



"You can't see past a pop star's image" An intimate chat with David Sylvian



"Phenomenal!" Cambridge Audio's MXW70 power amp

Hi-Fi Choice

PASSION FOR SOUND

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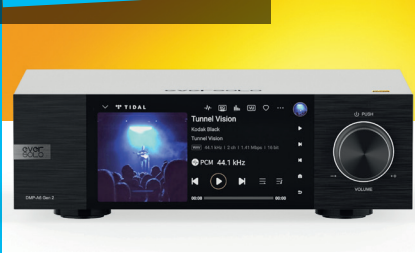
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Q Acoustics' Q SUB100 active subwoofer



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Middle class

Mark Craven lends an ear to Q Acoustics' latest affordable bass box and finds there's plenty to like about it

When it launched in 2006 Q Acoustics focussed on the affordable end of the speaker market, then came the flagship Concept 500 floorstanders (HFC 426) designed in conjunction with Karl-Heinz Fink. It's the same story with its subs: the new Q SUB series offers three models priced between £600 and £800, and these are the brand's most 'premium' options, slotting in beside the new 3060S Satin at £400.

On test here is the middle unit, the Q SUB100, which uses a 254mm bass driver with quoted amplification of 250W (500W peak) from a custom-designed multi-stage power/DSP module. All three units share the same general features: front-firing drivers, sealed, cube-shaped MDF cabinets with double-thickness baffles and White or Black finishes.

Q Acoustics says its subwoofer's DSP engine enables it to 'identify' the input signal type (stereo or mono) and level, and automatically adjust system gain to suit. It's also used to

ensure the driver system does not become 'over-stressed', limiting distortion, and supports a signal delay function to aid integration with partnering speakers. However, the brand hasn't allied this DSP with app control or an onboard display; setting of the delay, plus phase, crossover and level is done via dials and switches on the rear. Considering that signal delay should optimally be set in conjunction with a room/speaker measurement, a more granular level of control would be welcome.

The sub's rear panel is recessed, so cables can be connected (figure-of-eight mains, 12V trigger and RCA interconnects into either its stereo/mono inputs) and then hidden by a supplied metal cover, leaving only the level dial and status LED on show. This is the sort of neat design we've come to expect from Q Acoustics and in general the Q SUB100 is immaculately presented for the price. The grey fabric grille might attach with studs instead of magnets, but the way it covers the entire baffle looks neat.

Sound quality

Connected to the stereo pre out of a Primare PRE35, the Q SUB100 slots in easily with my B&W 700 S2 Signature standmounts. Sure, this eminently affordable subwoofer might lack the reach and slam of (typically more expensive) rivals, but its less aggressive nature, coupled with a tonally rich presentation, proves a good fit for music. It adds a sense of richness, as well as weight, to the B&W speakers, for a more enticing overall sound.

The synthesiser introduction of The Police's *Invisible World* sounds more solid, while a run-through of The Marshall Tucker Band's *Can't You See* benefits from the Q SUB100's ability to accentuate Tommy Caldwell's buoyant bassline without clouding higher-frequency detail. Getting the level set optimally helps here, of course – it's where a control app or remote control would be useful. However, those using the sub with an AV processor will have bass management on hand.

I find myself making level changes with Koan Sound's *Infinite Funk*, where the move from Seventies-esque disco to modern electronica persuades me to crank it up. The physicality the Q SUB100 brings to the deep, bass effects is superb and suitably tight without necessarily dazzling in terms of slam. Just as enjoyable is the groove and scale it adds to Lionel Richie's *Running With The Night*, subtly filling out the bottom octaves but not becoming the star of the show.

Conclusion

The most impressive sub I've heard from Q Acoustics, the Q SUB100 is a bargain – particularly for systems where its lack of ultimate low-end extension is outweighed by a natural presentation with a little *je ne sais quoi*. Neatly styled, it will look great next to the company's speakers, but owners of other brands can still apply ●

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Q Acoustics
Q SUB100

ORIGIN
UK/China

TYPE
Sealed, single-driver active subwoofer

WEIGHT
16.7kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
350 x 350 x 382mm

FEATURES
● 254mm paper cone driver
● 250W Class D amplification
● Delay control and source detection

DISTRIBUTOR
Armour Home

WEBSITE
qacoustics.co.uk
armourhome.co.uk

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY
★★★★★
LIKE: Natural, musical performance; smart, unobtrusive styling

VALUE FOR MONEY
★★★★★
DISLIKE: Not the deepest-reaching subwoofer around; no remote control

BUILD QUALITY
★★★★★
WESAY: A little light on features, but this competitively priced sub hits the right notes

FEATURES
★★★★★

OVERALL

★★★★★