



To the point

David Price is impressed by the razor sharp, laser-like focus of Tannoy's latest premium standmount speaker

Costing the considerable sum of £900, Tannoy's new Precision 6.1 has to be demonstrably better than the large number of cheaper standmounters around to attain serious success. It has to give at least a taste of greatness, if not the full culinary experience! Reflecting this, it is a purposefully styled product, with a design suggesting few compromises.

Being a Tannoy it has a Dual Concentric drive unit. And as anyone who's heard one knows, this is no bad thing. This one is said to have an extremely uniform sound radiation pattern that shows off the benefits of Tannoy's technology to best effect – the high frequency unit is mounted behind, and concentrically, with the

The Tannoy is great at filling any small to medium-sized room with music

low-frequency unit. High frequencies radiate from the centre of the low-frequency unit through a carefully designed exponential horn. The result is a far wider on-axis area that you can listen from, and superior stereo projection. The crossover further time-aligns the two drivers, meaning that the sound appears to come from the same point-source just behind the drive unit.

To the untrained eye, the Precision 6.1's drive unit looks like a single full range design, and not a big one at that at 150mm in diameter. The outer mid/bass part sports a cone made from a selected blend of paper pulp fibres, and is chosen for its natural sound, says Tannoy. The cone has a rubber roll surround and a powerful double magnet bass motor system is used to give the driver high sensitivity and better dynamic range. The inset WideBand tweeter uses a titanium dome for high rigidity and low mass, and is said to be superior to aluminium in terms of where and how the response breaks up; "out of

harm's way", says Tannoy. A Tulip Waveguide is claimed to improve dispersion, with crossover of 1.6kHz.

The rear of the cabinet features a distinctive binding post panel, which has gold-plated binding posts. The company also offers its signature fifth terminal to earth the driver chassis to the amplifier ground, which is said to reduce RF interference.

Like almost all contemporary loudspeakers, the Precision is a bass-reflex design, which means it has a hole in the cabinet, for better efficiency at the expense of a slightly less manageable bass response. The port is at the rear, which means you have to be careful in placement. It needs to be at least 30cm out from the rear walls, I find, and toed-in slightly. This done, the 6.1 gives an even, wide and expansive sound with no response anomalies. In spite of all this, Tannoy's claim of 88dB 1W/1m sensitivity seems optimistic in my view; not particularly inefficient but you would struggle to get high volumes with a 20W valve amplifier, for example. I use a 60W Musical Fidelity X-150, which drives it nicely.

Sound quality

This is a quintessential high-quality Tannoy that gives a wide, expansive and room-filling sound. It's not what you'd call tonally warm, but neither is it hard and steely; the balance is well judged and the general impression is one that is ever so slightly 'well lit' across the upper midband, but not excessively so. It picks out vocals, lead piano and guitar lines and throws them into the room with confidence, while at the same time not forcing the listener to take cover behind the sofa!

At higher frequencies, the mid/bass unit crosses over to the tweeter in a pretty orderly way, where you become aware that you are listening to a metal dome – it's not quite as smooth and well damped as a fabric dome, or as seamless and delicate as a ribbon. All the same, it integrates well and shares the same slightly 'vivid' character of the mid/bass unit. The result is an atmospheric and extended

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Tannoy Precision 6.1

ORIGIN
UK/China

TYPE
Standmount
loudspeaker

WEIGHT
7.3kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
224 x 330 x 257mm

FEATURES

- 25mm titanium dome tweeter
- 150mm treated paper mid/bass driver
- Recommend amplifier power: 20-150W
- Quoted sensitivity: 88dB/1W/1m
- Quoted frequency response: 43Hz-35kHz (+/- 3dB)

DISTRIBUTOR
Tannoy

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01236 420199

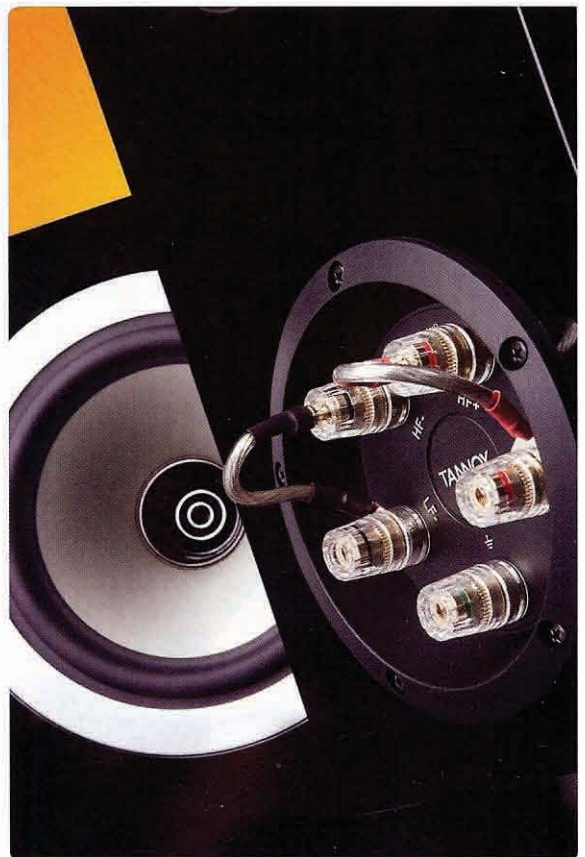
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treble. It's not coarse or hard and lends a lovely metallic twang to delicately struck hi-hat cymbals.

Its size means it's only going to give a finite amount of bass, which means that the very bottom notes of a bass guitar simply aren't there. That's fair enough, as you don't buy a relatively small standmounting speaker for guilty subterranean pleasures. But there are similarly sized standmounters that go slightly lower, or at least give the impression of doing so. What bass there is, is decently controlled and tuneful – it doesn't impede that lovely open midband, and prefers to sit back and add a bit of heft to percussion, to push the song along in a crisp and tidy manner.

The result is a clean and open speaker that images beautifully and seemingly disappears from your listening room. I kick off with Animal Nightlife's *Native Boy* and the Precisions romp along. Rhythmically, the cabinet stays out of the action to a large extent, with no untoward honking or booming, letting the Dual Concentric driver get its claws into the music. This it does very well, serving up a musically satisfying sound that bounces from the start of the track all the way to its very end. It gives a really enjoyable sense of there being a musical event, as opposed to just going through the motions. ▶

The fifth terminal is for earthing the driver chassis to the amplifier ground



Q&A

Tim Lount

VP of Residential, Tannoy



DP: What type of customer is the Precision 6.1 aimed at?

TL: It's actually the most purist model in the Precision range. The range overall differs from many previous Tannoy speaker series in that it uses 6in drivers throughout, from the 6.1 with its single 6in Dual Concentric unit up to the 6.4, which comprises four such drivers (DC, Aux Bass and two ABRs). Previous Tannoy series would have stepped up drive size from 6in to 8in above the 6.2 model. The strategic reason for this was simple – modern living is space-sensitive and if you can keep the baffle area and footprint of a speaker smaller, then it will have wider acceptance in living rooms.

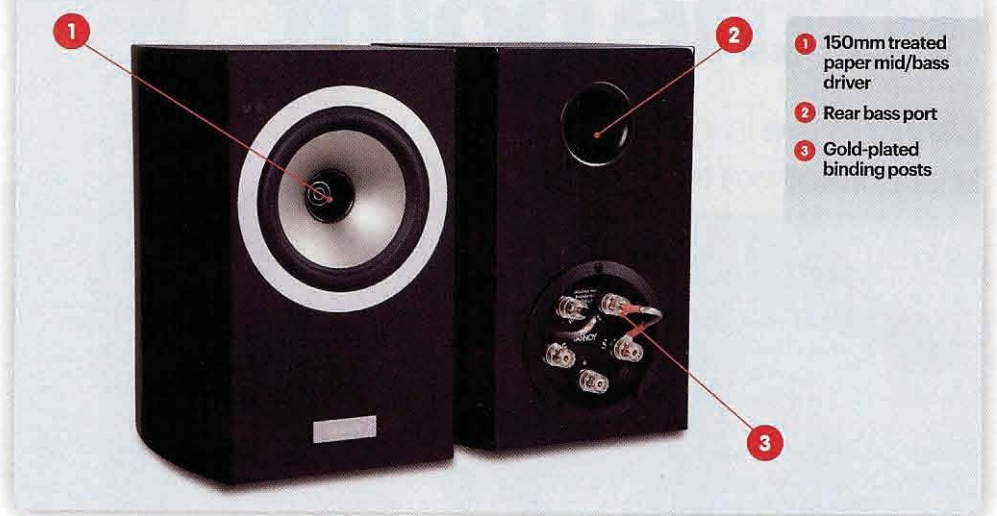
Who designed it?

Tannoy's longstanding Chief Designer, Dr Paul Mills, headed up the Precision development programme.

What are the benefits of a point source speaker?

Low and high-frequency sound radiation is generated on the same axis. The high-frequency unit is mounted behind, and concentrically with the low-frequency unit. High-frequency sound radiates from the centre of the low-frequency unit through a carefully designed exponential horn. Low and high frequencies are, therefore, fully integrated at source, giving unique sound reproduction qualities. Also, the high-frequency unit does not obstruct the low-frequency unit in any way (a unique feature when compared with other point source or coaxial systems). Polar dispersion of sound is symmetrical in both horizontal and vertical planes. By careful crossover network design the virtual acoustic sources of the high and low-frequency units form a virtual point source. Measurements on other coaxial driver systems have indicated a lack of true time alignment. In the Tannoy Dual Concentric design the total sound appears to emanate from a single point source located slightly behind the drive unit, allowing the loudspeaker to recreate a full and accurate stereo image.

IN SIGHT



- 1 150mm treated paper mid/bass driver
- 2 Rear bass port
- 3 Gold-plated binding posts

Feed the Tannoy some heavier and more challenging material, such as Genesis' *Dance on a Volcano*, and things are no less fun. The speaker has a good go at capturing Phil Collins' thunderous pan rolls and the bass drum is tight and taut. Again, the midband is finely etched and highly detailed, throwing out large amounts of information into the room with

does remind you you're not listening to a high end speaker! Also, on loud peaks, there's the slightest hint of dynamic compression, proving that no speaker with just a 6in bass driver and 11 litres inside is immune to the laws of physics.

Conclusion

Overall, the Precision 6.1 is a charming little loudspeaker. Its imaging is class leading; it's one of the few boxes at this price that is truly able to leave its cabinet behind and offer an 'out of body experience'. It's great at filling any small to medium-sized room with music, and isn't too picky about where you sit in it. Its midband is its strong point – detailed, clean and projective – but the bass and treble don't let the side down, and the result is a nicely integrated speaker that's enjoyable to listen to. It times well, is decently dynamic and has a taut, tuneful bass. There are rival designs that do some other things better, but few are as good all round. It's a highly likeable and capable loudspeaker then, that's well worth considering ●

A clean and open speaker that disappears from your listening room

headly abandon; the guitar work feels very intricate, and Collins' vocals are breathy and captivating. On this denser material at higher volumes there's a bit of compression, but that's the price you pay for a small speaker. Still, the Tannoy holds on more ably than many, and most importantly remains in control.

The beautifully lilting *I Hear You* Now from Jon and Vangelis shows other facets to the sound, good and bad. There's nice texturing to the lead synthesiser line and the cymbal and snare work is crisp, clean and wholly enjoyable. Jon Anderson's distinct falsetto voice is carried well too, the horn-loaded metal dome showing itself to be more couth than many. Again, it's a little light and forward towards the top of his vocal range, but nothing unpleasant. But the synthesised bass line does raise some issues; the Tannoy appears a little less extended than some, and at high volume levels there's just a trace of boxy colouration coming through. It's not worse than any other similarly priced standmounter I've heard, but it

HOW IT COMPARES

Monitor Audio's GX50 (£950) is a similarly sized standmounter, but puts out a more measured and precise sound than the Tannoy. This is partly down to its superb ribbon tweeter, which is better than the metal dome of the Precision 6.1; it is wonderfully delicate and detailed, and spacious too, as well as lacking any edge. It disperses well, but can't match the Precision 6.1 in this respect, the latter throwing sound out into the room in a more exuberant way. The Tannoy is a bit more involving, giving a better sense of the natural flow of the music. But the Monitor Audio counters with a tauter and more precise bass, and more midrange detail.

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY



LIKE: Clean, spacious, detailed and engaging sound

VALUE FOR MONEY



DISLIKE: Limited bass extension; stiff competition

BUILD QUALITY



WESAY: Beautifully presented, musically satisfying stand mounters

EASE OF DRIVE



OVERALL

