



INFINITY KAPPA SERIES AND INTERMEZZO 1.2s SUBWOOFER

"Rekindle an Old Flame with Your First Love—Fidelity"



Sitting under a shade tree at the edge of the Willamette River watching brilliant leaves fall, I drifted off to a time and place when I knew young love. There is something about the nostalgia of fall that makes me daydream of a time when I knew it all, yet was very impressionable—the age of curiosity, the age of innocence.

Her name was Fidelity, and though I remember that first glimpse, I am unclear as to what it was about her that captured me. Perhaps her voice...or purity...or strength...or finesse. Perhaps everything about her...perhaps.

Kappa was the mother of Fidelity, as I knew it. To me, there was nothing more pure.

But a war was raging around the world in which Fidelity had no place. Digital signal processing was a relentless battle of formats des-

tined for digital domination. By the time the smoke began to clear Fidelity was gone...as is often the case in love and war.

Recently, from the ashes, the love and legend of Infinity Kappa was reborn. But would Fidelity be the same?

Unique Features

What makes the Kappa Series unique from most of the Infinity line of loudspeakers is the use of real wood finishes. The Kappa Series speakers are a wonderful marriage of Scandinavian craftsmanship and technology, built entirely in Denmark.

To achieve sonic accuracy and musicality, all Kappa Series drivers, woofers, midrange and tweeters, are constructed with Infinity's patented Ceramic Metal Matrix Diaphragm (C.M.M.D.) just as in the Entra ensemble we reviewed last month. This is also the same driver technology utilized in the flagship Intermezzo and Prelude MTS models. C.M.M.D. driver material is a constrained-layer sandwich construction formed by bonding alumina (a ceramic com-

▲ The Infinity Kappa Series (left to right): 600 (cherry), 400 (black oak), 200 Bookshelf on stand (maple), and Center (black oak).

pound), to both sides of an aluminum core, producing driver diaphragms of ultra-low mass and ultra-high rigidity for extraordinary transient response and resolution. With the inherent resonance of the drivers moved well beyond the audible range, unwanted sonic colorations are eliminated.

The results are dramatically reduced distortion and cone breakup, excellent detail resolution and smooth, consistent sound quality throughout the frequency range.

The floor standing Kappa 600 (38" x 8.25" x 17") features a single 6.5" midrange and 1" tweeter and maintains a sleek appearance by employing a 10" side-firing woofer and a rear firing port. This allows the Kappa 600 to achieve accurate low frequency response without a large, obtrusive appearance.

The Kappa 200 (14.25" x 8.25" x 14.5") is effectively a "bookshelf" version of the 600, uti-

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lizing the same driver array minus the 10" woofer. The Kappa 200s are also magnetically shielded so that they can be placed next to a video display (i.e., used as the main L/R). There are optional metal stands available from Infinity that are, again, excellent quality and match the overall look of the Kappa series well.

The Kappa Center is another impressive addition to the line. The three-way design of the magnetically shielded Center incorporates a 1" tweeter, atop a 4" midrange flanked by dual 6.5" woofers.

The Kappa Series are well damped internally and contoured externally so they will not suffer from harsh secondary reflections. All are bi-amp or bi-wireable 6-ohm speakers. The speaker connections feature wonderful gold-plated binding posts with "real" jumpers made of thick gauge metal—kudos. The Kappa Series are offered in maple, cherry and black oak.

There are plenty of options in the Infinity lineup with regards to anchoring the Kappa Series with a subwoofer. However, there is not a specific "Kappa" Series subwoofer. I chose to integrate the Infinity Intermezzo 1.2s subwoofer. The Intermezzo subwoofer is a truly unique and revolutionary design for a number of reasons. An incredible 850-watt RMS amplifier featuring Infinity's patented Room Adaptive Bass Optimization System (R.A.B.O.S.) powers the 12" C.M.M.D. woofer. The R.A.B.O.S. system is an interactive parametric equalization system that enables the speaker to "adapt" to the listening environment.

The Intermezzo 1.2s subwoofer (15.25" x 18.25" x 13.75") features a die cast aluminum enclosure and weighs about 62 pounds total. It includes a test CD, an electronic meter, and a key to use when dialing in the R.A.B.O.S. On the back are push button switches for high-



▲ The Intermezzo 1.2s subwoofer weighs 62 pounds, features a die cast aluminum enclosure, and incorporates a self-equalization system.

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pass/low-pass filters and 0 to 180 phase shifting, a variable 100Hz 6dB per-octave crossover, low-level inputs and the highest quality high-level inputs I have ever seen on a subwoofer. The front baffle of the sub features a gain/volume control that glows red or green to signify On/Off and three small keyholes for use when dialing in the R.A.B.O.S. system.

Installation/Setup/Ease of Use

The Kappa 600 series are a true dedicated left or right speaker. They are designed so that the sideward firing 10" woofer fires into the display area rather than toward the outside of the room. This is a well thought out design, as it is more likely the "controlled" placement option. The 600s are heavy—about 72 pounds—and feature a very solid footprint. I bi-wired the pair to my Sunfire Theater Grand III Signature Series via Monster Cable Z1 pre-terminated cables.

The Kappa Center is large and heavy, and well represents what a true high quality center channel speaker should be. I bi-wired the center also to maximize the dynamic performance. It was a welcome sight atop my Zenith HDTV.

Assembling the speaker stands supplied for the 200s was relatively simple. The stands are heavy and well matched to the 200s and the perfect height for surround channel placement.

The Intermezzo 1.2s sub is a real back breaker. However, it is compact enough for one person to manage. It includes a 15-foot power cord to give users plenty of placement options—after all, with the built-in self equalization system, the 1.2s can be placed anywhere in the room and tuned for performance maximization. I could write an entire 3-page review just on the 1.2s sub. Not only do the performance and features warrant it, but it is the smartest subwoofer I have ever auditioned. The R.A.B.O.S. kit includes a slick Sound Level Meter, Test CD, Adjustment Key, a

Bandwidth Selector and graphs. Learning how to use the system and dialing in the sub will take about an hour and the results are well worth the time spent.

Final Take

The Kappa Series tweeters are capable of reaching up into 27kHz and I measured the subwoofer (for fun) down to 15Hz at 104.5dB. This measurement was taken in a subjective environment, but the fact remains: the Intermezzo sub hits low and loud. Add in the sheer musical quality of the 1.2s and the result equals the most well rounded subwoofer I've laid ears on. Couple that bone crushing bass output with the headroom and top-end output, and you've got one heck of a dynamic speaker ensemble. In addition, the Kappa Center stages a large and lively performance and is absolutely relentless with on-screen action.

Faith Hill never sounded this good, and I swear if the room had been just a bit colder I would have seen her breath coming off the Kappas. This isn't the type of speaker ensemble that you buy without spending some personal quality time auditioning for yourself, so I won't bore you with what each clip did for me. This is a series designed for the ages and you should have exceptionally high expectations when you audition them for yourself.

Infinity could not have brought back an old flame in the Kappa Series without some serious considerations. This is not just a product engineered to meet the performance expectations we've become accustomed to today. The Kappa Series brings back the nostalgia of the passion that is Fidelity—a relationship I'd be willing to rekindle at twice the asking price.

—By Clint Walker



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Price as tested
 \$6,000