



# V for victory?

M&K Sound's 15in mid-tier subwoofer has the size, looks and clever control app to win over **Steve Withers** – but will it satisfy his deepest LFE desires?

**WHEN I REVIEWED** M&K Sound's X15+ subwoofer a couple of years ago [HCC #331] I was enamoured of its infrasonic depths but also intimidated by its size and weight. That model, certified THX Dominus, runs two drivers and stands 83cm high. What I really wanted was a sub that offered a similar level of performance, but was a bit more practical.

What I wanted, it turns out, was the V15+.

This unit sits at the top of the company's mid-tier range of (relatively) compact subwoofers, and uses a single 15in long-throw driver powered by 500W of RMS grunt. Specs-wise that scratches my low-end itch, but the V15+ also ticks a few other boxes by being half the size, half the weight, and – at £2,895 – half the price of the X15+.

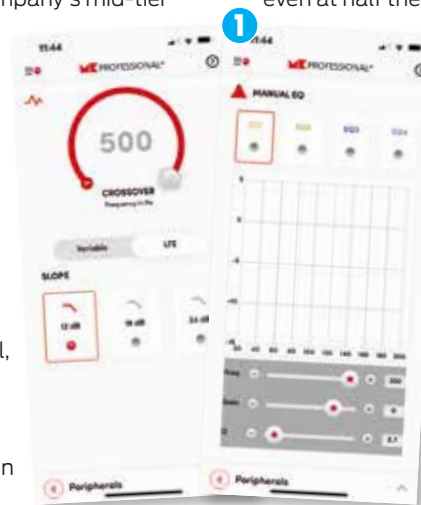
## The extended cut

The V15+ is a completely new model, but its sibling subwoofers, the V12+ and V10+, replace earlier versions. On the menu are more manageable cabinets, a bass response that's been

extended down from a claimed 25Hz to 20Hz, and increased amplifier output. The V15+ and V12+ are THX certified, achieving Ultra and Select status respectively, and both also support M&K's new remote control/setup app.

The slimmed-down nature of the V15+ is certainly one part of its appeal. Despite its huge 15in driver, the curved and tapered cabinet measures only 470mm deep, with a front baffle that's also only 470x470mm. However, even at half the weight of the X15+ it's not a lightweight, clocking in at 30.7kg – making it a two-man lift. The cabinet is finished in satin black, matched by a magnetic black fabric grille. Rubber feet are supplied in the box.

The V15+'s reinforced paper cone driver (the X+ series models use carbon fibre woofers) is housed in an enclosure that M&K describes as 'anti-resonant'. It combines with a Class D amplifier rated at 500W RMS, with peaks up to 1,000W, fed by an in-house designed 'front end' input stage. The sub's frequency response is a suggested 20Hz-200Hz (average response in room +/- 3dB), and based on the graphs



produced by my Trinnov Altitude16 processor I'd say those figures are legit.

The rear panel has been simplified, with an on/off switch and status light joined by stereo/LFE line-level inputs and passthrough outputs, all using RCA connectors, and a volume control that you won't need to touch.

The reason for this, along with the minimalist rear panel, is M&K's new remote app for iOS and Android. This will find any supporting subs, and you can name them – handy if you have more than one. At first glance the app offers just a page for controlling volume, but if you hold down the 'MK Professional' logo at the top you'll unlock all the other features such as crossover, phase and delay, plus manual and auto EQ.

Now, if you're using an AVR or processor for bass management you probably won't need all this, but it's nice to have and you can complete the setup while sat at the sweet spot, which is convenient. One feature I absolutely loved is Audio Sweep, which generates a tone from 20Hz to 130Hz – very useful for locating any rattles in your room.

## The low-down

Since I already own a pair of the original V12s [HCC #341], I thought I had a good idea what to expect from the V15+, but those extra three inches of driver make a huge difference. The V15+ just digs that bit deeper and feels so much bigger, laying down a foundation of low-frequency energy that really slams.

I put on the 4K Blu-ray of *Training Day*, and the hip-hop songs from Dr. Dre, Cypress Hill, Xzibit, *et al*, that pepper the soundtrack really benefitted from the added depth. Thanks to the sealed enclosure the V15+ remains nimble too, weaving its way through the basslines and drum beats with skill.

It's not all musical panache though, and the V15+ can still serve up a few infrasonic surprises. When Denzel Washington's car is being shot up by Russian gangsters in the final act, one of the tyres bursts with an LFE hit that's incredibly powerful – I literally felt it in my chest.

Having established this sub is tight and controlled, is it also capable of staying deep for prolonged periods? It was time for the classic opening bombing run in *Unbroken* (Blu-ray), where Angelina Jolie proves to doubters that she's more than just a pretty face by not



## SPECIFICATIONS

**DRIVE UNITS:** 1 x 15in reinforced paper cone woofer **ENCLOSURE:** Sealed **ONBOARD POWER (CLAIMED):** 500W (RMS) Class D **FREQUENCY RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 20Hz-200Hz (+/-3dB) **REMOTE CONTROL:** No. App instead **DIMENSIONS:** 470(h) x 470(w) x 470(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 30.7kg

**FEATURES:** LFE/stereo line-level RCA inputs; line-level RCA passthrough outputs; M&K App for iOS/Android; volume control; bass level (Normal, Music or Movie); THX Mode; Night Mode; crossover control (42Hz-300Hz variable or LFE); 0-360 degree phase control (variable or AVR); delay (variable or AVR); manual EQ; auto EQ; low frequency sweep (20Hz-130Hz); power control settings; Dynamic Driver Excursion Control

## TESTED WITH



**CIVIL WAR:** Alex Garland's provocative dystopian drama, about jaded combat photographers trying to impartially cover the titular conflict, features a battle-hardened Dolby Atmos soundmix that regularly unleashes explosive deep bass, especially during the climactic battle. The 4K Blu-ray's HDR-infused visuals also beguile.

only deftly directing this powerful sequence, but also choosing a first-class sound design team.

The V15+ does their Oscar-nominated work justice, keeping all the different bass moments separate and distinct, whether it's the drone of the bomber engines, the roar of the Japanese Zeros, the thump of exploding flak, the cacophonous machine-gun fire, or the LFE rumble that accompanies the destruction of the target.

## Ready, aim, fire

Alex Garland's *Civil War* received a superb 4K disc with an aggressive immersive mix that uses LFE to dramatic effect in certain sequences. The explosion near the beginning obviously benefits, but throughout the film low frequencies are employed to subtly enhance the realism, whether it's a landing helicopter, a passing tank or to expand the dynamic range of gunfire with a frightening thud.

However, it's the climactic battle that really delivers the goods from a low-end perspective, and here the V15+ worked its magic, reinforcing the soundstage as a whole. Rocket launchers fire into the Lincoln Memorial and the columns explode with a pleasing physicality, before tanks rumble up Pennsylvania Avenue and fire at the White House. The explosions and gunfire are rendered with bass so visceral you'll be as traumatised as the film's journo.

Size matters when it comes to subwoofers, and M&K Sound's V15+ has a driver big enough to pressurise larger rooms with bass that will liquify your innards. It's not quite a behemoth like the X15+, but subjectively has the edge in terms of agility and is unlikely to give you a hernia or get in the way of your projector screen. The delivery is fast and clean, while the new remote app will delight tweekers, making this victorious subwoofer a very worthy addition to the M&K line-up ■

## HCC VERDICT



**M&K Sound V15+**  
→ £2,895 → [www.mkssound.com](http://www.mkssound.com)

**WE SAY:** A big 15in driver, sealed enclosure, plenty of power and a sophisticated control app help this bassmaker deliver the infrasonic goods with speed and depth. You'll love it.

1. M&K's control app handles volume, crossover, phase and delay settings, plus presets and auto and manual EQ...

2. ...which explains why the V15+'s rear panel is limited to stereo/LFE RCA in/out, firmware USB port, and volume dial