



Ktêma

The birth of Ktêma

To be able to communicate, using the language of music, those feelings that cannot be narrated with the most private of words - this is my task.

I am Ktêma, a loudspeaker.

I am a fusion of the old, enduring experience with the light, free, searching spirit.

My birth came about by chance, by the strange destiny of the simplest things that fascinate us - the things that give life to great passions and enthusiasm...

It was because of a mysterious string of events that a simple phrase – written in pen along the margin of a wiring diagram – began to represent the inception of an arduous project. Little by little, it took form and depth, generating my conception.

The following phrase was sent to the person who, through time, “gave me shape”, words from a friend with whom he had continuously carried out accurate and attentive research over the years, intent on delving into the innermost definitions of what music reproduction actually “means”.

This friend had written...

*The Greeks said, “**Ktêma eis aei**”: a possession for ever - something that, over time, cannot be disputed. It is the opposite of “**Panta rei**”: everything changes constantly.*

*When will a speaker become “**Ktêma eis aei**” in place of all those that are “**Panta rei**”? -*

It was an invitation to spur him on to create something everlasting, that would be “a possession forever” in a world where everything changes, in a world that cannot stop because it is interwoven with technology and research which by definition is always new, always in a continuum, sometimes sterile, always improving ... It was all about trying to find a stability in the impetuous and continuous “current” of forms ... and it was immediately clear that this was to be a truly fascinating challenge.

So my “creator” thought it would be nice to continue the planning process, to create a sort of “testimony” that could last through time: almost like a “ship’s boat” that floats on the unavoidable waves of “panta rei”...

After all, a lot of water had passed under the bridge of music reproduction since the time of the

legendary "Snail", which, with its incredible structure (rightly defined by the press of the sector as "Leonardo-esque"), launched a new way of conceiving the acoustic transducer.

Over the years, my designer had maintained a coherent approach, a wilful and spontaneous craftsmanship that had always represented a strong continuum in the production of all the speakers which came before me.

We are the offspring of the same inspiration and of the constant desire for beauty and simplicity

I remember with great pride the "Parva", the "Minima" and the "Minima Amator", which are still considered today as true points of reference by authoritative music authorities all over the world. For years they have been defined by the press of the sector as the "best loved by the Italians". Then came "Electa" and "Extrema" - incredible speakers which are admired to this day. Then came the "summa" of their research - the continuously copied "Guarneri" ... and then the "Amati" and "Stradivari" ...

A long list of "music instruments" that represent my "Ancestral Gallery": a fascinating exhibition of products that foresees what my voice will be - another fruit from my creator's fertile mind that has given life, in over 30 years of passionate work, to masterpieces that now belong to the history of music reproduction.

It was clear, however, that only through tenacious research, digging deeper, removing, lightening and finally by working a fundamental synthesis, could my designer give birth to a speaker, both new and old, that could happily stand in line along with all its "sisters" that had been born before me.

It was also clear that, by definition, there cannot be a product that can resist the assault of the new and technical evolution. Instead the product's essence and its *raison d'être* will remain in time, because they are linked to its functionality and honesty - and also to a kind of universality that will allow it to overcome the influence (and also the wear and tear) of passing fads and time.

Therefore I had to embody a governing principle which time could not alter, yet, at the same time, had to materialise in the product as conceived ... I had to be the wonderful-yet-seemingly-impossible fusion of "ktema eis aei" with "panta rei"!

And so it was clear that the simple needs of every keen enthusiast are the credibility and the evocation of the musical event being reproduced. The keen enthusiast is the person who wants to use the system to enjoy music and not use music to enjoy the system. My creator felt the need to take hold of a new, strong concept that had to be a moment of a conquered synthesis, and had to reconcile the many requirements a product must have in order to be elegant, functional and useful.

I had to be a non-conceited and non-invasive product, destined to enter into the homes of those who desire something beautiful and "right" - a humble instrument of reproduction and not a bulky object that expects to be the protagonist, overthrowing the very concept of service and function.

It would have been normal, for the person who designed me, to think up a great and important speaker, imposing and powerful, able to deafen and amaze, with acoustic possibilities that go beyond the limit of perception, with infinite controls, and with a booming personality. When all is said and done, it would have been normal to think up a product that would have been the simple fruit of decades worth of knowledge regarding technique and components.

But the need for simple truth and measure has always been the leitmotif that informed and sustained the entire project which gave me a life. A project that could only keep in solid consideration the needs of the normal and keen music enthusiast, without having to sacrifice their home furnishings, or the

norms of living, to instruments which look "professional", but which are meant for recording studios or for rooms created exclusively for auditions, experimentation and comparisons.

In short, I was desired as a fresh and simply innovative creation: a calm and fascinating travelling companion, able to provide hours and hours of pleasurable listening to any enthusiast of good will.

I had to embody a new and strong concept, but at the same time I had to be elegant, functional and readily usable.

Therefore, many vectors had to join together to result in the conception that would lead to my birth, and many of these were completely unconventional.

Long before I was born, though, an idea whirled through the mind of the person who created me: he wanted to highlight - in the sound box that houses the reproduced music event - what counts most of all, that is ... the thing which normally captures the attention of the listener ...

Thus it was that the idea of highlighting the "proscenium" came to be. The proscenium is, of course, the centre of the event, and this idea would give a clear reason and shape to my body.

Maybe it was precisely because my designer felt the need to reproduce the music event in the simplest, most direct, natural possible way, that brought about the desire to make the typical place of performance - centre stage - perceivable in the clearest way.

This is where the action takes place, where attention is focused, where you can perceive the virtual space that surrounds the concert artist, the soloist, the singer - it is the element that is the focal point of what we listen to.

The surrounding area needs to develop around this point: the orchestra, or the chamber music group, or the group of musicians.

Two roles, ideally and simply illustrated by the centre and its surrounding space.

Specific choices were made, as well, from a technical point of view - special attention and care were paid to not disturb or "soil" the central part of the acoustic spectrum.

This is the most delicate and sensitive part, where the ear perceives the smallest variations, where the harmonic richness and completeness highlight the true timbre of the instruments, where the audio phasing needs to be carefully considered and respected.

I know that it took several years to choose those three components, embedded in my frontal section, and I know that those three transducers represent the state of the art. They embody a consolidated reality, which has been confirmed by continuous and careful listening in the most prestigious laboratories.

In short, there is a clear awareness that the ultimate aim of music reproduction is not about conforming to technical parameters, but rather, with due respect to the most sophisticated technical parameters, it is about making the ear of the listener "happy".

That is how my frontal section was born, and it has been carefully designed and safeguarded by any possible interference or disturbance.

The centre and surrounding space are its nodal point and supporting structure. The construction of my entire framework has been determined by clear choices.

Governing principles originating from logic and pressing rationality have smoothed the way for formal production guided only by simple consequentiality: when the main process is logical and correct, the product that stems from it has to be correct as well.

So this "surrounding part", which supplies the correct support to the solo part, has acquired its own importance: a rear diffusion that accompanies and complements the "heart" of the music without invading or obscuring it.

The low frequency has therefore been optimized in a wave guide (following the path mapped out by illustrious authors such as Allison, Klipsch, Snell, Berkovitz, et al) which, for months on end, has been the object of careful tuning. This has resulted in an extremely interesting and new characteristic: by giving the membranes of the loudspeaker the same "resistance" to both the front wave and the rear wave, creating a synchronicity in the vibration with the most unexpected results.

Obviously, I'm telling you all this from my point of view, from how I perceive my unity, that is, from how I "live" the quality of sound that emanates from me: this goes beyond the simple technical aspect and positions itself in a place where (at the "base" of obligatory technical coherence) the listener's "eminence" fuses with maximum awareness.

And so, I know all too well that the happiness and emotion that comes from listening to me will be directly proportional to the sensitivity, the culture and musical knowledge of my faithful listener.

For a lengthy year of testing and improvement I was a guest in the home of Andrea Bocelli, and the admiration and respect he showed me made me proud and feel sure of my way of presenting the music reproduced - my personal "version of the facts".....

The famous singer wrote this, about me, to my designer:

Dearest Mr. Serblin,

I am sitting in front of the speakers and, whilst listening to my album, I felt the need to sit down in front of the computer to write and congratulate you for the quality of these speakers and the pleasure they give me whilst listening.

Even my voice seems warmer and more beautiful!

A real home theatre, where the singer is right there, in front of you.

...many congratulations for "a possession for ever"...

Andrea Bocelli.

Now all I can do is to wish you good listening...on behalf of myself I have to say that I am carrying out my work with great satisfaction because I am convinced that the fascinating challenge, that I mentioned at the beginning, has been properly won...

Yours, Ktêma.