gold mini-jack connector with a screw-on 1/4-inch stereo jack adapter so you can use them in a variety of situations.

Dig out the detail

To anyone familiar with the K702s, the K712 Pro offer no surprises in the sound stakes. What you are getting here is a set of headphones that will let you hear all the detail in a mix with an accurate balance of frequencies. Transient response is good, as is the sense of imaging and spatial awareness – this is an altogether very open and airy sound. The K712 Pro have a little more in the bass end than the K702s but it's not hyped in any way and the overall feeling is that the frequency spectrum as represented by the K712 Pro is one that will both satisfy the casual listener and allow any engineer/producer to dig out the detail and make valid mixing choices.

Light and extremely comfortable the K712 Pro are headphones that will lend themselves to extended listening sessions and can be relied upon to give you an accurate representation of your mix. FM

FutureMusic VERDICT

BUILD
VALUE
EASE OF USE
VERSATILITY
RESULTS

A pair of great mix headphones. Light, airy, comfortable and expertly put together