

Sonique

Slim Series Home Theatre Speaker System

Can't decide whether you should buy conventional loudspeakers, in-wall models or on-wall types? If so, we'd recommend taking a very close look at Sonique Audio's 'Slim Series'.

This is a mix'n'match concept: all the speakers use identical bass/midrange drivers and tweeters, yet are available as in-wall, on-wall or floorstanding variations.

Equipment

We had reviewed the in-wall/on-wall version (Slim 6) of Sonique's front/main speakers previously, so were pleased that this time around the company provided its Slim 66 floorstanders, not least because they enable a far deeper-sounding front 'image'.

This is because when a loudspeaker is positioned in front of the wall, you also hear reflected sound from the wall—something that you can't get from a speaker that's attached to (or dug into) a wall.

We used Slim 6s as surrounds, rear and centre, but you could use a second pair of Slim 66s as surrounds if you wanted. This approach would be particularly effective in large rooms. Although the Slim 66 floorstanding speakers use the same drivers as the Slim 6, the larger cabinet volume and bass reflex alignment mean that Sonique is able to extract considerably more bass from the Slim 66.

The bass/midrange drivers are 147mm in diameter and equipped with tough, environmentally robust polypropylene cones, durable rubber roll surrounds and very large, heavy, shielded magnets. The tweeter is a 25mm fabric dome type that is also fully shielded. The dome provides far higher power-handling and output levels than are possible from tweeters with smaller-diameter domes.

An unusual feature of the Slim 6 cabinets is that they're made of thick, non-resonant medium-density fibreboard (MDF) and completely enclosed. Most in-wall speakers come without cabinets, meaning their sound quality varies depending on where they're mounted, or else they're supplied with flimsy plastic cabinets that vibrate and add unwanted resonances to the sound. In using MDF, Sonique is sticking with a tried and tested technology.

Another advantage is that it's easy to paint, and Sonique points to this advantage by providing Dulux colours for a small additional charge. Alternatively, you can order the



speakers pre-primed and paint them yourself. The standard grille colour is burnished silver; also available are white, cream, green, caramel, brown, burgundy, grey and black.

The Slim 6 speakers are 480mm high, 200mm wide and 100mm deep, which means that if you choose to fix them to a wall, they'll protrude less than the diameter of a CD. If you mount them *inside* a wall, they protrude only 9mm, in other words the depth of the mounting frame.

All the speakers are available individually and cost \$149. The Slim 66 floorstanders are \$299 each. The Slim 606 subwoofer sells for \$499.

This last is 360mm high, 360mm wide and 390mm deep. Rated by Sonique with a frequency response of 39 to 160Hz, it has a 304mm diameter bass driver powered by a 350-watt amplifier that features auto-sensing power circuitry, phase switching, and rotary crossover and level controls. The cabinet is vented, using a two-tube venting system that ensures the ports won't 'chuff' at high output.

Performance

Last time around, in 5.1-channel mode, we reported that the sound quality of Sonique's Slim Series was "stunningly good" and that it "knocks the socks off any in-wall or on-wall speaker system we've ever heard at anywhere near its price, and sounds markedly better than several big-name imported systems that sell for more than twice [the price]".

This time around, with the floorstanding 66s up front, and the extra rear channel, we're happy to be able to report that the sound quality was even better.

Notable was the linearity across the midrange, which works wonders on voice, whether singing or speaking, and also the degree of focus provided by the fully symmetrical driver layouts. Not only do you feel completely immersed in a wash of sound, but the imaging is also very precise and one's

ability to track sounds around the room is greatly enhanced.

The stereo playback, imaging and stage depth was greatly improved by the Slim 66 floorstanders, but we also found that multi-channel sound from DVD benefited as well, seeming to sound 'bigger' and allowing us to better connect the sound with the on-screen action.

Conclusion

We didn't have to think twice about which version of Sonique's Slim Series speakers we liked the best: the Slim 66s came in clear winners. In fact, we were so impressed, we'd use them as surround speakers as well if we could—particularly at the bargain price.

However, if space is an issue, or you just don't want your room cluttered with speakers, you'll be astounded by the way the Slim 6s melt into your decor—and then make their presence manifest with their superior sound. **9.5**

Sonique Slim Series Home Theatre Speaker System	
Warranty	Five years
+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior sound • Very low room profile • Excellent subwoofer
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mounting not quite flush
Contact	Sonique Audio Pty Ltd 1300 766 418 www.sonique.com.au info@sonique.com.au