

REVIEW : AUDEZE MOBIUS – THE CHAMELEON



This review is about the Audeze Mobius, the latest, geekiest headphone from the brand.

Disclaimer : the Audeze Mobius was sent to us free of charge by the brand itself in exchange for our honest opinion.

About Audeze

Born in 2008, Audeze is an American manufacturer producing planar-magnetic headphones. Like (al)most all US start-ups, the company began in a garage, where two guys – Alexander Rosson and Sankar Thiagasamudram – put together pieces of metal to create “the next big thing.”



AUDEZE™

And they succeed.

From there, Audeze began to roll success after success, all based around one technology: a thin layer surrounded by an array of magnets, or most commonly said a planar magnetic driver. The rest is history and all led to this day, where we review their first Bluetooth headphone, the Audeze Mobius.

The Audeze Series

Audeze range covers three different typologies of listeners, or so they say: the audiophiles, the prosumers/sound engineers and more recently, the gamers. All of those headphones are sorted in different categories – Flagship, Reference, Gaming&Multimedia, Origins – but we'll just lay out the one that really matter down here.

LCD-2

The Audeze LCD-2 is where everything began. A big fat can with a rounded cup made of wood, massive plushy earpads and, of course, an astounding 106mm transducer, which remains huge even up to today's standards.



It was a direct hit. A headphone both craved by audiophiles and revered by sound engineers. So much that the brand chose to make a re-edition, known as the LCD-2 classic. Available in both open-back and closed-back version, Lieven even reviewed it and said :

“In this price range, the LCD2 classic certainly is recommended if you want a balanced, precise and clean sound from a more neutrally tuned headphone. It’s very easy to like”.

LCD-X

The Audeze LCD-X introduced the next-generation of the brand. If visually the main difference was the replacement of the wooden cups by aluminum ones, the insides of the headphone enjoyed a few upgrades.

The magnet embedded a new technology, named Fazor, which both lowered the distortion and expanded the dynamic range. Also, Fazor versions of the LCD headphones require less power to be driven, since they act as waveguides.



Since then, Audeze has created two new iterations of the LCD-X, the LCD-XC (closed back) and the LCD-GX, made for gamers, just like the Mobius.

It's still one of my favorite headphones of all-time, the one that I used for almost all my reviews and one that may never leave my office.

What did we think of it?

"It's a terrific execution, that I haven't really heard in any headphones. How can reducing the bass body on a non-basshead headphone (LCD-3) end up with a headphone that's far more neutral yet still feels planted? I suppose the HD600 is a good analogy here, except that the X's drivers are far ahead of the 600's class."

LCD-4

The Audeze LCD-4 is the pinnacle of the brand, remaining one of the best cans available out there.

It costs 3995 \$/€, got the best drivers that Audeze ever developed with Nano-Scale Uniform Diaphragm, 106mm wide transducer, 200-ohm impedance, fiber carbon headband... so yeah all the high-end specifications you'd expect.



It impersonates the LCD Flagship range, which comes with the LCD-4z (easier to drive), the LCD-i4 which is an open-back, planar, earphone, priced at 2495\$/€ (but sounds fantastic) and last but not least, the LCD-MX4. All in all, la creme de la creme.

Lieven reviewed them and said :

“Do I like the Audeze LCD-MX4? I do, without any doubt. It’s a great sounding headphone with its own characteristics and positive and negative points but it’s also a headphone that makes all genres sound good. The MX4 is a headphone you can use in the studio but you can also really enjoy it at home and even for non-critical listening.”

Mobius

The Audeze Mobius is a very different kind of animal. Firstly, it was created through a Kickstarter and not through the usual R&D process. Second, it's a closed-back headphone, with Bluetooth and its own embedded DAC and various surround sound parameters.



The future is here guys, and Headfonia is about to review it, for you.

That said, it's time for us to see what the new generation has to offer.

Design & Build Quality

Shell

Available in three different colors, Audeze sent us a blue/black version of the Mobius.

Each version is labeled Team Carbon / Team Blue / Team Copper, and that relates to the gaming world, like the web series Red Vs Blue. It's a strange sight to behold, especially if you own the classic headphones from the brand. Compared to my Audeze LCD-X for example, the Mobius looks like a gaming headphone... which was to be expected.

As a true gamer headset, the headphone is sweat-proof and scratch-proof. To do so, the Mobius is coated with a very sweet soft-touch silicon and enjoy replaceable earpads and headband. It will withstand the test of time, long Fortnite sessions or even your next ragequit in Minecraft.



Audiophiles may not like the overall sensation, as none of the other headphones from the brand ever felt so different from the flagship models. I received the Audeze LCD-1 a few days ago, and having them face-to-face really outshines the philosophy difference.

Yet, I think the Audeze Mobius design looks pretty awesome. The various buttons and knob, the blue accent, the contoured ear pads: all feel premium. It's not a cheap knock-off, where a brand just put its label on an OEM headphone, it's a true Audeze at core, but for (audiophile) gamers.

Build quality

Build quality is excellent so far.

The Mobius doesn't crack and feels sturdy enough to be carried away, without a box. It's a bit heavy, but this weight gives credibility to the whole package, like those heavy doors in a car. It looks cheap from afar, but the closer you look, the better it gets.



The headband can be adjusted very precisely, and even listeners with big heads like me will feel confident wearing the Mobius. You cannot fold it, but that's okay as Audeze clearly favored the choice of a durable design, in exchange for a little practicality.

The buttons are a bit rugged, so you can easily feel them while you're playing. The USB-C port is placed on the lower part of the headphone, so you easily can plug it to your computer, and – surprise, surprise – the Mobius even has a clickable scroll-wheel. One for the microphone volume and the other for the headphone volume.



Finally, you have the microphone. It comes separately, but that's even better as you can choose to use it, or not. It's a boom microphone, with built-in noise attenuation, one you may find on a Plantronics headset, rather than Audeze. Geeky as duck.

Bundle and Comfort

Inside the box

Audeze is surprisingly generous with the Mobius.

Inside the box you have :

- the Audeze Mobius
- a boom pole microphone
- 1x jack-jack cable
- 1x USB-A to Type C connector
- 1x Type-C to Type-C connector
- 1x travel bag made of fabric

There is no balanced cable provided, but since the headphone carries its own DAC, I'll live with that.



Additional accessories

Honestly, there are no real improvements you can do regarding the Mobius. You can plug your own jack-jack cable, but since the real deal would be to use the internal DAC, this won't make a big difference.

What you can, however, would be to choose an LDAC compatible source, be it a smartphone, or a player. The [FiiO M11](#), [Hiby](#), [Shanling](#), and obviously [Sony's DAPs](#) will support this protocol to give the best sound.

Of course, that won't be an issue if you plug your Mobius in via USB.



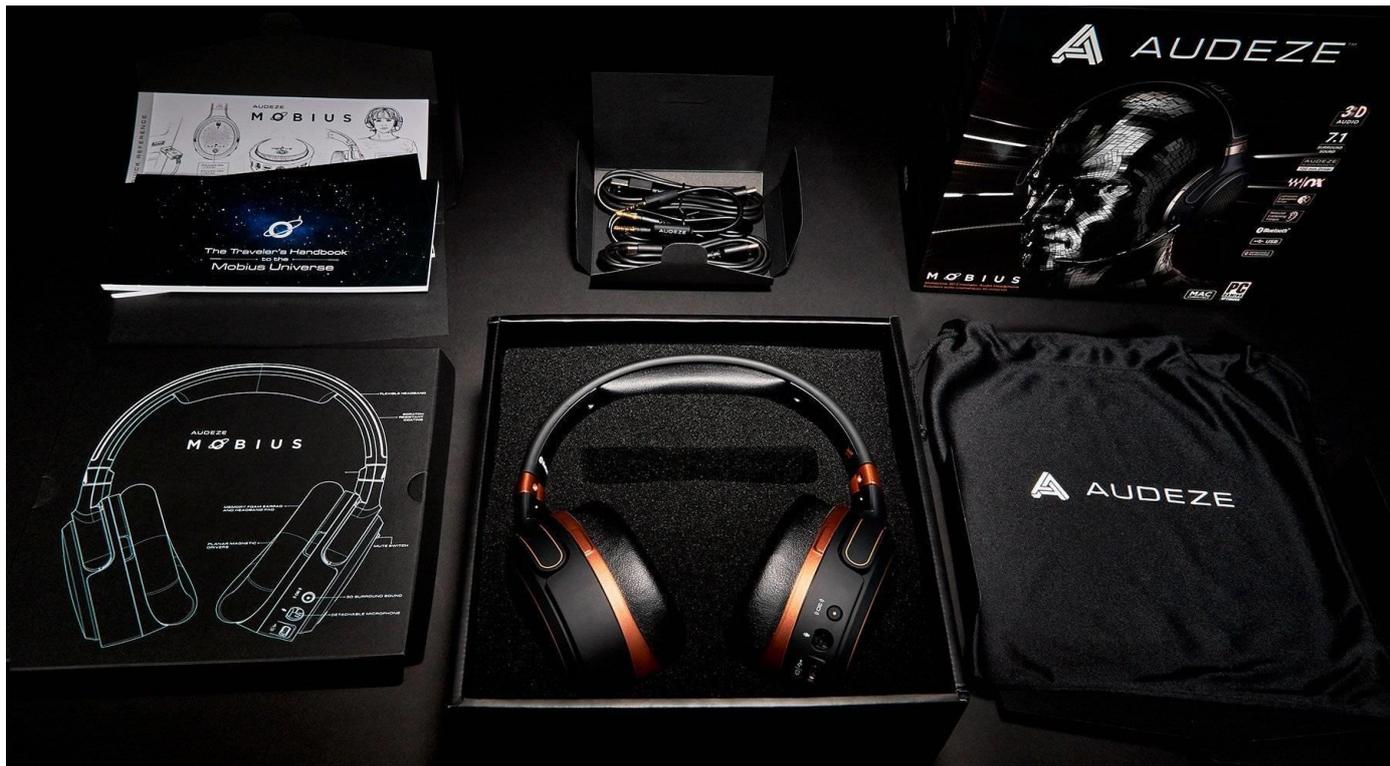
Comfort

The Mobius is much comfier than I expected them to be.

The plushy ear pads cover the whole ear and thanks to the memory foam, you will be able to wear it with glasses. The engineers chose the right level of clamping force, and it feels just right, as the whole headset does.

Again, compared to the Audeze LCD-X, the Mobius feels like a toy. But it's an adult toy, as you'd compare a car and a motorbike, the latter feels much more nimble, more free. That's the Mobius.

Plus the fact that you can use Bluetooth on a planar headphone!



Isolation

Isolation is one of the weak points of the Audeze Mobius however.

I take the train almost daily and solid noise-blocking is mandatory for me. I use headphones/earphones to isolate myself and focus on my work, so isolation is very important to me.

The Mobius isn't too bad, nor is it amazing either. You can definitely hear others talking or typing, and the closed-back design is more to avoid neighbors' issues, than proper noise-blocking. But, in Audeze's defense, it's very very hard to make a closed-back planar-headphone. (Remember [the EL-8C](#) ?)

Specifications

For the nit-pickers and nerdy ones here, I'm giving the specs and technical sheets. For all the others, you can just go to the next page to see how the Mobius performs.

Planar Magnetic Drivers

Despite its gaming background, the Audeze Mobius is a true planar in and out.

Planar magnetic headphones all share specific traits, and one of them is very large drivers. The Mobius remains true to its lineage, housing an "audiophile-grade"

100mm wide driver. That's almost twice the size of your usual transducer, and that's even bigger than the driver found in the mighty Sennheiser HD800S... Massive!



Inside, Audeze integrated all of their in-house patented technologies, such as :

- Uniforce Ultra-Thin diaphragm, with super low distortion
- Fluxor magnet array, that works like wave-guide
- Fazor, found in all Audeze LCD Flagship to lower the needed drive power

Again, let me remind you this is a 399\$/€ headphone, designed for multimedia and gamers, which carry almost, if not all, Audeze signatures technologies. That alone is already amazing in my opinion.

Integrated DAC and DSP (Waves NX)

So you know the basics, the Audeze Mobius is Bluetooth compatible and embeds its own DAC. But did you know there is more?

The Mobius can be connected to any computer or digital source, with the provided USB Cable. Doing so, the headphone automatically activates the Cypher DSP, to work as a fully-fledged DAC+Amp+headphone system. I tried it on my computer, on some DAPs, on a phone and each time the Mobius was properly identified.



But, Audeze chooses to go even higher by partnering with Waves, to enhance the Mobius with 3D localization and multi-channel support. To put it simply, the headphone tracks your movements every 1/1000th of a second so your music always engulfs you. There are various settings available and to unlock the full potential of this headphone, you'll have to use the USB port, or at least Bluetooth, but trust me on this: it works, all the time.

You can deactivate the option, to stay in classic stereo mode, but that would be unfair to the amazing work Audeze did with the Mobius. Even if you're not into gaming, movies or just hate 3D emulation, you should definitely try the headphone once.

To be entirely fair, the EQ presets feel like overkill, as most people will only use "Default" and "Music" (whoever use "Ballistics" or "Footsteps") but apart from that, it's really something to behold.



Full specs

- Type : Headphone
- Style : Planar Magnetic transducer
- Magnetic Structure : Fluxor magnet array
- Phase Management : Fazor
- Diaphragm : Ultra-thin Uniforcer 100m wide
- Frequency response : 10Hz – 50kHz
- THD : <0.1% (1kHz 1mW)
- Bluetooth : SBC, AAC, LDAC
- Weight : 350g
- Connection : USB-C, 3.5mm analog, bluetooth
- Crossover : 4 way / 2 tubes
- Weight : 350g

- Maximum SPL : >120dB

▪ Sound performance

- For this review, I mostly used the internal DAC and a phone as source. You can connect a wired source, but this doesn't unleash the full potential of the Mobius in my opinion.
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- Most files used were FLAC 16bit/44kHz streamed from Spotify / Amazon Prime or from the internal storage.

▪ Overall signature

- If you expect the Audeze Mobius to be all bass and treble, you'd be awfully wrong.
- Even with the regular preset activated, the Mobius sounds like a true Audeze headphone. Full bass, clean mids, and shining highs, all carefully sent to your ears with the precision of a metronome. It's uncanny how clean the overall presentation feels, as if they successfully fitted the LCD-X, inside a gaming headset.



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- The driver moves a lot of air, and you constantly feel the pressure on your eardrum, but that's never harmful either. The Mobius blends true analog sound, with hi-end technology and you'd be surprised by how clean it sounds. I tried heavy-paced electro with saturated chords, to see how deep those drivers can reach, and always found the low-note I was searching for.

- Mids have this little emphasis on the upper part of the spectrum, but that's clearly a choice as you can find this quirk in almost every Audeze headphone. Combined with the Waves NX effects, it gives an airy presentation and, depending of the recording, can be seen as amazing or a bit unnatural.
- The spaciousness is, by far, a league above all the other closed-back headphones I currently own. The witchcraft behind this comes from the sound localization, which compensates every head movement, to deliver the sharpest rendering, all the time.



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- Whatever the genre, the Mobius always seemed in control. Its got the deep heavy bass you'd expect from a planar headphone, while keeping the voices clear and poised. Attacks are superb and clearly the ADSR is among one of the best you would find in this price range.
- Dynamics are excellent, with a rich presentation and superb layering. Highs are energetic and that annoying sibilant often found on the LCD-XC is nowhere to be found. Honestly, it's almost shocking how hard it is to put the Mobius past its boundaries.
- Yet, there are boundaries. And those come in the form of Bluetooth connection. As long as you remain in USB mode, the Audeze will be the best headphone you can get in this price range, or even higher sometimes. But, once you use the Bluetooth connection, some of that magic seems to hide.



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- Precision remains astounding but the sounds get a bit more veiled, lacking the original dynamics heard at the beginning. Bass is still superb, but the highs become harsher. All in all, it's doesn't make a big difference, but you'll definitely feel the downgrade.

▪ Tonality

- Highs: clean and rich. The Audeze Mobius highs are impressive with great decay and a slight bump around 6kHz. It's still a league above classic headphones in my opinion and classical music, or female jazz singers will be a thrill to listen to. The massive dynamics really makes a difference here in my opinion.
- Good test-track: Mellotron – Worakls
- Mids: transparent. Mids are well-balanced and voices sound clear in any configuration. Be it jazz, pop or even heavy metal, the Audeze Mobius offers performances on-par with its bigger siblings. It cannot reach the level of precision heard in the LCD-X or LCD-3, but it is on par regarding the naturalness of the sound.
- Good test-track: San-Francisco Street – Sun Rai
- Lows: that good old bass. Planar headphones remain the best choice for bass-lovers, and that's still the case with the Mobius. The bass can reach the lowest notes with absolutely no distortion, while keeping the other frequencies untouched. I tried it with a movie and this may be one of the best headphone experiences I have had up to this day.
- Good test-track: Faces – The Blaze



Sensitivity / Hiss

This is hard to measure as I mostly used the Mobius in Bluetooth and USB mode. Even though, I never faced any issue regarding the hiss. You can sometimes hear the annoying sound of an old phone receiving messages, but that only happened once, on a train.

Sensitivity is pretty high and with the volume control, you can go very high, very fast. Remember that Bluetooth volume is capped though.



Comparisons

Last time, some of you complained about not having a comparison section. Here it is now :

Meze 99 Classics : obviously one of the top choices in this price range. It has this organic feeling, with velvet mids you'll love if paired with a good DAP. But, at the end of the day, I'd stick with the Mobius, which delivers much more kicks and sounds much more spacious.

Audeze LCD-1 : we'll do a complete review at a later time, but for now this must be the best opponent to the Mobius. The LCD-1 feels more natural, with better mids, but again, I'll stick to the Mobius.

Hifiman Ananda BT : the other bluetooth option for those who seek a planar headphone. The Ananda sounds more mid-forwarded, where the Mobius will give you stronger bass. It's a hard choice and if the Ananda gives you sweet highs, the Mobius takes the crown. At least for me.



Conclusion

Unless you've only read the introduction, you already know my opinion regarding the Audeze Mobius. It's a fantastic piece of hardware, that doubles up as a great headphone. It embeds all of what Audeze did during the last years, and mixed it into one of the most thrilling devices I've ever tried.

The only drawbacks are the fact that you'll have to use the USB entry to get the best of it, and then there's the sub-par isolation. But apart from that, it easily ticks all the right boxes and goes directly in [my recommendation list](#). Try it, love it, keep it. That's what I did.