refused to “disappear”. Drawing attention with wallowing sounds and flatulent bass, they were the stuff of audio nightmares. Which is why after spending far too much time with the feet up enjoying the review “loaner” from Australia’s SVS distributor, Final Link Audio, I can say, hand on my heart if you haven’t heard about US brand SVS Revolution, park your doubts and surf the Net. SVS has a well-earned and growing reputation for well-priced, Cadillac class, wonderfully equipped subs with a distinguished sonic prowess.

From the get-go, two things stand out about the SVS SB13-Ultra subwoofer. It sounds superb on music and movies, and Lord be praised. It’s easy to integrate into existing speakers and a room’s acoustic space. Over the last decade, plenty of subs have gone into my system. Models from REL, Definitive Technology, B&W, Sunfire, JBL, and several other brands were all noteworthy for their contribution to good sound.

Most paired fairly seamlessly with my existing gear. But others from mass market brands priced to sell at the Kia end of the market, refused to “disappear”. Drawing attention with wallowing sounds and flatulent bass, they were the stuff of audio nightmares. Which is why after spending far too much time with the feet up enjoying the review “loaner” from Australia’s SVS distributor, Final Link Audio, I can say, hand on my heart if you haven’t heard about US brand SVS Revolution, park your doubts and surf the Net. SVS has a well-earned and growing reputation for well-priced, Cadillac class, wonderfully equipped subs with a distinguished sonic prowess.

“well-priced, Cadillac class, wonderfully equipped subs with a distinguished sonic prowess”
Bass & Scale

After long listening sessions with music albums and movies that never fail to please me, it’s as plain as the nose on your face: an SB13-Ultra, tuned in to your existing speakers and room acoustics, will give your movie soundtracks loads of tight, informative trouser flapping and skirt lifting amounts of bass, and your music a greater sense of scale.

Putting aside that none of us knows what a Tyrannosaurus Rex’s paws pounding the ground really sounds like, or for that matter, what the difference is between the sound of a Gluck or a Biretta wreaking havoc. But, there is universal agreement that the sound of a quality sub-woofer increases the level of realism of the home movie and music experience. Especially if your speakers lack a little low end wellie. If they do, rest assured: replaying movies with a decent quality subwoofer like the SVS is much more enjoyable than the same movies heard without it.

Moreover a well tuned sub swells to liberate your speakers’ potential not only opening up the midrange, adding loads of informative, rhythmic lower wallop, but seemingly opening up the midrange and enlarging the sonic envelope as well.

As for system integration, we all have our own way of achieving a seamless blend between a subwoofer, speakers and a room’s acoustics. Some are happy to use their AV Receiver’s semi-automated speaker setup feature for the bulk of the work before tuning in the sub by ear, aided by an SPL meter.

Point is, there’s no single agreed route to subwoofer integration. So don’t beat yourself up if at first you don’t succeed. You will with time, patience and more than a little advice and help from your audio buddies.

The SVS website also offers their ‘Merlin’ wizard feature which contains a database of the world’s most popular loudspeakers. Selecting the right SVS subwoofer for your existing speakers is made easy with Merlin. Give it a try for yourself.

The SB13-Ultra whipped up an acoustic storm playing the Stones’ Let It Bleed album on CD. Love in Vain, one of my five album tracks took on added scale with a soundstage studded with life-sized performers.

The Sophia’s are not a speaker I regard as lacking satisfying bass. But gosh, Keith Richard’s insistent bass was more defined and informative, with extra body and verve with the SB13-Ultra in the system. Switching it out of the system and sure enough the Sophia’s rendered the same bass patterns with authority and slam. But missing was a greater sense of scale and definition.

It’s also worth pointing out the SB13-Ultra’s dynamic slam and its contribution to my system’s overall musicality. Yes, we acknowledge the dynamic capabilities of a quality subwoofer, but musicality? Trust me, good subs thanks to their working dynamic response, rhythmic drive and detail retrieval are satisfyingly musical.

Album after album, track after track and with each improved, I had to surrender to the charms of the SB13-Ultra.
SVS SB13-Ultra Driver Features
- Aluminium die-cast frame
- 13.5” (342.9mm) long throw woofer
- Extended gap plate magnets
- Flat wound, 3” diameter, 8 layer copper shorting sleeve
- Polyimide/fiberglass former
- IFC (Integrated Function Controller)
- 13.5” diameter, 200mm (8"") Pulp/Fiberglass/Rohacell cone
- Diam heavy. It measures just 17.4” x 17.4” x 17.4” (W x H x D, inches) but weights a back breaking 48 kgs.

Connections include RCA/XLR line level inputs and outputs plus an LFE crossover bypass. Frequency response, says SVS, is 20Hz to 450 Hz. Woofers used is a quality 13.5” model. Available in either a ported (PB-13Ultra) or sealed enclosure. My sample was sealed model (SB-13Ultra). As for power, there was plenty of output at 35Hz at 105 dB in the family listening room thanks to this model’s 1000-watt RMS digital plate amplifier (STA-1000D).

Setting up the SB13-Ultra is also made easy via a small alphanumeric display screen equipped with one rotary knob that can be turned and pushed in to make volume adjustments, set the high pass filter, select high pass slope and frequency for low frequencies. Suffice to say, the SB13-Ultra has a comprehensive range of user adjustments to make system integration a bit of a pleasure rather than a chore.

Price of the SB13-Ultra is $2999, and about what I guessed it would be without being told. Finish is exemplarity and my sample was turned out in piano gloss black. I’m told it’s also available in black oak.

The SB13-Ultra is compact, but damn heavy. It measures just 17.4” x 17.4” x 17.4” (W x H x D, inches) but weights a back breaking 48 kgs.

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