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TEMPTATIONS



Tannoy DC10T

These Definition **floorstanders** major in awesome power

Profile

Price £5250 (plus £200 for optional plinths) ★★★★★

Design miracle An unusual drive unit design that puts the tweeter right in the acoustic centre of the midrange driver, plus a crossover network that's cryogenically treated. Yep, you heard right...

Tempted? Considering Tannoy's heritage with top-end speakers, you bet we are

Tannoy says the Definition DC10T floorstanders are its most accurate, revealing and dynamic speakers to date. It's a bold claim considering the company's roll-call of excellence, but listening to these towers, we get the enthusiasm.

These are big speakers meant for big rooms and high volume levels. The doubled-up 25cm drivers (10 inches in old money) suggest loads of bass - and that's exactly what you get.

There's something deeply impressive about a way a large bass driver produces low frequencies. Smaller drive units -

What's so clever?

1 The name makes sense

The name DC10T is more logical than most. The DC comes from the inclusion of the dual concentric driver, the 10 from its diameter in inches and the T from the fact that it's a tower, otherwise called a floorstander.

2 Interference is a goner

The screening connection on the rear (below the biwire terminals) should be connected to the amp's earthing post. It is linked to each driver chassis and is intended to reduce radio frequency interference.

3 Damped internal components

Tannoy have known for many years that crossover components are sensitive to vibration. They use a damping material on the capacitors used in the high-frequency section to improve resolution and refinement.

many of the competition tend to use 16.5cm drivers - just can't match the sense of ease and the feeling of confidence that good-quality, large-capacity units impart to the bass. Once heard, these characteristics are hard to do without.

Play a bass-rich recording such as *Time* from the *Inception* soundtrack, and it's enough to bring a slightly crazed smile to our faces. We expect - and get - lots of bass weight and authority. What's less anticipated is the agility and definition on offer.

While they're perfectly happy flexing their muscles, these speakers also give impressive insight into the sonic texture of low frequencies and crisply define the leading and trailing edges of notes. It's this ability to track the envelope of bass notes that allows the DC10Ts to reveal the low-level acoustic clues that define say, the size of a concert venue.

Concentric drivers = unified tone

Tannoy's engineers have been clever in their driver configuration, too. The DC10Ts use the company's trademark dual concentric drivers, which puts a tweeter right in the throat of the treated paper pulp midrange unit (see p78). The idea is to make the pair sound more like a single driver.

It works well, with the DC10Ts' controlled dispersion and seamless integration producing a stable soundstage, providing a certain amount of care is taken over their positioning and toe-in.

Like just about every big speaker, these Tannoys thrive on having space around them. Put them too

Dual concentric drivers give the DC10Ts a really cohesive sound



Be tempted this month...

- 1 If you want power, detail and fun, the Tannoys are for you
- 2 Agility, honesty and unique bass character: just the Facts
- 3 Monolithic planar speakers serve up stunning sound



Hot tech Cryo-crossover

It's no surprise that a speaker at this price level would use top quality crossover components. Like most rivals, the DC10T uses low-loss laminated core inductors for the bass section and audiophile grade polypropylene capacitors in the treble circuit.



However, it's not often that we find a company has subjected the entire crossover network to deep cryogenic treatment. The crossover is cooled to -190C and thawed slowly. This treatment is claimed to reduce the internal stresses in the crossover components leading to better sound quality. But does it work? The proof is in the listening...

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What makes them special?

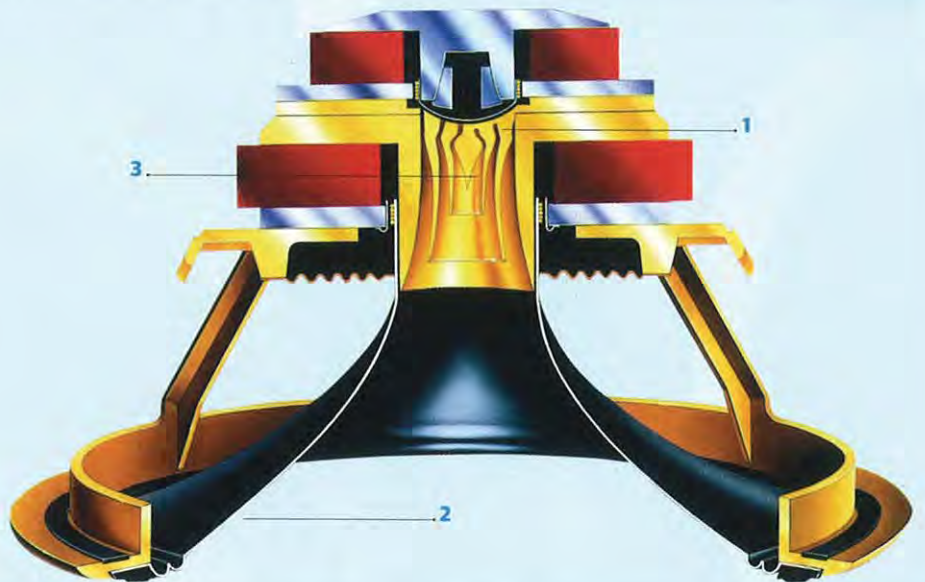
1. Clever dual concentric drive units
2. Cryogenically treated crossover
3. The ability to play loud and deep

How it works Tannoy's dual concentric drive unit

The dual concentric drive unit is Tannoy's big USP, particularly at the high-end of the market. It's a long-running design that the company has refined over the decades.

The design places the tweeter (1), in this case a 25mm titanium dome, right at the acoustic centre of the treated paper pulp midrange unit (2). The idea is to create a 'point source' driver where both high and low frequency sounds come from the same point, as opposed to the conventional arrangement where the tweeter and low frequency drivers are physically separated on a front baffle.

Tannoy's approach should yield better integration and more controlled dispersion, though there are downsides, such as increased coloration, to having a tweeter buried inside the larger driver. The company has spent years honing the shape of the wave guide (3) that channels the tweeter's sound outwards in a bid to reduce any such ill-effects.



close to a back wall and the low frequencies gain a little too much weight. Tannoy supplies foam bungs to block the two rather large rear-firing reflex ports, and this helps to control bass in a close-to-wall position. However, the downside is a degree of constraint in the speakers' sound.

And constraint is something that this speaker, when working well, can never be accused of.

The DC10Ts are immensely dynamic when the music demands, swinging from the quieter sections of Mahler's

when required and handle the nuances in Curtis Mayfield's vocal track on *I'm So Proud* with considerable skill and delicacy. This might only be a simple recording but it's all too easily spoiled by speaker that lacks finesse.

These Tannoys are relatively well balanced tonally, though they aren't the most refined performers we've heard. Their high frequencies fall a little short of ideal in terms of sweetness. Fortunately, they remain on the right side of acceptable when replaying harsh recordings.

Of course, when you get to this price level, absolutely everything has to be beyond reproach - and here it (mostly) is, from the high quality of the speaker terminals to the neat way the optional (£200) plinths fit on. Our only complaint is that some of the threaded inserts for the floor spikes weren't as well machined as they should be. Our plinths are very early samples, though, and Tannoy is aware of the issue. We're sure it will be sorted out on the product by the time you read this.

TECH SPECS

Type Floorstanders
Sensitivity 92dB/W/m
Impedance 8 ohms
Max power handling 125W
Biwireable Yes
Finishes 3
Dimensions (hwd) 113x 34 x 32cm

These Tannoys are as happy hammering out Metallica as they are Mahler. They have the agility and precision to follow a fast rhythm track, and the power to deliver monster punch

Symphony No.2 to the peaks without any hesitation at all. But don't worry, the increase in sonic intensity is as relentless as it is controlled.

There's plenty of attack on offer too. These Tannoys are as happy hammering out Metallica as they are Mahler. They have the agility and precision to follow a fast rhythm track, and the power to deliver monster punch when the music demands.

For all the dynamism and muscle on show, though, these Definitions still have a cultured side. They're subtle

They're easy to partner for the most part, too. Just feed them a high-quality signal from an amp that can make the most of their attributes and all will be fine. A high sensitivity of 92dB/W/m means that a multi-hundred-Watt monster isn't needed to produce high levels in most rooms, but if you have one of sufficient quality, the DC10Ts are more than happy to oblige.

What about build? It's as good as you'd expect. The finish on our gloss dark walnut pair is lovely, as it is on the gloss cherry and black alternatives.

Engaging, fun and dynamic

There's no doubt that there are some great speakers available for this kind of money. You can certainly buy something with greater refinement and a more convincing tonal palette.

However, we've heard few rivals that come close to matching the dynamic envelope, authority and sheer engagement of these big Tannoys. These are speakers with a big heart, and it's really hard not to love them.

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Dynamic and cohesive; good quality bass; go really loud; excellent build; high sensitivity

AGAINST Not the most refined for the money

VERDICT If you're looking for a big-hearted and exciting sound, few rivals come close to these extremely likeable Tannoy floorstanders