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Piega Tmicro 40 AMT Speaker Review

Like the country it comes from, the TMicro 40 is small but deceptively powerful

by [Ed Selley](#) Mar 25, 2018 at 7:58 AM

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SRP: £849.00

What is the Piega TMicro 40?

The Piega TMicro 40 is a compact two-way loudspeaker. In fact, it is a very compact two-way loudspeaker, so compact that on first inspection it appears to be a pair of satellites that have come adrift from their partnering equipment. Of course, you can also use the TMicro 40 this way – it is part of a range that includes the required bits to make an AV system but this is not the only way that Piega sees you using it.

This is because, despite its teeny appearance, the TMicro 40 is a fully functional standalone speaker. Furthermore, it uses technologies that are absolutely integral to the way that Piega feels that speakers should be constructed. As very few of these philosophies are cheap or easy to do so it means that these little speakers also come with a fairly hefty price tag.

A few years ago, this might have seemed a little on the ridiculous side but the times they are a changin' and the market for very compact and high end speakers has come a long way in the ensuing period. This means that we even have benchmarks to test the Piega against in the form of the [Neat IOTA](#) and [Spendor A1](#). So, does this compact and unassuming little speaker deliver what you need?

Specifications





The Piega is, at its heart, a two-way standmount speaker. The key element of this statement though is that almost everything that goes into making it a two-way standmount speaker is different from the accepted practise. As an opening gambit, the cabinet is made from aluminium. Piega feels that this is the best possible choice for the task but getting the best out of it requires considerable effort. In the flagship designs this means milling great sections of the cabinet from a single billet which isn't entirely practical at this price but some of the principles are carried over. The entire vertical section of the cabinet is a single piece which makes for a very rigid shape indeed.

First of all with the logical exception of the interface to the top and bottom of the cabinet – if you want the speaker to sit flat on a surface this is something of a given – there are no right angles present in the cabinet. This avoids the propagation of standing waves and allows for a more effective volumetric use of space in a given area. The result of this effort is a very inert and acoustically quiet cabinet to put drivers in.

The drivers that are then placed in this enclosure are unique to Piega. There is a 4.5 inch mid-bass driver that is made to the company's 'MDS' specification. This is a continuous profile cone that has been designed with a view to offering a very long throw that will ensure that the maximum bass output is extracted from that compact cabinet. This is partnered with a rear mounted bass port to further aid low-end extension.





The tweeter is more unusual still – both in terms of the technology used and the price it appears at. The Piega is fitted with an Air Motion Transformer. We have encountered these on the [Monitor Audio Platinum 100](#) and the principle remains the same. A folded membrane is mounted in a structure that allows it to be moved via electrical current in a manner not unlike (and cue one of my all time favourite phrases) a high frequency accordion. The advantage of this approach is that the radiating area of an AMT is massively greater than that of a conventional dome tweeter and still larger than that of a ribbon. This helps with the output and dispersion of high frequency information. At the same time, the overall moving mass of the AMT is still extremely low.

The combined efforts of these two drivers result in a fairly surprising frequency response. The upper quoted figure is no less than 40kHz which should mean that the TMicro 40 will have no trouble covering the upper audible frequency spectrum. In some ways the lower figure is more notable still. Piega claims that this 24 cm tall speaker is capable of extending down to 50Hz (albeit with no roll off figure quoted). This means that – on paper at least – it offers performance competitive with larger rivals at a similar price. The trade-off for this is marginally lower sensitivity at a quoted 87db/w into four ohms which should still be manageable for most amps and makes the Piega easier to drive than the Neat IOTA for example.

Design



To really appreciate the TMicro 40 you need to handle it rather than look at the pictures. The reason for this is that despite my best efforts to take some pleasant pictures of it, I don't think I can convey the sheer solidity that the Piega has when you pick one up. Even though, this 'affordable' version can't be hewn for a single massive billet of aluminium, it still manages to feel like it was. When you can interact with the Piega, you can see where the money has gone (notwithstanding that assembling *anything* in Switzerland is a fairly pricey thing to do).

As well as a feeling of solidity, the working elements of the Piega all feel solid and well thought out too. The grill is not something that is easily removed so you can't see the drivers (although I think that Piega has probably judged their target market correctly and that most customers won't be at all bothered by this). Other visible details like the terminals and the bass port though all feel exactly constructed. While you might feel that there is a size deficit to some similarly priced rivals, the Piega gives nothing away to any competitor I've encountered at similar money in terms of the way it is bolted together.

This particular set of TMicro 40s has been supplied in the optional black finish and for me at least, this is not the finish I'd choose with my own money. For starters, it adds another £50 to the asking price but more significantly, while it has been applied beautifully, it doesn't have the same appeal as the unskinned aluminium that is available at the base price that looks really lovely and is something of a Piega trademark. The Piega's aesthetic is notably different to both the Neat IOTA and the Sendor A1 but it should still work well in most domestic spaces.



“When you interact with the Piega, you can see where the money has gone

How was the TMicro40 tested?

The Piegas were placed on a pair of Soundstyle ZT60 speaker stands connected to both a Naim Supernait 2 and NAD D3020v2 integrated amp and used with source equipment including a [Naim ND5 XS](#), [Chord Hugo 2](#) and [Yamaha WX-AD10](#), along with an Audiofiles Modified [Audio Technica AT-LP5](#) Turntable into the NAD and a Michell Gyrodec via Cyrus Phono Signature into the Naim. Material used has included lossless and high res FLAC and AIFF, DSD and streaming services such as Tidal and Qobuz. Vinyl was also used at various points.

Sound Quality



Some products take a little time to exert their specific charms on you and show what they are all about. The Piega is not one of those products. From the moment they are connected and running, the TMicro 40 is seemingly on a mission to monkey about with your perceived sense of scale. The most notable thing about this is that there isn't one thing you

to monkey about with your perceived sense of scale. The most notable thing about this is that there isn't one thing you can pick out of the performance and say "that's what is making it do that", the effect is rather wider than that.

First up, that 50Hz figure or something very close to it, is genuinely achievable in room. Listening to the Piega on any amplifier – from the 30 watts of the NAD D3020 v2 to the rather more vigorous 80 in the Supernait 2 – and it delivers a bass response that you never have to qualify with any form of justification in the manner that I have had to some small speakers in the past. There is always enough low-end extension in my not unreasonably sized lounge to be convincing.

No less importantly, this extension dovetails well into a midrange that is satisfyingly full, rich and detailed. Compared to the outstandingly natural and transparent Spendor A1, it is slightly more mechanical in the way it sounds in that there is some sense of drivers and a cabinet being involved but this is as much a reflection that the A1 sounds like a pair of lungs and vocal cords in a box than any genuine failing on the part of the Piega.



The other area that really helps the TMicro 40 sound bigger than you might expect is that Air Motion Transformer. This is something that Piega has considerable experience with and it really shows in the integration with the main driver which is utterly seamless. From the crossover point, the Tmicro 40 demonstrates an absolutely stunning top end. What is notable for me is that it isn't as simple as there being plenty of emphasis on a particular area, leading you to say "it's good with voices" or the like but instead there is a fundamental sense of rightness, that everything you are hearing is a faithful representation of what is on the recording and not an embellished take on it.

It is fabulously involving though – listening to the last hurrah of the band Wild Beasts, a live album called *Last night, all my dreams came true* shows the Piega at its best. There is an immensely assured sense of the space they are

performing in and the speed and complexity of their percussion is handled with an effortless sense of speed and cohesion. You can legitimately argue that some of this speed stems from the small size and ultimately limited bass extension but that doesn't tell the whole story. Mounted in those wonderfully inert cabinets, the drivers are free to move with an outstanding sense of freedom and it makes for a genuinely open and exciting performance. These are speakers that manage to effortlessly convey the energy and passion in a piece of music without discernibly adding colouration which is always an impressive achievement.

The only caveat that needs to be made about the Tmicro40 is not really an issue with the performance of the Piega so much as a side effect of the way it goes about making music. The presentation is sufficiently transparent that if you have issues in the electronics that you are using with them, there will be nowhere for them to hide when partnered up. Like a few speakers we have seen over the years, there is nothing intrinsically complex about driving the Piega and you could use fairly affordable equipment to do it but you will likely find the limitations of that equipment fairly quickly. It isn't a merciless studio monitor type presentation but it is something that will need at least some attention paid to the partnering equipment.



“From the moment they are connected and running, the TMicro 40 is seemingly on a mission to monkey about with your perceived sense of scale

Conclusion





OUT OF 10

Pros

- Sound vastly larger than they look
- Superbly refined and detailed
- Excellent build

Cons

- Fairly expensive
- Absolute limits to bass extension
- Doesn't look as good in the black

☐ **You own this**

 0

☐ **You want this**

 0

☐ **You had this**

 0

Piega Tmicro 40 AMT Speaker Review

Some products are almost the equivalent of 'givens' when they turn up for review. Their specification, the performance of their predecessors and the known competition mean that we know that they are going to be good almost before we open the box. The Piega Tmicro 40 is not one of these products. The disconnect between unpacking a speaker that looks like a refugee from a home cinema pack and hearing what it is capable of makes this one of the most surprising products I have tested in quite a while. Put simply, if you have the necessary budget for these speakers but space is looking restricted, you need to hunt down a dealer and give these a listen because they are sensationally capable and deliver a performance that has no right to come out of a box this small. The Tmicro 40 isn't cheap but it very definitely earns our enthusiastic recommendation.

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The Rundown

Build Quality



9

Connectivity



7

Sound Quality



9

Ease of Use



9

Features



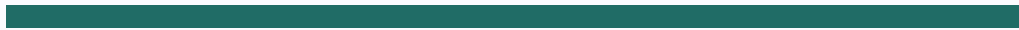
8

Value for Money



8

Verdict



9

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