

Schertler Tim & Tom

BOB THOMAS

Schertler, the specialist Swiss manufacturers of acoustic pickups and amplification, appear to be rolling out new products with increasing frequency these days. The full integration of former partners SR Technology into the Schertler Group has led to a revamp of their acoustic amplifiers and amplification systems that is delivering a wider product range and a new cosmetic identity for the Schertler brand.

The latest results of this project are the Schertler Tim and Tom compact analogue amplification systems. These are variants of the existing SR Technology Pocket 1 and Pocket 2 systems, but have been re-engineered for professional use. The Tim and Tom are available in either stained wood or textured anthracite finishes. Although protective carrying bags are available as optional extras, the latter finish, which is accompanied by steel loudspeaker grilles rather than brown grille cloth, is the more durable and more suitable for carrying around from gig to gig.

The Boxes

Both systems, like their ancestors, follow the well-established 2.1 paradigm of twin two-way passive loudspeakers and an active subwoofer that contains an electronic crossover and all the necessary power amplification — mono for the bass

Active PA Systems

Swiss acoustic-amplification experts Schertler have entered the compact PA market, with impressive results.

and stereo for the mid/high satellites. The two systems carry identical controls on their steel rear panels: a ground lift, a stereo/mono switch for the satellites and a level control for the sub. They

also sport the same array of connectors, comprising stereo L/R inputs and pass-throughs on balanced XLRs, and mid/high power amplifier L/R outputs on Speakons. The rear panels also contain

»



Schertler Tim & Tom

PROS

- Both deliver excellent audio performance.
- They really do sound superb.
- High build quality.

CONS

- You'll have to buy them to try them.

SUMMARY

Schertler's Tim and Tom are high-quality compact analogue amplification systems designed for soloists, duos and small ensembles playing acoustic-based music. Both are capable of delivering an excellent level of audio performance and offer real alternatives to the current trend towards DSP-controlled, Class-D-amplified sound-reinforcement systems.

» the power-amplifier heatsinks and the power inlet and on/off switch.

The enclosure materials are also common to both the Tim and Tom, with 12mm ply being used for the satellites and 18mm ply for the subs. The passive satellites share the same one-inch throat and 25mm voice coil for the high-frequency driver, with the Tom's eight-inch woofer necessitating a physically larger cabinet than the Tim's equivalent, in which a six-inch woofer is employed. The same holds true for the reflex-ported subwoofer, where the box containing the Tim's 10-inch driver is significantly smaller and lighter than the Tom's 12-inch-equipped behemoth.

Alternatives

Once you set aside all lower-cost competition and similarly priced thin-column systems, you'll find competitive alternatives from the likes of **dB Technologies**, **LD Systems** and **HK Audio**.

PWM amplifiers in favour of chunky traditional linear power supplies and what Schertler rather grandly describe as 'BJT technology' (good old bipolar junction transistors to you and me).

The resulting power output is a healthy 600W (350+125+125) in the Tim's case, with the Tom delivering an impressive 1000W (500+250+250). Both subs cross over electronically to their respective mid/high units at 150Hz,

"Schertler have succeeded in producing a pair of high-performance systems that stay true to the company's ideals."

Although no speaker stands are supplied with either setup, both sets of satellites are equipped with top-hat receptacles for standard-size poles. The subwoofers can optionally be fitted with pole-mount sockets, for a modest extra cost.

One nicely practical design touch is that the handles for the enclosures are routed out of the cabinet sides. This is not only aesthetically pleasing, but is also probably a practical cost-saving. However, for the want of spending a few moments with the appropriate grades of sandpaper, the inside surfaces of the handles have been left rather rough, making lifting and carrying the loudspeakers (especially the Tom's sub) slightly uncomfortable.

In contrast to many current and new compact sound-reinforcement systems, the Tim and Tom have remained resolutely analogue in their amplification, eschewing modern lightweight switch-mode power supplies and Class-D

and the mid/top crossover points are at 2.2kHz and 2.3kHz for the Tom and Tim, respectively.

In Use

Once the satellites are up on speaker stands and connected to their

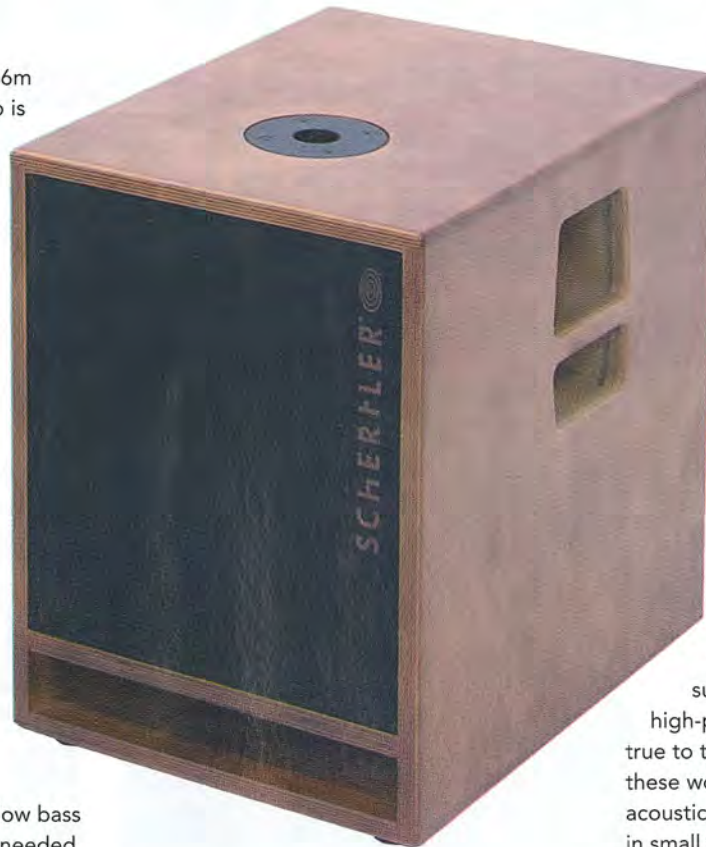
»



Both systems are available in either a wood or black anthracite finish.

» respective subs via the supplied 6m Speakon-equipped cables, setup is simply a matter of connecting a stereo signal, switching on the power and adjusting the sub/satellite balance for the acoustic environment.

With the subs set at their 0dB point (their volume can be varied between -7dB and +2dB) my initial impression from playing back my usual selection of reference CDs was that the Tim felt a little bass-heavy, whilst the Tom displayed a much better overall balance between its sub and satellites. Slightly reducing the level of the Tim's sub produced a more neutral balance in that system. In the Tom's case, I didn't feel that the +2dB of available sub boost would be quite enough to enable me to emphasise the low bass response to the extent that I've needed to when working with acoustic bands that feature 'floorboard' stompboxes or other low-frequency percussion instruments. In practice, boosting the bass either on individual instruments in the mix or via a graphic EQ inserted on the mix bus would usually sort that out, and experimenting with a graphic EQ showed that the Tom's sub is not short of low-end power when required.



To my ears, both systems deliver a very natural sound and both are capable of handling acoustic instruments, percussion and vocals with great clarity, detail and precision. Frequency response is all that you could ask for: 50Hz-20kHz for the Tim and 45Hz-20kHz for the Tom. Coverage is excellent, aided by the 90-degree dispersion in the horizontal and vertical planes of the systems' high-frequency horns. Both systems' subs sound fast, well-controlled and well-defined, handling kick drum, floorboard and bass guitar very capably indeed. Both are also able to deliver high SPLs from both subs and satellites, a facility that really comes into its own when replaying EDM tracks — as my long-suffering neighbours would doubtless agree.

Conclusion

In this day and age of highly portable, low-cost, plastic loudspeaker enclosures, 1000W PWM amplifiers on chips, lightweight drivers, heavy-duty DSP, switch-mode power supplies, thin 'line-array' column loudspeakers, iOS remote-control apps and the like, Schertler's Tim and Tom could be seen as slightly anachronistic. However, although these latest developments in sound-reinforcement technology have made getting a great sound at a gig much easier (and much more affordable) than

ever before, all that has come at the cost of absolute sonic performance. This I know from personal experience, having replaced my bulky old analogue amplified top/sub system with a DSP-controlled, Class-D-amplified thin-column-and-sub setup a few years ago — and taken a slight (but noticeable to me) hit in sheer audio quality.

Schertler have built their business and reputation by aiming to achieve the highest levels of accuracy in the reproduction of the sound of acoustic stringed instruments. With the Tim and Tom, the company have succeeded in producing a pair of high-performance systems that stay true to the company's ideals. Either of these would be more than suitable for acoustic soloists, duos and bands playing in small to medium-sized venues. The Tom has enough power to handle somewhat larger venues, although I'm not quite certain about its suggested suitability for large outdoor events, unless deployed in multiples.

Normally, I'd suggest that anyone looking for a system along the lines of the Tim and Tom go along to their favourite stockist and audition one or

“Either of these would be more than suitable for acoustic soloists, duos and bands...”

both systems. Unfortunately, however, Schertler's business model makes that impossible in the UK and US: they only sell direct, and there are no showrooms or distribution partners in those territories. Fortunately, though, Schertler do offer a 30-day money-back guarantee, which allows you to purchase and audition any of their products without fear of losing out if they turn out to be not quite right for your purposes. ■■■

- E** Tim €990.01 (€1090 for wood finish).
Tom €1390.01 (€1490 for wood finish).
Prices include VAT and delivery.
- T** Schertler +41 916 300 710
- W** www.schertler.com

