

Loudspeaker Focus



Rockport Technologies Lynx Product of the Year Contender!

Matt Clott

When you listen to stereo equipment professionally, you can become numb to the constant flow of gear in and out of your listening room. Some are an obligation; some you really look forward to. Every once in a while, you are offered something you were secretly hoping would be dangled like a shiny fishing lure in front of you. Having owned and loved my Rockport Atria 2 speakers for over a year now, I had been quietly hoping I would be asked to review the newest bit of Maine-brewed deliciousness, Rockport's new Lynx. I was specifically intrigued by the Lynx, as it is, nearly, the identical in every way to my Atria 2 but with a better cabinet—a *much* better cabinet. Other than the cabinet, the only other difference is a 1" larger-diameter woofer (dropping the low frequency extension from 28Hz to 23Hz and adding approximately 50% more internal enclosure volume and 50% more drive surface area) and a more advanced tweeter waveguide. The tweeter, midrange, cross-

over, internal cabling, most internal parts and bits are otherwise identical in the proverbial baby of the model line-up and the third from the top of the line, making this review an exercise in hearing what a better cabinet can do to the performance of a speaker. News flash—the difference is massive, but let me explain how...

The cabinet of the Lynx was spawned by the amazing sandwich cabinet design implemented in the Lyra (see Robert Harley's sidebar on the Lyra's construction). In the case of the Lynx, a single

aluminum casting is utilized; Rockport refers to it as its DAMSTIF3 enclosure. This enclosure allows ideal placement of the drivers, reduction of internal standing waves, and less edge diffraction. The aluminum casting weighs 185 pounds and has internal stiffening ribs, which help further reduce structural resonance and increase surface area at the interface between the aluminum and damping material. Eighty-five pounds of visco-elastic damping is sequentially poured onto the interior surfaces of the casting and allowed to cure, creating a completely inert, perfectly bonded, and ideally damped enclosure. The cabinet uses no fasteners of any kind, no joinery, and is essentially composed of two components permanently and meticulously bonded. The result is a practically resonance-free enclosure that weighs 300+ pounds but can fit into a normal home/listening room, offering a perfect melding of performance and reasonable size. As is standard for Rockport, the crossover is placed in its own acoustically isolated enclosure in the Lynx's base and is individually calibrated by company President Josh Clark and Rockport founder and chief designer Andy Payor. The enclosure has outrigger feet cast as part of the cabinet into which spikes are inserted. Leveling the speaker left to right and back to front was easily realized by adjusting the spikes.

The Lynx takes cues from the "form follows function" design philosophy of all Rockport speakers. The 6" midrange and 10" bass drivers are in-house designs and incorporate carbon-fiber

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sandwich technology. The 1" beryllium tweeter is loaded in a waveguide. These are the same drivers used in the Lyra with the exception of the woofer being a 4 Ohm design for this application. The waveguide helps to match the tweeter's dispersion at the bottom of its operating range with the dispersion of the midrange at the top of its operating range as well as increasing the sensitivity at the low end of the tweeter's frequency range. The cabinet is only 48" tall and 12.4" wide and weighs 305 lbs. Technically it has a nominal impedance of 4 ohms and a 90dB sensitivity, compared to the Atria 2's sensitivity of 87.5dB. Interestingly, while both worked fine with my Lamm amps, as I cycled through a few other review items (including the to-be-reviewed Vitus SIA-025 Mk2), I found that the Lynx enjoyed the added power and control that higher wattage and higher damping amplifiers could deliver.

The speakers come on casters and easily roll out of the crates for simple installation and placement. Once they are settled, transitioning to sliders beneath the spikes allows for micro-placement adjustments to get them exactly where they belong. While the Lynx are quite heavy, their center of gravity is low, as Jennifer Warnes says, "way down deep." So, tilting and moving isn't as hard to accomplish as one would think. Josh spent half a day making sure the Lynx were optimized for my room, using the placement of the Atria 2 as a launching point. Josh uses a four tape-measure system, well-trained ears, and enormous patience to make the magic happen. The Lynxes ended up 37" from the sidewalls and 39" from the front wall, within inches of where the Atria 2 had

sat. I know I keep saying it but spend the time to set them up properly or you will never get the full performance out of your loudspeakers. The dealer will do it right, but if you are buying second-hand, you either need to know what you're doing or pay someone who does; otherwise, you will never get the performance the speaker can yield. Also, along the same lines, do as much as you can and spend as much as you can to make your room as acoustically ideal as possible. I don't care how expensive your equipment is, you can't overcome a bad room with good equipment! Sorry, rant over.

Circle-back time. I gave the Atria 2 a Golden Ear award in 2024. It uses a triple-laminated, constrained-layer damped enclosure with a solid four-inch-thick front baffle. I commented that "they play with a scale that belies their size and offer exceptional resolution, texture, detail, realism and impact. The Atria II create an expansive and wonderfully wall-to-wall stage with depth, height, and energy and their capacity to recreate the air and presence of the venue itself is, at times, almost unnerving. Their performance, in my room, engaged and enraptured in a way that very few other (much more expensive) speakers could." If you take all the drivers from the Atria 2 (make the woofer an inch bigger and add a more sophisticated tweeter waveguide), identical cabling, parts, and crossovers, and place them ever so gently into a DAMSTIF3 Lynx enclosure, you find out what happens when you improve the cabinet. Instantly, you realize electrostat-level speed, an absolute bottomless noise

floor, dynamic prowess, and magical detail retrieval, while concurrently charging the listening room with the energy of the recorded venue in a way the Atria 2 simply could not achieve.

For those who know my writing, I frequently mention that with certain designs you need to reset your brain/ear system to prepare yourself for the sonic differences that various speaker designs present. Electrostatic and planar speakers, sealed-enclosure dynamic speakers, open-baffle designs, ported dynamic cabinets—each offers positives and negatives and requires shifting your expectations to best appreciate their unique qualities. I had to adjust my listening expectations with the Lynx, not because of the change in enclosure but because of the way that same design was implemented. This was the closest I have ever heard in my room to a complete lack of cabinet intervention or interference; the cabinet is simply not part of the performance. In a ported dynamic design that is a bit unnerving and threw my brain a curve ball at first.

The Atria 2 are very forgiving speakers and work well with most brands of equipment. They are excellent for use as review tools. The Lynx exudes emotion with speed, contrast, transparency, and resolution; yet their lightning-fast speed, utter lack of noise, and complete transparency told me that they demand truly exceptional equipment in a symbiotic relationship where each part is absolutely focused on achieving a common goal. As an example, the Lynx sounded magical in my system: Lamm

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Specs & Pricing

Type: Three-way floorstanding loudspeaker	(17.6"with outrigger) x 48" x 23.4"
Driver complement: 1" waveguide-mounted beryllium dome tweeter; 6" carbon-fiber-sandwich composite midrange; 10" carbon-fiber-sandwich composite woofer	Weight: 305 lbs. each/470 lbs. crated
Frequency response: 23Hz–30kHz (–3dB)	Finishes: Satin Silver Metallic; Satin Titanium Metallic; High-Gloss Custom
Impedance: 4 ohms	Price: \$78,000
Sensitivity: 90dB SPL/2.83V	ROCKPORT TECHNOLOGIES
Minimum amplifier power: 50W	info@rockport-technologies.com
Dimensions: 12.4"	(207) 596-7151

M1.2 Reference monoblocks, Lampizator Poseidon DAC/pre-amp, and Aurender N30SA server. Yet while the Atria 2 sounded fantastic with the Vitus SIA-025 Mk2 integrated amplifier, the Lynx smacked me across the head and made it clear that the SIA-030 would be a much more appropriate mate, revealing limitations in the SIA-025 Mk2 that only a speaker twice the price of the integrated could. Anyone who is buying or considering buying \$80k+ speakers is going to spend commensurately on the rest of the system, and the Lynx tells you to take your time and pick the gear that will extract the most from these wonderful transducers.

The Lynx sits below the Orion, which is below the Lyra. None of Rockport's speakers are huge or imposing, and all fit in pretty much every room. To me, the Orion and Lyra can do medium or big rooms easy-peasy, while the Lynx, Avior 2, and Atria 2 are best mated to small to medium rooms. Not that the latter can't perform well in larger rooms, but I think the larger driver volume of the bigger boys would best suit that need.


It is important to comment on Rockport's low-frequency persona. The low-frequency intent of a Rockport is to recreate the texture, tone, and dynamic scale of the recording, while adding nothing that should not be there. Because they are utilizing a single 10" woofer in a beautiful and elegant three-way design, the Lynx goes deep wonderfully and offers everything most listeners would ever want, but it does not provide heart-pumping impact and viscerally fathomless bass like a much larger speaker would. For those for whom near-subsonic bass is a priority, consider subwoofers to satisfy that itch; but know that even the absolute best subs will likely struggle to keep up with the insane speed and resolution of the Lynx. To that point, my experience with the REL S/510 Line Array (three stacked subwoofers per side) and the Atria 2 gave me unlimited visceral impact and dynamic extension, adding a sense of scale and width but sacrificed a

hair of detail and resolution that Rockport is known and lusted after for. In the end, I preferred to sacrifice that last bit of resolution for what the subs added; it simply suited my listening preferences more. When Josh came over, he heard what the REL Line Array added and appreciated them but felt that they took away from the last ounce of purity, refinement, and imaging accuracy that his speakers can achieve; I could not argue. I look forward to bringing in REL's higher-end systems to see if those faster drivers and improved amplifiers make a difference with the Lynx. This is not meant to challenge the low-frequency prowess of the Lynx, which is staggering, especially considering their size. I found I could play these

speakers louder than I would ever want to; their capacity to render scale and gravitas was limitless in my room.

Sonically, the Lynx achieves what few other speakers can. To be flatly honest, they are amongst the six best speakers I have ever heard. The performed in my room in a way that only two other speakers have achieved (the Kharma Exquisite Midi 2 and Wilson Alexx V) but in a different way. Considering both the other speakers cost well over \$100k, that is quite a feather in the Rockport's cap. I feel that talking about the airy and natural highs, the complex and honest timbre of the midrange, and the true-to-life and perfectly balanced bass reproduction would just be an insufficient way to de-

Rockport's Lyra Enclosure

 **FOR MANY YEARS** Rockport has eschewed making cabinets from flat sheet stock in favor of advanced molding techniques. For example, the enclosure of Rockport's Altair (see my review in Issue 214) is made from an inner fiberglass shell and an outer carbon-fiber shell, with the void between them filled with dense epoxy. This method not only creates a stiff and dense enclosure, but it also allows cabinet shapes optimized for acoustic performance without the limitations imposed by gluing together flat sheets of material. An added benefit is a seamless monocoque structure with no joinery.

For the Lyra, Rockport has taken this concept to an extreme. Rather than make the inner and outer shells from fiberglass or even carbon fiber, the Lyra's two "shells" are massive cast-aluminum structures. The inner enclosure fits inside the outer enclosure, the joint is sealed, and then the cavity is filled with dense, custom-chemistry viscoelastic developed by Rockport. The inner enclosure (which is also the baffle) is an intricately designed casting with extensive reinforcement structures inside to brace the drivers.

This technique is extremely expensive, but results in an inert cabinet. In the Lynx, Rockport has attempted to bring the benefits of this construction method to a lower-priced loudspeaker. **ROBERT HARLEY**

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scribe what these speakers accomplish. I can say that they are sonically neutral, correct, balanced and transparent, but *honest* is truly the most accurate descriptor. What comes in, goes out—no flavoring, no seasoning, no box, no cross-over effects, no enclosure diffraction. They are the closest thing to a perfect transducer system I have ever heard in my room, especially considering their size. The only thing that will affect what comes out of the Lynx is your equipment and accessory choices, speaker placement, and room effects.

As many of you know, I use a track from *Thor: The Dark World, Asgard*, as my final litmus test. It is reasonably well recorded, loaded with

brass, tympani, symphonic scale, choral undertones, and power and for personal reasons has an enormous emotional impact on me when perfectly reproduced. When I finally listened to this track, I was left an emotional basket case; it took me a solid three minutes to compose myself afterwards. Only the Kharma's did that to me, and as much as I adored the Khar-mas, they struggled to offer a stage that extended well above the speaker height, while the Lynx's stage width and height are only limited by whatever was preserved by the microphones when the track was recorded. Interestingly, in a completely different way, I think the Kharma Exquisites

achieve a similar lack of cabinet interaction. There is something to say for spending the extra money on a better cabinet; the proof is in the pudding. I must also admit I did love my Wilson Alexx V's very much. Nothing rendered mass, impact, and scale while retaining subtlety and a natural resolution the way those behemoths did—a well-deserved Product of the Year winner!

The Lynxes are a “you are there” experience; the listener is transported to the venue, not the venue coming to you. To me, that is harder to achieve. If you are upgrading, you will likely need upgrade your amplification and speakers at the same time, as the Lynx are brutally revealing of anything but the best in upstream equipment. But, man, do they reward you when you accommodate them. There are few speakers that can achieve technically and emotionally what the Lynxes can accomplish. They are, quite simply, a tremendous achievement and an absolute mandatory consideration for anyone shopping in this price range.

I was asked to select my 2025 Golden Ear awards just after the Lynxes arrived. With only a week of settling and burning in, I could tell the Lynxes were something special and deserving of that honor. The remainder of my time with the Lynxes has not changed my mind. Well-deserved 2025 Golden Ear award! To be blunt, I will be pushing for the Product of the Year award for them, too. **tas**

