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The ugly-duckling subwoofer is forced to hide its drivers in disgrace behind its prettier sisters

Children of the Revolution

Beauty is in the ear of the beholder. **Adam Rayner** enjoys a Tannoy speaker system that's way too cool for simple station announcements...



It must be difficult to be a brand like Tannoy. As with Xerox, Hoover and Sellotape, its name has become a label that now applies to a whole category of stuff. But if you thought that all its loudspeakers could handle were raspy announcements up and down supermarket aisles, then you're much mistaken. The brand's Revolution Signature range of home cinema speakers auditioned here are evolved way past this illustrious history.

And although Tannoy still makes speakers with names rather than numbers, this new lineup is definitely a 21st Century AV offering, with some style and pizzazz, too.

Odd one out

Well, style and pizzazz except for the subwoofer, that is, which is designed to be hidden – or at least not looked at. It is as ugly as an ogre in comparison to the lovely, lustrous woodwork the other teardrop-shaped boxes are wrapped in.

The woofer is from a series simply called TS as in, er, Tannoy Subwoofer, and boasts a soft grey finish. The one in this array is the biggest, a 12in job with 500W in its guts. It has a sexy set of balanced inputs and outputs on XLR plugs, as well as the *de-rigueur* phono inputs. There's no silly high level speaker nonsense on the back of this one.

The subwoofer fires downwards and the driver has a huge surround

suspension to it – it looks like it might hit the floor. Of course, it doesn't, but the supplied spikes are a good idea. There is, in fact, an extra sheet in the instruction book, that has clearly been printed and added afterwards, that suggests use of the small cup-shaped thingies underneath the spikes, when the sub is used on a hard floor. This woofer was probably rattling like a ball-bearing in the back of Transit van before these were added for use in marble halls. **The moving mass of the woofer must be considerable.**

There are some useful controls on the TS12. You get a continuously variable phase knob to go from 0-180° and LF extension control with adjustment marked from 50Hz to 40Hz to 30Hz. A 'Music' label adorns the 50Hz setting. 30Hz is the 'Theater' (sic) setting – obviously meant for sale in the USA then. Crossover frequency is selectable between 50Hz and 150Hz.

The main course

Away from the boxy, drab subwoofer, the main speakers (centre, rears and fronts) are gorgeous to behold. They are all bi-wire/bi-amp style with a set of binding posts for HF and LF input, connected with a jumper bar until you do so. Also – and I have never seen this on a speaker before – there is a fifth green terminal that, when connected to your AV hardware, electrically earths

Product: Surround speaker system with high-quality sound, and good looks

Position: Audiophile grade boxes positioned below Tannoy's Dimension and Prestige lines

Peers: DLS Home Audio R66 system B&W 600 series PSB G Design series

the driver chassis. This reduces RF noise in the system and, claims Tannoy, brings substantial improvements in mid-range clarity.

The supplied manual is excellent, despite one simple malapropism. Discrete means separate, as in five discrete channels. The manual refers to 'discreet channels', which means they are unassuming and would not offend the neighbours. This is patently untrue, as in addition to a serious slice of power-handling, the high-frequency drivers within the dual concentric 'Tulip' waveguides give these speakers a slice of efficiency too. A figure of 89dB means they bloody stonk. Put simply, you can wake the dead, let alone the neighbours.

All the enclosures are equipped with a 6in dual-concentric Tannoy driver that reaches right up to bat frequencies. This gives a lovely image and stage, with pin-sharp placement of sounds within the field around you. The DC6 rears have just one of these, while the DC6T towers have an extra bass-only driver to add to the air flowing in and out of the sexy, curved port beneath. The centre D6LCR is obviously designed for all-stage use as well. It has no port, but in addition to the same driver complement as the towers, gets another that looks the same but isn't driven. This passive radiator gives the loudspeaker some of the bass-boosting benefits of a port but keeps the cabinet sealed. The air pressure inside the cabinet >



Centre point:

The Tannoy centre features three 6in drivers – and can be used for left and right as well

aids the driver's suspension and allows the cone to hit deep-down low frequencies at high volumes without getting into a flap.

They all feature natty hidden-magnetically stuck-on grilles.

Sting in the tail

For testing I fired up the old DTS/DVD-Audio dual-format disc of Sting's *Brand New Day* album, opting for the DTS track. Sting was immediately right in front of me and at face height, with percussion to the back right and a swirly synth line running in the back left zone. Cymbals hung in space, rare and delicate enough to hear the 'ting!' of wooden stick-tip on bronze. All of this was underpinned with a deep tight bass. The performance is very hi-fi and very clear. I got goose bumps.

Now, when cranked to the ends of an amp's ability these horns can get harsh – but that is sheer idiocy. I actually got the sound level meter

out and found an easy 93dB. It was loud, just waiting for peaks and thumps and was plenty potent. It's just so clean and easy, you don't perceive the level so oppressively. Delicacy and grace with power, like a boxer with the soul of a concert pianist. With Sting warbling away I found myself grooving off,

losing the work plot. I had to force myself, with some discipline, to go check out a film...

The Simpsons Movie is, of course, mostly a Foley job, but there are moments of sheer brilliance that show off the speakers' ability to recreate space and feeling.

When Homer arrives late to church with his family he is heard with perfect clarity from within, exclaiming that the churchgoers cannot hear his rant as 'They are too busy talking to their phoney baloney God!' Our favourite cartoon family enters to a sudden aching silence (04:27), felt by the echo of the doors opening into an utterly dumbfounded congregation. The audio mix is done brilliant justice by these speakers. At 10mins 50secs Bart shoots his dad repeatedly with a BB gun, and, through this system, the pops really sound like they hurt.

Detail resolution is excellent. At 17min 3secs Flanders makes Bart the world's most elaborate mug of cocoa. I counted no fewer than eleven separate delicate Foley effects, from spray cream to a blowtorch scorching a marshmallow that crackles just a little – before Bart grabs it from a window sill and goes off into mid-distance to exclaim 'Oh my God!' quietly to himself.

Sound like this isn't just about power and efficiency – it's about control and richness, too. And these Tannoys excel. It'd rate them as a bit special. Revolutionary even ■

→ Specifications

Tannoy Revolution Signature DC6

Drive Units: 1 x 6in paper pulp cone; 1 x 1in HF dome
Enclosure: Front ported
Frequency Response: 46Hz-35kHz
Sensitivity: 88dB (2.83V @1m)
Power Handling: 20-150W
Dimensions: 226(w) x 365(h) x 225(d)mm
Weight: 7.2Kg
Connections: Twin sets of bi-wirable binding posts plus earth connection point

Tannoy Revolution Signature DC6T

Drive Units: 2 x 6in paper pulp cone; 1 x 1in HF dome
Enclosure: Front ported
Frequency Response: 34Hz-35kHz
Sensitivity: 89dB (2.83V @1m)
Power Handling: 20-175W
Dimensions: 226(w) x 950(h) x 225(d)mm
Weight: 16.4Kg
Connections: Twin sets of bi-wirable binding posts plus earth connection point

Revolution Signature DC6LCR

Drive Units: 3 x 6in paper pulp cone; 1 x 1in HF dome
Enclosure: Sealed – with a passive radiator cone
Frequency Response: 36Hz-35kHz
Sensitivity: 89dB (2.83V @1m)
Power Handling: 20-175 Watts
Dimensions: 600(w) x 226(h) x 225(d)mm
Weight: 12.2Kg
Connections: Twin sets of bi-wirable binding posts plus earth connection point

Tannoy TS12 subwoofer

Drive Unit: 12in long-throw with large top roll suspension
Enclosure: Sealed
Frequency Response: -6dB @ 26Hz
On board power: 500W RMS
Dimensions: 335(w) x 372(h) x 335(d)mm
Weight: 12.5Kg
Connections: Balanced XLR in and outputs plus twin RCA inputs

URL: www.techradar.com/241528



HCC VERDICT

Tannoy Revolution Signature
£2,900 Approx

Highs: Tremendous resolution and detail; brilliant imaging and staging
Lows: Can get harsh if driven too loud; subwoofer doesn't match the looks of the rest

Performance: 1 2 3 4 5

Design: 1 2 3 4 5

Features: 1 2 3 4 5

Overall: 1 2 3 4 5



Tannoy Revolution Signature



Winner: Best Loudspeakers Over £2,000
First Reviewed: HCC #154

Gorgeously styled with lustrous woodwork, this bi-wireable £2,900 system features some interesting extras such as a dual-concentric tulip waveguide and an earthing system for the drivers.

The 6in cones provide a lovely image and staging, while the tower speakers and the ugly-but-punchy subwoofer provide the kick. We described these speakers as delivering 'delicacy and grace with power, like a boxer with the soul of a concert pianist' – and it's not often we're moved like that.

Also nominated...

Martin Logan Fresco I/Dynamo
First Reviewed: HCC #152

At £5,000, this 5.1 sub/sat system manages to offer hybrid panel/moving coil flexibility without sacrificing audio quality.



Focal JM Lab Chorus 800

First Reviewed: HCC #145

Derived from the top-end Utopia Be series, this distinctively-designed £3K system delivers expansive movie sound but doesn't lose the flexibility for music.

