

Tannoy Revolution DC6T Floor-standing Speakers



Introduction to the Tannoy Revolution DC6T Floor-standing Speaker

Scotland, home of whisky, many successful racing drivers and Tannoy. Originally founded in 1926 England, Tannoy has been headquartered in Scotland since the 70s. Tannoy is best known for their dual concentric speakers where the tweeter is at the center of the mid-range driver. The Dual Concentric is a Trade Mark of Tannoy and is important because it maintains proper time alignment between LF and HF sources, which is something other concentrics do not achieve. A bit of trivia, Tannoy is not only the name of a speaker company but is often used to describe a generic public address system by citizens of the UK.

Tannoy released the Revolution line of speakers recently. A simplified version of the Revolution Signature series, the regular Revolution line simplified the cabinet construction, moved production to China and in the case of the towers limited the finish to espresso. These moves significantly reduced the cost and promise to deliver most of the performance the Signature line. The cost to performance potential of the DC6T led me to get a set in for review as soon as possible. Tannoy thankfully obliged.

Design of the Tannoy Revolution DC6T Floor-standing Speaker

The relatively compact DC6Ts are very handsome speakers. Fit and finish is excellent with an air of sophistication and modernism without being cold. The lack of visible screws on the front panel and the magnetic grills lend to a very elegant look. Silver trims rings around the drivers and the silver drivers themselves contrast nicely with the black rubber surrounds and dark brown espresso finish of the speaker.

The isosceles trapezoid shape of the cabinet is strikingly attractive. The shape allows

the cabinet to be more rigid and helps dissipate energy within the cabinet. I actually find the profile to be more attractive than the round tapering cabinet of the more expensive Signature Revolution series. Solidity is impressive as well, removing the speakers from their cartons, there's a feeling of having been milled from a solid piece of material. There's no flex, no resonance, the walls are incredibly inert, the whole speaker is very solid and nicely weighted towards the bottom.

Plinths are provided and to be honest they distract from the visual appeal of the speaker. Thankfully the Tannoy DC6Ts are so solid and the included floor spikes so rigid (hardwood floor metal cups are provided, as they should always but seldom are) and easy to lock that the DC6Ts are not likely to tip if used without plinths. During the time on my hardwood floors they survived a minor earthquake and several accidental bumps while fiddling with cabling without so much as even sliding on my wood floors.

Packaging must also be praised, despite having suffered serious damage during transport, the boxes protected the speakers fabulously and there was not even a small scratch on the speakers.

The main design focus of the DC6T is the Dual Concentric driver. The benefits of having the tweeter in the throat of the main driver is to provide a point source for the critical mid band. The human brain is most sensitive to the midrange area of our hearing and having the hand off to two drivers physically separated in space can create issues. Often times if you don't sit on axis with a traditional speaker, you get a suck out or boost in the crossover range between the tweeter and mid/bass driver. This off axis frequency shift means that you won't hear a flat response unless you're exactly on axis either vertically or horizontally or worst, both.

Time alignment hasn't been conclusively proven to be a big advantage but in my own experience, time aligned speakers tend to have just that bit more snap and realism. The Dual Concentric driver supposedly time aligns (I have no way to confirm this) the tweeter to the main driver by physically locating it behind the cone area of the main driver and coupled to a Tulip Waveguide which acts as both a waveguide (I would assume the cone driver also acts as a waveguide) and horn.

Another benefit of the Dual Concentric driver is a 90 degree dispersion across most of the frequency spectrum. With most separate driver configurations each driver has a different dispersion. Waveguides in particular help to reduce or eliminate this and in my listening experience most speakers with a proper waveguide (not easily done) have significantly more consistent dispersion and integration between the tweeter and mid/bass driver. There is one additional benefit to a 90 degree dispersion especially at midrange frequencies, in the right installation it will reduce the effect of

wall and ceiling reflections. In my own listening room I found a welcome similarity between listening to the DC6Ts with and without my room treatments. Only small studio monitors like JBL LSRs and Genelecs have been as consistent. Most residential speakers lack focus and suffer from a bloated mid range in my room without my treatment panels up.

Setup of the Tannoy Revolution DC6T Floor-standing Speaker

The DC6Ts have dual sets of binding posts mounted very low and horizontally. A nice touch helping for both a cleaner look and shortening the length of speaker cables. The posts are solid and well secured but seem best suited for banana plugs. Single wiring sounded good but I gained a bit more organization and dynamic zeal with biwiring. If possible I prefer using bare wire on both the amp end and speaker end. The terminals on the Tannoys are recessed making it difficult for me to thread the bare wire cleanly. I caved and used banana plugs. Spades also proved a bit tricky, the knurled ends of the posts making it difficult to tighten them. In my experience I've yet to hear a difference between a good spade and a good banana connector. The only audible difference I hear is in connector versus bare wire. I usually prefer bare wire, towards the end of my listening I took the time and put together the patience to thread the bare wire.

These are far from the most benign speakers to set up correctly. They take time, which will be well rewarded, unlike other speakers you will need to experiment and be patient. The crux I suspect is related to the incredible phase coherence of the Dual Concentric drivers. The Tannoys required perfect, not near perfect, but perfectly symmetrical distances from my seating distance. Accuracy had to be to an inch! Initially I was off by just 1" and while I enjoyed what I was hearing, the sound lacked a tight central image.

Using a Marantz AV7005 surround processor I played with distances on a per 1.2" distance basis until I discovered that the speakers were literally 1.2" in difference from each other. When this was compensated for with the delay built into my Marantz AV7005 imaging snapped into focus, ferociously. Upon discovering this I proceeded to share my thoughts with Tannoy and was also informed that Dual Concentric speakers respond well to more toe-in than usual. I normally fire speakers straight down as I don't have side walls close to the speakers. Angling in the DC6Ts by 10-15 degrees did indeed do wonders for maintaining a consistent sweet spot even far from the ideal center listening position. With the left speaker physically moved forward one inch until the Marantz delay was set equally the AV7005 was disconnected.

Bass tuning is very forgiving and flexible. The rear bass reflex port reacts very linear

with distance to rear walls. Moving the speakers closer adds a good dose of warmth without too much overhang or bass delay. Conversely pulling them further away decreased bass depth without affecting midrange energy. It should be very easy to get the bass just right in most rooms.

After getting placement just right I evaluated the Tannoy DC6T speakers with my Audiolab 8200CDQ used as DAC and Pre-Amp. Fed by a Musical Fidelity V-Link hooked up via USB to an Intel MacMini. The USB Cable being a D+ Class A from NEO (a professional cable brand of Oyaide Japan) with a NEO AS-808 SPDIF Coax cable. Interconnects were self made DH Labs Silver Sonic Pro Studio cable with Furutech FP-126 RCA connectors or Oyaide PA-02 bulk cable with Neutrik XLR connectors. Speaker wiring was Furutech FS-301 in dual run biwire or Canare 4S8 internally bi-wired. Amplification was provided by a Myryad MI-120, Parasound A23 or Meridian G series amp.

The Tannoy Revolution DC6T Floor-standing Speaker In Use

Prior to this review I have not spent much time listening to Tannoy home speakers. Professionally in my post-production career I have used Tannoy non Dual Concentric and Dual Concentric speakers since the mid 90s. Much of the same characteristics I appreciate of Tannoy professional monitors apply to the DC6T towers. In many ways the Tannoy DC6T speakers just sound like large studio monitors with better bass extension and output. This is a huge compliment. They are relatively neutral, image well, are forgiving off axis and in particular have a snap, speed and lack of overhang that usually only active studio monitors possess.

It's difficult to place the overall character of the Tannoy DC6T speakers. Initially I thought they had terrific timing, great imaging and good but not excessive bass, good but slightly coarse highs. This initial impression came while using my Myryad MI-120. An amp known for those qualities, high detail, superb timing, and great bass definition. Neutral but not cold, with just a bit of hash in the treble. Substituting the Meridian G55 redefined the sound. It was now completely grain free with insane control over the woofers but at the expense of timing and a sonic picture so neutral as to sound cold. A trait of the G55 amp. Beginning to see the trend? The Parasound A23 brought immense bass grip and intensity, I had to double check my subwoofer wasn't on. The midrange became more lush and there was a definite reduction in detail, the typical Paraound....sound. The Tannoys take on and reveal the character of the electronics upstream in a truthful and honest manner. Many speakers do so as well but impart their own sonic character in addition to that of the electronics. The Tannoys manage to minimize it to such an extent they really get out of the way. A rare feat for a speaker of this price.

Enough resolution to reveal subtle details yet not so much resolution as to make mainstream commercial recordings unlistenable. The wholly organic sound translates into effortless listening. Some equally priced speakers offer more startling realism in the mid-range but at the expense of cohesion with non acoustic/vocal recordings. The DC6Ts manage to make details a better part of the whole sonic image. Instead of needing to focus in on the reverb tail of a snare, it's just there, more easily perceptible. The acoustic space of a live recording is that much more realistic and intimate. Panning of instruments or studio effects sound faster, more vivid and exciting.

It didn't matter if I was listening to The Beastie Boys Paul's Boutique or Chet Baker playing These Foolish Things, the one quality that bowled me over was the pitch definition and vibrancy of bass. Usually easy to do if you also don't have a lot of bass output, a good 2-way monitor for example. The timing and bass pitch definition is what routinely draws me to 2-way monitors. Towers often times don't time as well and usually don't have the same tight and quick bass of monitors. This is not the case with the Tannoys. When called upon they can deliver serious amounts of bass and also great extension without compromising speed, timing and tonality. There's no trace of boxiness or resonance in the midrange even when driven hard as can sometimes happen with floor standing speakers with significant bass output.

Imaging is good but slightly diffuse and may actually be more realistic. I can't remember the last live performance where I could localize someone to be exactly 12 degrees to my right. If you value pin point sharp imaging this may not be the best choice. Staging depth is good but not phenomenal. Over what the Tannoys do most is being well rounded. The DC6Ts aren't tuned for one characteristic at the expense of others, or voiced to highlight one quality, they are a well balanced speaker.

Conclusion about the Tannoy Revolution DC6T Floor-standing Speaker

For music lovers that listen to a wide selection of genres, these could very well be your speakers. It didn't matter if I listened to mainstream hip-hop, pop like Chromeo or Two Door Cinema Club, heavy electronic like Noisia, or well recorded acoustic music. The Tannoy DC6Ts never failed to deliver a remarkably pleasurable and dynamic presentation. In the context of their price it's hard to find faults. Compared to more expensive speakers they fall short of delivering absolute realism to acoustic instruments but I've not heard any floor stander under 4k that does. Equally priced small stand mounters offer more mid range resolution but at the expense of drive, bass and dynamic ability. The Tannoy DC6Ts are a seriously good accomplishment.

The toughest part may be finding a dealer to audition the DC6T but Tannoy assures me they are in the process of expanding their dealer network. If you're in the market

for a sub two thousand dollar pair of floor standers consider the DC6Ts for the top of your list. Just remember, what you'll hear will be more the electronics than the speaker. Make sure you know what you're actually listening to before making a call on the Tannoy DC6Ts sound. Highly recommended!