

**HOME
CINEMA**
*Reference
status*

Hardcore gets handsome with the
Jamo D 7PEX system

JAMO D 7PEX ♦ £5,500 (approx)
♦ 0845 600 4224 ♦ www.bbg-av.com

Next-gen THX power

THX-certified speaker systems are few and far between, which makes the arrival of this 7.2 Jamo rig rather special. Adam Rayner feels the need for a quick history lesson

In the olden days we had Hafler surround by simply connecting up a pair of 'rear' speakers a bit oddly. Then the Dolby people created a home cinema revolution, courtesy of their licensed surround technologies and a little piece of magic called Pro Logic (hands up who was into AV back then?).

Quite early on in the process, Lucasfilm got involved in creating a book of standards that, if adhered to by license, along with some clever post-processing, would result in a sound and vision experience that Uncle George figured his and everybody's audience truly deserved. THX was its name; a standard for building speakers, amps, and whole professional cinema auditoria – right down to the degree of reflective surfaces and sound-absorbing drapes. In the Empire Cinema at Leicester Square, they used to screen a THX demo sequence involving jumping audio tracks and a laser light show. The audience would burst into spontaneous applause before the movie had even begun!

The rest is history, with Dolby's five surround speakers and single subwoofer supporting the 5.1 format and becoming the de-facto standard for DVD, with DTS as a secondary player.

THX's fortunes have ebbed and flowed, particularly outside its native

USA. Not everyone needed the original specification of Home THX and a secondary THX standard evolved. Thus we got Ultra for larger rooms, and Select for smaller ones. Theories and electronics were largely the same, except for overall power and sound pressure ratings.

As the quality and frequency range, or passband, of movies' soundtracks subsequently went through the roof, another, newer set of standards was called for, again in two sets of order-of-magnitude arrays, now to be called THX Ultra 2 and Select 2.

Which brings us to this: the system that was used at the press launch of *Revenge of the Sith*, as set up by the Jamo importer's Mr THX, Mark Cheffins. What he doesn't know about THX ain't worth knowing.

So what comprises THX speakers these days? Well, you are looking at a 7.2 system: two large 15in equipped subwoofers; five direct-radiating surround sound satellite

RATINGS

Highs: Fabulous performance with good intelligibility at all volume levels
Lows: Some may find it hard to house two 15in woofers; pricey too.

Fronts/centre	★★★★½
Rears	★★★★★
Bass	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★½



Above: beefcake terminals signal the D 7PEX's intent
Above right: the sub has a MFB (Motional Feedback) circuit that allows it to reach even deeper

HCC PRACTICAL TIP

Although huge and impressive, setting up and optimising a THX speaker system is surprisingly simple, thanks to elegant post-processing in all THX-certified amplification and plug and play speaker/subwoofer connectivity. Just follow the onscreen instructions on your amp, set all speakers to small (a misnomer for sure) and the job's done.



'These speakers are a hardcore movie fan's dream - dynamic, exciting and totally involving'

speakers for rears and front use; and a brace of superb dipolar side speakers with rakes of drivers in them all.

Speakers corner

Although undeniably large, by usual THX speaker sizes these can claim almost claim to be petite. Some fanatics might even consider wall-mounting the main L/C/Rs, such is their limited depth. In point of fact, that is how they have been designed and it's in that configuration that they earn their THX stripes. But to be honest, stand-mounting them close to a wall boundary is for me the more acceptable option.

The D 7LCR (which stands for left, centre, right) are letterbox rather than tower style and have a pair of jumper-connected sets of binding posts on their rears. They come with rubber stand studs, and a set of wall-bracket mounts that are no more than steel receptacles (with pre-drilled locations) for a wall screw fixing to marry up to. On each side of the box you get a serious looking golf-ball dimpled 5.5in cone for bass, with a

vertical array of small speaker drivers between them. These comprise an annular ring tweeter and two stiff but well-suspended 2.5in mid-range jobs.

The surround enclosure (D 7SUR) has two sets of these sexy small drivers, arranged vertically but at 45° angles to the ends of the boxes, mounted such that when on a wall alongside your seated position, they create a perfect dipolar surround pattern. The central part of the box houses one of the 5.5in bass units.

The D 7SUB subwoofer is a simple gut-bucket of bass. A mighty 15incher lives in the face of each one - you get two with the full-on Ultra 2 specification, each one with a meaty half kilowatt of grunt, which can reach down to 20Hz (required by the specification). Each of the seven surrounding boxes - three across the front, dipolar sides and two regular rears - came with a solid-feeling stand, that adds £300 a pop to the system for each one.

Performance

In use, these speakers are a hardcore movie fan's dream. Dynamic, exciting and

SPECIFICATIONS

ITEM	DETAILS
Jamo D7LCR	
Drive units	One 25mm DCD tweeter, two 65mm midrange drivers (in array), Two 140mm bass drivers.
Enclosure type	Three-way sealed, shielded.
Frequency response	80Hz - 40kHz
Sensitivity	89dB/m @ 2.83V
Power handling	200W (short term)/400W (long term)
Dimensions	275(h) x 591(w) x 173(d)mm
Weight	11.1kg
Jamo D7SUR	
Drive units	Two 25mm DCD tweeters, four 65mm midrange drivers (in arrays), one 140mm bass driver.
Enclosure type	Three-way, dipole
Frequency response	80Hz - 40kHz
Sensitivity	87dB/m @ 2.83V
Power handling	100W (short term)/250W (long term)
Dimensions	265(h) x 508(w) x 126(d)mm
Weight	11.1kg
Jamo D 7SUB	
Drive units	One 380mm (15in) driver
Enclosure type	Closed box
Frequency response	20Hz - 200Hz
Onboard power	400W RMS, 700W peak
Dimensions	492(h) x 591(w) x 444(d)mm
Weight	33.6kg



totally involving. Partner them with a grand's worth of THX-certified amplification and you're away.

So good is the experience, that I wanted to revisit my entire DVD collection. A great test disc for these babies turned out to be the THX-remastered *Aliens*.

Early on, Ripley asks how long she was in stasis before the salvage team found her. She suddenly spasms, knocks a glass of water onto the floor and her chest bursts. Then she wakes up... The sound of the glass's destruction happens stage front and centre and the dynamic rise lifted me clean out of my seat (no easy feat!). Further on, we see the alien-ravaged colony of

Hadley's Hope (population 150). A huge truck is arriving at the atmosphere processor. The sound is massive, deep rich and throbbing. I found out certain things were being shaken off shelves. Marvellous.

The front soundstage is detailed and warm. There's not a harsh bone to this cabinetry. By their nature these

speakers are very directional, so positioning and toeing in, is crucial.

With CDs the system has less sparkle; this is definitely a cinephile system first and foremost. If you do want to use the system for music, I'd advise that you try and ensure your electronics have been configured for THX music mode.

Housing the complete 7.2 system will require some planning

Conclusion

The output of this handsome system is Brodningnagian - seriously pro style for domestic use. They certainly sound better than my local cinema system; it's large and lovely to be pinned to the sofa by. However, the D 7PEX isn't for dilettantes. This system is reference grade, state-of-the-art, cinematic joy. I loved them ■