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Q Acoustics has a brand new sub for its 3000i Series. Ed Selley shakes it down as part of a potent package



Q Acoustics 3010i 5.1 Plus

Q ACOUSTICS IS getting impressive mileage out of its 3000 series. Launched in 2015, it was updated in 2018 with an 'i' suffix that brought in performance improvements. Now it's left the passive models untouched and debuted an all-new sub, with new 5.1 packages too.

The QB12 (£500 on its own) has nothing in common with the preceding slim-line model. It's the first Q Acoustics woofer to use a 12in driver, which fires forwards from a sealed cabinet that is not significantly larger in any dimension than the driver itself. It's by no means a big beast, but is far more purposeful-looking than its forebear and claims an impressive 28Hz reach, improving on the 35Hz rating of the 3060S. Power has also been pushed, with a 220W Class D amp preferred

to the previous 150W.

Tested here is the 3010i 5.1 Plus pack, which features four two-way 3010i speakers and the two-and-a-half-way 3090Ci centre. All use the same 4in doped paper cone midbass and 1in soft dome tweeter, materials that underpin everything Q Acoustics does and

have achieved excellent results in models including the flagship £4,000 Concept 500.

Speaking sense

Not for the first time listening to a Q Acoustics speaker package, the impression is of a system that gets an awful lot done at a very sensible price. Take the car chase in *Atomic Blonde* (4K BD) when Lorraine arrives in Berlin. Here it is reproduced with effortless realism. The engine notes of an Audi and Porsche snarl distinctly, and dialogue is clear and easy to follow even with the frenetic soundtrack to contend with. The spread of effects is convincing too; there are few substitutes for having the same drivers in every corner, because there's a seamlessness that's hard to replicate any other way.

This comes into its own with the perfectly synced opening sequence of *Baby Driver* (4K BD). It isn't every film that needs a surround package to have a grasp of timing, but this does and the Q Acoustics system doesn't let the side down. Every neatly timed bit of automotive thuggery is deftly handled and cleanly delivered, and, once again, the centre anchors dialogue to the screen with ease.

There is a level of cohesion and control here that is admirable for fairly affordable speakers. Some rivals might sound more dynamic on first listen but you can do three films on the bounce with this array and not feel fatigued.

SPECIFICATIONS

3010i

DRIVERS: 1 x 4in midbass driver; 1 x 0.9in tweeter **ENCLOSURE:** Rear-ported **FREQ. RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 65Hz-30kHz **SENSITIVITY (CLAIMED):** 86dB **POWER HANDLING:** 125W **DIMENSIONS:** 150(w) x 253(h) x 252(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 4.1kg

3090Ci

DRIVERS: 2 x 4in midbass drivers; 1 x 0.9in tweeter **ENCLOSURE:** Rear-ported **FREQ. RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 75Hz-30kHz **SENSITIVITY (CLAIMED):** 89dB **POWER HANDLING:** 165W **DIMENSIONS:** 430(w) x 152(h) x 216(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 6kg

QB12 (subwoofer)

DRIVERS: 1 x 12in woofer **ENCLOSURE:** Sealed **FREQ. RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 28Hz-300Hz **ONBOARD POWER (CLAIMED):** 220W **REMOTE CONTROL:** No **DIMENSIONS:** 400(w) x 400(h) x 466(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 18.5kg **FEATURES:** LFE/stereo phono input; auto on/off; crossover/level controls; phase switch; removable connections cover

And the QB12 sub? Initial impressions are that its performance might not exactly match the burly appearance. It would be wrong (and possibly a bit weird) to describe its bass handling as 'delicate', but there's a subtlety to how this woofer goes about its business that is unusual for a model at this price point.

In *Baby Driver*, when Baby and Doc head down to the carpark, there's a little swell of LFE energy as the lift gets to the bottom. It's not a thud or an impact, just a little resonant noise. The QB12 adds it neatly to the mix; it's not forced or overblown, it's simply there as an integral part of what's happening.

You can spend the same money and get a woofer that packs a little more subjective punch, as the QB12 seems to have been engineered to be effortless rather than gut-wrenching. A solid bass slugfest like *Bumblebee* on 4K BD is impressively weighty, but there isn't the savagery that offerings from subwoofer specialists can produce.

Yet listen a little longer and the virtues of this setup make themselves more apparent. At pretty much any level you choose, it delivers a presentation that feels unforced, seamless and able to handle dynamic soundtrack moments without audible strain.

And, just to stress, the QB12 subwoofer sounds altogether bigger and more dramatic than the older and smaller models could ever hope ■

AV INFO

PRODUCT: 5.1 sub/sat speaker system

POSITION: Smallest models in Q Acoustics 3000i range

PEERS: Mission LX Series; Acoustic Energy 100 Series

HCC VERDICT



Q Acoustics 3010i 5.1 Plus

→ £1,050 → www.qacoustics.co.uk

WE SAY: Q Acoustics pimps its compact sub/sat system with a bigger woofer but doesn't upset its exceptional balance and refinement.