

**DETAILS****PRODUCT**
REL Acoustics T/9i**ORIGIN**
UK**TYPE**
Active sub-bass system**WEIGHT**
18.7kg**DIMENSIONS**
(WxHxD)
330 x 387 x 407mm**FEATURES**
● 254mm long-throw active drive
● 254mm passive radiator
● Class AB amplifier
● Claimed power output: 300W RMS**DISTRIBUTOR**
REL Acoustics Ltd**TELEPHONE**
01656 768777**WEBSITE**
rel.net

fine adjustment of the crossover and level controls, I'm all set. I settle on the sub being placed in the corner just behind the plane of a pair of Dynaudio X38 floorstanding loudspeakers, but before I begin REL recommends some run-in time to allow the driver material to reach the optimum performance and for the amplifier to fully warm up.

The Dynaudio X38 already has a very tight and fast bass performance which is subjectively well extended too, but the scale the REL brings to the soundstage is breathtaking. Everything I enjoy about the way these speakers reproduce a recording is enhanced and made more believable with the T/9i in place. Suddenly, I am no longer sat on the sofa at home listening to *Do You Ever Think Of Me?* by Corinne Bailey Rae, and when I close my eyes I am transported to a startlingly intimate front row seat at Ronnie Scott's. Her vocal snaps into focus and sounds even more achingly heartfelt with the REL in place while the piano and guitar accompaniment sound rich and so tangible that I feel I can almost get up and walk around the players in the room.

Performances grow in stature and show off cathedral-like soundscapes. Vocals on Oh Wonder's *Livewire* sound so rich and three-dimensional that I am glued to my seat enjoying the vast soundscape that breathes life and increased levels of enjoyment into tracks I know well.

Conclusion

As I spend more time with the T/9i and the drivers settle in, I find it requires a slight reduction in level to continue to integrate unobtrusively with my setup. What it brings to the way a system handles recordings old and new is insightful, and one of the most rewarding additions to my hi-fi setup in recent times, allowing the main loudspeaker to do its thing, but even more so ●

Bass station

Speed and timing go hand-in-hand for any successful hi-fi system, **Lee Dunkley** auditions a sub that brings so much more

Timing is everything to the way a piece of music communicates with its audience. Without the ability to keep time and pace accurately, attention wanders and engagement and communication of the musical message is easily lost. It's a critical element to the success of any hi-fi setup, and many traditional loudspeaker designs live or die by their ability to convey the right kind of rhythm to get toes tapping.

A lack of timing isn't something that can be levelled at REL's sub-bass systems, but when subwoofers first appeared at the start of the home cinema boom, absolute timing was arguably less critical. Thanks to improved materials and design, musical latency is a thing of the past and a well-engineered sub can bring benefits to hi-fi sound beyond extending its bass handling abilities.

The T/9i is the flagship model in the T/i series, and the re-engineered cube design is constructed with thicker cabinet walls and superior bracing to improve rigidity that's topped with five coats of high gloss paintwork.

Its driver tech uses a combination of lightweight, composite fibre alloy in a 254mm forward-firing driver with an inverted dust cap and steel chassis. It's powered by a Class AB 300W amplifier and is coupled to a matching downward-firing passive driver on the underside, and even the shape and height of the support feet are precision designed to provide the best airflow in order to optimise performance. Controls and connections have been simplified for ease of installation and – if like me you're not keen on trailing cables around the room from an amplifier to the subwoofer (a 10m Neutrik Speakon cable is supplied) – there's the supplementary REL-designed Arrow zero compression wireless system (£199), that plugs into the rear of the sub and is straightforward to set up.

Sound quality

Integrating the T/9i into both your room and system is by far the most important thing to get right first. Thankfully, it's a doddle and after half an hour or so of experimentation with positioning in my listening room and

Hi-Fi Choice**OUR VERDICT****SOUND QUALITY**
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Improves soundstage and dynamics; easy set up**VALUE FOR MONEY**
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Wireless transmitter needs careful placement**BUILD QUALITY**
★★★★★ **WE SAY:** Musically engaging, bringing sonic improvements beyond bigger bass**FEATURES**
★★★★★**OVERALL**