



Has REL's 10in sub got the X factor?

The sub-bass specialist has upgraded its Serie T range of subwoofers. [Steve Withers](#) takes the new top-end T/9x model for a spin

FOR A WHILE now REL has favoured upgrading its subwoofer ranges rather than cooking up entire new ones. This makes sense when the likes of its T1 models have proved extremely popular. But a worthwhile upgrade obviously involves more than a tarted-up cabinet and a lick of paint – and thankfully the new Serie Tx gets both a make-over on the outside, and plenty of changes on the inside too.

The Tx replaces the T1 range, which offered a more affordable bridge between REL's home theatre orientated Serie HT and the higher-end Serie S. The new line builds on the T1's earlier success, while giving the subs a more up-to-date look.

Short and sweet

The T/9x sells for around £1,300 (we expect the new lineup will also feature more affordable models) and has a redesigned cabinet that draws inspiration from REL's pricier Serie S range with a stealthier appearance and

curved edges. The T/9x is slightly squatter than its predecessor, but looks can be deceiving and the cabinet is actually bigger, resulting in maximum bass from minimum space.

This increased internal space has, says REL, been utilised to improve performance, which includes an optimised steel housing for a new 10in FibreAlloy long-throw front-firing driver and inverted dust cap. There's also a matching 10in downward-firing passive radiator built into the base.

This new driver claims increased strength and improved recovery qualities, aiming to craft bass that's not only deeper but faster and more nimble. REL says extensive testing was conducted to ensure the new cabinet could handle the pressure the driver and the radiator were throwing at it.

The same goes for the feet, which are now bigger in terms of surface area and designed to match

the T/9x's driver; REL fits feet of different size and mass depending on the cabinet they support.

The redesigned cabinet and upgraded driver have a knock-on effect beyond the need for bigger boots. The T/9x also features a new 300W Class A/B amplifier design. As with the earlier generation, there's a sink at the rear to dissipate excess heat.

While decidedly 'bijou' in appearance, the build quality and weight of the REL T/9x hint at the hidden depths within. A solid fabric grille sits out in front of the baffle, and the finish is a knock-out, with a choice of glossy piano black or lacquered white. There's also an embossed badge on top, while the silver-coloured drivers sport the REL logo. All of these flourishes help justify the price tag.

Back-side story

The aesthetics and internal components may have been upgraded, but around the back it's business as usual. In fact the connections and controls are identical to the previous iteration, with a high-level Neutrik Speakon input, low-level phono input, and a dedicated LFE phono input. There's no 12V trigger.

The controls also remain the same, with knobs for high/low/LFE levels and crossover, plus switches for standby/always on and 0-180-degree phase. The T/9x is compatible with REL's Arrow wireless system, and includes a 10m Neutrik Speakon cable for the high-level connection.

Testing kicked-off with an absolute belter, just to blow away the cobwebs. The subterranean bass notes that herald the start of *Edge of Tomorrow* (Blu-ray) are genuinely scary, and can reduce lesser subs to quivering wrecks. Not so the T/9x, which handled the descent into the infrasonic depths with skill.

REL's claims that this sub goes down to 27Hz make sense given the petite cabinet and 10in driver, but a look at the graphs produced by my Trinnov Altitude16 processor suggests these stats are conservative. This sub is capable of dipping below the stated bottom, but going deep is one thing, you also need the power to sustain these forays into the lower frequencies.

While 300W might not sound like much, REL's Class A/B amplifier delivers some surprisingly forceful grunt. The justly famous 'skadoosh' scene in the Blu-ray of *Kung Fu Panda* unleashes a tsunami of bass as Po flexes his little finger. The REL handles this classic sequence with enough power and control to delight even the most demanding low-end fanatic.

REL know its subwoofer onions, so the fact the T/9x delivers LFE depth and power doesn't come as much of a surprise. What is noteworthy is it's managed to get so much welly out of a sub this small.

What's even better is that this low-end slam hasn't been generated at the expense of the speed and control of bass transients. This sealed unit retains REL's usual deft touch and musicality, as evidenced during the 'drum dance' in *House of Flying Daggers* (Blu-ray). As the pebbles bounce

SPECIFICATIONS

DRIVE UNITS: 1 x 10in FibreAlloy front-firing long-throw driver; 1 x 10in FibreAlloy downward-firing passive radiator **ENCLOSURE:** Sealed with passive radiator **FREQUENCY RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 27Hz (-6dB) **ONBOARD POWER (CLAIMED):** 300W (RMS) Class A/B **REMOTE CONTROL:** No **DIMENSIONS:** 340(h) x 370(w) x 393(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 20.6kg

FEATURES: High-level Neutrik Speakon, low-level RCA and LFE RCA inputs; high/low and LFE level controls; crossover control (30Hz-120Hz); 180-degree phase switch; automatic standby option; 10m Neutrik Speakon cable included; compatible with optional REL Arrow wireless system

TESTED WITH



KUNG FU PANDA: This 2008 Dreamworks animation is a golden oldie, and while the idea of a Dolby TrueHD 5.1 mix might not sound that exciting, this soundtrack is a stunner, particularly when it comes to frequent bouts of playful, nuanced LFE. No 4K outing yet, but there is a 3D Blu-ray for those still rocking stereoscopic spex.



around the room, there's a resounding thump that's perfectly timed and precisely aligned.

The 4K disc of *Monster Hunter* proves the perfect all-round test of the T/9x's abilities, with a soundtrack that takes no prisoners. This bass behemoth savages your senses from start to finish: kicking off with a ship sailing across the desert (don't ask), and producing seismic flourishes every time the bow ploughs through the sand dunes.

It's then rammed by a creature that looks like a cross between a triceratops and a water buffalo (again, don't ask), and as it smashes into the ship's hull the low-end assault is visceral. The action rarely stops from that moment on, and whether its sand storms, battling monsters, flying dragons or the kick of a 50-calibre machine gun, the T/9x didn't seem to mind.

Power, speed and flair

I normally use a pair of M&K Sound V12 subs in my system, so I was amazed at the T/9x's ability to energise the room without sounding woolly or frayed. It also managed to deliver powerful bass while retaining REL's trademark speed and flair.

This is a remarkable achievement in terms of redesigning and reengineering an existing product, and one that's sure to please existing fans of the brand. It should also make it plenty of new ones ■

HCC VERDICT



REL T/9x
→ £1,300 → www.rel.net

WE SAY: Don't be fooled by its diminutive appearance, this capable subwoofer delivers powerfully deep bass with exceptional speed and flair.

1. The new look cabinet design is derived from REL's Serie S

2. A rear-mounted heat sink wicks heat away from the sub's Class A/B amp

3. When fitted, the T/9x's fabric grille gives enough clearance for excursion of the 10in driver

AV INFO

PRODUCT:
10in front-firing sealed subwoofer

POSITION:
Top model in mid-range Serie Tx

PEERS:
Paradigm Defiance X10; B&W DB2D; Klipsch SPL-100

